

Sini Setälä

# Tabloid Headlines in Mind

## A Frame for Research



JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN COMPUTING 202

Sini Setälä

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A Frame for Research

Esitetään Jyväskylän yliopiston informaatioteknologian tiedekunnan suostumuksella julkisesti tarkastettavaksi yliopiston Agora-rakennuksen auditoriossa 3 joulukuun 8. päivänä 2014 kello 12.

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

JYVÄSKYLÄ 2014

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

JYVÄSKYLÄ 2014

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Cover photo by Sini Setälä.

*The human mind – a winding path that sometimes leads so very quickly to conclusions and other times finds amazing roundabouts through mental forests, fields, and flowering meadows. Illuminated by the sun or lit by the moon, sometimes shadowed by dark clouds. Always individual, but framed by the collective. Like nature itself.*

URN:ISBN:978-951-39-5965-4

ISBN 978-951-39-5965-4 (PDF)

ISBN 978-951-39-5964-7 (nid.)

ISSN 1456-5390

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Jyväskylä University Printing House, Jyväskylä 2014

## **ABSTRACT**

Setälä, Sini Aulikki

Tabloid Headlines in Mind – A Frame for Research

Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2014, 194 p.

(Jyväskylä Studies in Computing

ISSN 1456-5390; 202)

ISBN 978-951-39-5964-7 (nid.)

ISBN 978-951-39-5965-4 (PDF)

Many people see tabloid headlines every day, either willingly or because they are placed to meet the eye. This research in the field of cognitive sciences integrates a multidisciplinary understanding of the interpretation process of tabloid headlines. The mental representations evoked lead to the construction of personal meaning. A conceptual model is built based on the empirical studies conducted and the theoretical background. Special emphasis is placed on emotions and their appraisal, and the purposes headlines serve for people. The study of tabloid headlines is a multifaceted phenomenon that reveals discrepancies in what people say and what they really feel. Many of the emotions evoked by headlines were negative. The impact of negativity can be harmful to human well-being. But, tabloid headlines serve many positive purposes in the form of gratification. Gratification is very personal and headlines that could be interpreted as negative on a more general level may serve positive purposes for an individual. Similarly, negative personal meanings may arise from allegedly positive headlines. The impact of the emotions elicited by tabloid headlines will depend on the meanings given to the issues on the headlines and the self-referency of the emotions elicited. Tabloid headlines build and maintain collective representations. They outline the world and depict society. Their study reveals paradoxes in people's thinking. The study of tabloid headlines offers a way to better understand the individual with personal interpretations and personal meanings in a socially defined world of collective representations.

Keywords: tabloid headline, interpretation processes, mental representation, personal meaning.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has been an exhausting journey - but at the same time most rewarding. The diving into the wide sea of the studies of the human mind, the writings of great thinkers from various times in history, and the research done in the area have given me great pleasure and so much to think about. The human mind is fascinating with all its potential and, at the same time, all its limitations created to a great extent by the mind itself.

I feel indebted to so many people who have helped me in great many ways during my journey. I mention some names here, but I really want to thank everyone who took the time to participate in my studies. My supervisor Pertti Saariluoma whose wide knowledge and insight have opened perspectives while sometimes driving me to the limit. My second supervisor Pertti Hurme whose expertise in communication added value to my work. My reviewers Vesa Taatila and Eleni Berki and my opponent Matti Kamppinen for their contribution in the accomplishment of this journey. My wonderful colleagues at Laurea University of Applied Sciences who provided me with opportunities for data collection and offered me their warmhearted support.

I owe my gratitude to all the helpful and flexible staff at the University of Jyväskylä who I have been in contact with. They are there truly for the student. I especially want to mention Ville Korkiakangas and Seppo Puuronen who provided me with invaluable help in the technical challenges in the finalizing of the thesis and Sami Kollanus who was always ready to answer the many practical questions I asked during this study process. Jussi Jokinen, Doctoral Student at the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, helped me with the quantitative part of the analysis of Study Two. I want to thank him for his excellent knowledge in the world of statistical analysis.

The goldmine of the library of the University of Helsinki that houses the works of so many excellent authors was an indispensable source of knowledge. Even in these times of the thousands of opportunities provided by the internet, the library has something almost magical as the concrete physical heart of academic knowledge.

My friends have been there to support me and give me courage in the moments I really felt distressed. I thank them for being the wonderful people they are. Most of all I want to thank my marvellous family: my loving and all enduring husband whose trust in me never failed, my charming and intelligent daughter who shared the challenges of studying with me, and my precious son whose smile and caresses were there to remind me of what truly matters in life.

I trust this research offers tools for the study of the human mind, opens perspectives into its various sides and reminds of the individuality of all humans while framed by the collective. The trivialities of life, the even banal sounding everyday issues, may sometimes be those that matter the most.

Helsinki 17.11.2014  
Sini Setälä



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This research explores the workings of the human mind in the context of the interpretation of tabloid headlines. Tabloid headlines are something that many people see and read almost every day. First, the background of the research is introduced with an overview to the studies made in the topic. Second, the function of tabloid headlines is discussed which leads to the concluding part of the chapter: the challenge of this research.

## 1.1 Background

There are two tabloid newspapers in Finland, *Ilta-Sanomat* (IS) and *Iltalehti* (IL). Their headlines (in Finnish *lööpit*) are journalistic products that are separate from the actual tabloid (newspaper) and have usually several headings (topics) that deal with different matters. The first headline was published by *Ilta-Sanomat* on June 4, 1975 (Kilpi 2007, 186). Other newspapers use headlines also, but when there is discussion about headlines in general in Finland, the discussion most likely concerns the two tabloids, *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Iltalehti*. The headlines of the two newspaper tabloids are always posted close to one another. They function as advertisements for the tabloids but also as independent journalistic products (Mainonnan eettinen neuvosto 2005). Many people see tabloid headlines every day. They can be seen in the windows of kiosks, beside cashier lines in supermarkets and they are posted in other places where people have either the time or are in a place to see them. One could argue that it is virtually impossible to step into a kiosk or buy groceries without at least getting a glimpse at tabloid headlines. Sometimes also the cover of the tabloid serves this same function when it is posted in similar places and is similarly available.

According to the National Media Study (KMT kokonaistavoittavuus 2013) the overall reach (print and digital version) in 2013 of *Iltalehti* was 2 765 000 and *Ilta-Sanomat* 2 729 000 readers per week. They were the two most widely read newspapers in Finland. The print version of the newspaper was still the most



popular way to access the content. The print version of *Ilta-Sanomat* had 544 000 readers and *Iltalehti* 428 000 readers per day. Out of Finnish newspapers, only *Helsingin Sanomat* had more readers per day, 837 000 (1 855 000 readers per week). *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Iltalehti* are the three most read newspapers in Finland (KMT Lukija helmikuu 2014 tiedote). Although widely read, Finns do not find the two tabloids reliable sources of information (Median uutisoinnin luotettavuus. Kunnallisalan kehittämissäätiö 2014). Only 18% thought that *Ilta-Sanomat* and 16% that *Iltalehti* were trustworthy sources of information. *Helsingin Sanomat* had a trustworthiness of 66%. The TV news broadcasted by the national TV channel YLE was most trustworthy with a figure of 87%.

Since tabloid headlines are so widely in sight, they form part of the stimuli that may affect people every day. There is seldom time to make an active choice on whether to read a tabloid headline or not. A person may decide not to stop to read the entire headline, but with headlines so widely in view, at least the main heading (biggest print) is very likely to catch the eye of passers-by. As one of the participants of this research noted, it is not possible to ignore tabloid headlines since they are so available.

The viewer/reader of tabloid headlines is always an active participant of the viewing/reading process. She brings her own life history including her relationship towards the headlines into the situation, extracts meaning selectively, and is affected by various stimuli that come into play in the situation either on a conscious or unconscious level. Neisser (1976) argues that what will be perceived depends on what we know to look for and Bruner (1986) notes that meaning and reality are created, not discovered. The things posted on headlines stimulate the visual system, what is their impact on the mind? Turunen (2004) states in his book that deals with emotional life that "multiple meanings rise to our consciousness constantly. They are mental images, sentences, parts of sentences, in short: thoughts. Where do they come from", he asks, "Do I move my thoughts or do my thoughts move me?" (Turunen 2004, 13).

One participant accounted that when meeting her boyfriend for the first time, the boy had told her that he never read tabloid headlines. She had thought: "What a straight forward guy!" After some time had passed, it turned out that he did read tabloid headlines, but had not wanted to appear trivial when getting to know the girl for the first time. Tabloid headlines seem to have a very strong exaggeration stigma placed on them and admitting to reading them could be interpreted as socially suspicious. "There is nothing to wonder about the matter that headlines are discussed. To begin with that is usually the intention of the maker of headlines. In addition, *Ilta-Sanomat* alone has almost a million readers per day, but headlines are read by almost all people." (Kilpi 2007, 186).

In this research, participants often accused tabloid headlines of portraying mainly negative news. The third-person effect (TPE, Perloff 2002) examines the beliefs of media effects that are seen as affecting other people but not oneself. People attribute powerful, typically negative, effects to "the media". This can

even be turned into a marketing issue as can be seen from Figure 1. It shows the headlines from June 2, 2014. The headline of *Ilta-Sanomat* features the smiling sun with the text: "TODAY ONLY (in red) GOOD NEWS! In honour of the beginning of summer".



FIGURE 1 Tabloid Headlines June 2, 2014  
*Ilta-Sanomat*: TODAY ONLY GOOD NEWS! In honour of the beginning of summer.  
 Picture by Sini Setälä.

The study made by Setälä (2007) categorized tabloid headings during three months in 2006. Out of the 484 headings published 236 were negative, 84 positive, and 164 neutral (including information about supplements (103)). Kivioja (2004) assesses in his study that 75% of the analysed headlines were negative. Kivioja continues that positive news have insufficient news value which is suggested by their relatively small amount in headlines. Kilpi (2007) writes that the highest peaks in the sales of *Ilta-Sanomat* seem to be when the headline portrays the death of a celebrity, the termination of a dream life, a success turning into failure: a sudden and fast fall from the heights to the depths.

Claims against the media for intentional manipulation are sometimes put forward, but they do not fall into the scope of this research and no claim in favour or against is made here. It should be noted that when used in this research the word manipulate should be understood largely as advertising. "The word "lööppi" (tabloid headline) originates from the Swedish word "löpsedel"

meaning a catalogue of most important news. A better translation for "löpsedel" would nowadays be sales or advertising posters since that is what "lööpit" are all about." (Kilpi 2007, 186).

Taking the distribution and availability of tabloid headlines to all literate beings into consideration, their study has been fairly scarce in Finland. Pasi Kivioja (2008, 2004) has studied tabloids and their role in the change affecting media and society in general at the University of Tampere in Finland. Hanna Syrjäälä (2007) analyses violence in headlines at the University of Tampere. Also at the University of Tampere, Pauliina Leinonen (2006) depicts what kind of society is built by tabloid headlines and what are the values of such a society. Anni Karjalainen and Maria Ylitalo (2006) have at the University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä written a thesis discussing the headlines of tabloids through the perspectives of children "Voihan vattu, nuohan valehtelee (Gee, they are telling lies)". Tuononen (2007) has as part of the publications of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children in Finland published a study about the experiences parents had of the effects of tabloid headlines on their children. Tabloid headlines have also been somewhat discussed in other articles and publications.

There has been research on tabloids in Great Britain, but very few studies on the reception of the information conveyed by tabloids (Johansson 2008). Conboy (2006) has studied four tabloids and the linguistic strategies they use to describe contemporary Great Britain. He concludes that these newspapers that are often even slandered, are actually influential and important portrayers of every day life. Mutz (1994) has studied the role of mass media in turning individual experiences into political preferences in the United States. Blood and Phillips (1995) discovered a depression effect upon consumer sentiment resulting from headlines that referred to depression. There are numerous studies on headlines in general or effects of media coverage. See for example Turner, York and Petousis-Clark (2009) for inaccurate and misleading information portrayed by headlines in an immunization campaign. Andrew (2007) argues that the information (heuristic cues) voters who read only headlines receive is different from those who acquaint themselves with the complete article. Gerber, Karlan, and Bergan (2007) discuss the effects of headlines on voting behaviour. Chan (2003) has studied investor reaction to news. He argues that investors underreact to public signals and overreact to private signals. Condit, Ferguson, Kassel, Thadhani, Gooding, and Parrott (2001) have analyzed the impact of news headlines on genetic determinism and Mason and Donnelly (2000) the impact of a local newspaper headline on the intake of vaccines.

More recent research has focused much on misleading headlines. See for example Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, and Pillai (2014) for the effects of subtle misinformation in news headlines. Otieno, Spada, and Renkl (2013) discuss the effect of news frames in perceiving risk. Lewandowsky, Ecker, Seifert, Schwarz, and Cook (2012) examine the mechanisms of misinformation and offer recommendations for its debunking. Romeis, Morven, and Shelton (2013) discuss

poorly designed studies that report unusual or controversial results that receive disproportionate amount of attention in press.

Determining the effect of tabloid headlines is challenging because of the individual interpretation process and all other phenomena that enter into play. (See for example Kasperson, J., Kasperson, R., Pidgeon, & Slovic 2003 and Kunelius 2003) According to the mass communication research (MCR) results, its effects seem to be fairly small (Klapper 1960, McQuail 1978, Kunelius 2003). Rogers (2002) discusses communication research and states that its findings about mass media's minimal effects may result in part from the methodology used. He continues that interpersonal communication resulting from media magnifies the effects of direct exposure to media messages and intermedia processes cause strong effects. In addition, the indirect effects, such as the agenda-setting process (Dearing & Rogers 1996), framing (Tversky & Kahnemann 1986), the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann 1974), the availability bias (Tversky & Kahnemann 1985c), and the cultivation theory (Gerbner 1977) may be strong. The issues of everyday life need to be studied in order to understand people's reaction to media (Grossberg 1997). Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994) suggest that because mass media can spread emotions in addition to information and entertainment, its power may be greater than realized. Cantril (1942), Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973), Katz and Blumler (1974), and Ruggiero (2000) discuss the uses and gratifications approach to (mass) media, which analyses how media satisfies audience's different needs. Kline, Miller and Morrison (1974) highlight the importance of the individual uses of media content with reference to the uses and gratifications model.

## 1.2 Function of Tabloid Headlines

The information the (mass) media conveys usually concerns many people, its relevance for the individual may be of a more general nature than in the case of direct experience, and it makes reference to culturally shared goals, norms and values (Unz 2011). McQuail (2001, 484) argues, "Mass communication is centrally about the giving and taking of meaning." The concept of meaning may be interpreted in various ways (Lyons 1996), but in this research it signifies the interpretations a person gives to an issue. Individuals understand the information according to their individual ways of interpretation and relate it ultimately to personal meanings. According to Arnold (1960) organisms constantly analyse the world around them and judge the importance of stimuli, the relevance of environmental changes, for their own well-being. The presence of negative affect signals that everything is not all right (Dillard, Plotnick, Godbold, Freimuth, & Edgar 1996). Tabloid headlines use a lot of negativity in their headings.

Lazarus and Lazarus (1994) discuss intelligent beings' need to perceive and comprehend the world and events around them and judge their signifi-

cance for their well being, appraisal being an evaluative judgement about this significance (Lazarus & Lazarus 1994). This evaluation can be said to present one of the main functions of tabloid headlines. "Things must be well in this country if tabloid headlines deal with matters like Matti Nykänen" (Comment made by one of the participants on the interviews of Study Five). Although this comment illustrates the disgust the participant had towards the celebrity on tabloid headlines, it also shows the deeper function of headings: they serve as check points of security. According to the terror management theory (TMT, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg 2003) human behaviour is largely provoked by the paradox that in spite of the human love of life every person has to die one day (Konijn & ten Holt 2011).

Tabloid headlines serve the human need for orientation (McCombs 1981, McCombs & Reynolds 2002) and are sources of information. They can also be used as peeping holes (e.g. celebrities) and they serve as entertainment. Schwab and Schwender (2011) argue that the evolved motive and emotion system is primarily organized around social problems and basic themes of media entertainment seem to be closely connected to it. Entertaining media content is evolutionary relevant emotional content (Schwab & Schwender 2011). Entertainment may provide very beneficial emotional experiences (Bryant & Miron 2002). One does not necessarily want to read the tabloid because of its informative value, but because it provides an escape or pause from the daily routines regardless of whether one agrees with the content or not.

McQuail (2001) and Kunelius (2003) discuss the consumption of mass media and the purposes of research into audiences. There are two theses to explain it. One implies that consumption is determined by supply. The other analyses how mass media forms part of the daily routines of people and thus has effects on consumption choices. The reading of headlines may become a part of daily routines in order to serve the need for orientation and check point of security, or just plain curiosity. Von Bagh and Koski (2000, 6) argue, "The tabloid headline is the biggest common denominator of our common consciousness."

McLuhan (1964) is often quoted with regard to communication research for proposing that the effects of the content of the message are far less important than the way in which the medium conveys the information, because "it shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action: The medium is the message" (McLuhan 1964, 9). This issue will be discussed when analyzing the results of this research. The medium, tabloid headlines, certainly affected the participants, but did not render the content of the message ineffective. Also, studies of persuasion suggest that the importance of the effect lies in the person quoted, not what or how it is said (Kunelius 2003, Guilloroy & Geraci 2013). As will be argued later, long term memory may fail to store, or connect, the origin of the information to its content, only the message (content) will be retrieved rendering thus meaningless the possible exaggeration or unreliability stigma related to the source of the information (tabloid headlines).

Habermas (2004) discusses the power of media and states that the right-of-access principle has lost all innocence once harnessed for manipulative purpos-

es. This was well illustrated by the comment of one of the police officers interviewed for this research when he questioned the morality of the often-used press claim "the public has the right to know". Someone's right to know is the exposure of someone else.

### 1.3 The Challenge

Tabloid headlines form part of the stimuli that affect people every day. They are a phenomenon the study of which stretches across different fields of science and can be seen from different perspectives. The challenge arises from the need to integrate without losing anything essential of the various sciences that contribute to the study of the phenomenon. Tabloid headlines offer a target for psychological investigations since their interpretation is individual and emotions are of crucial importance. However, individual interpretation processes cannot be isolated from the cultural perspectives and collectiveness studied by social psychology and anthropology. Tabloid headlines are a social phenomenon because of their impact on society and the science of sociology needs to be incorporated. They are a linguistic phenomenon employing words and meanings, both on individual and collective level. They are means of communication. They contribute to the building of a common cultural collectiveness. The defining of the theoretical concepts used and the conceptualizing of the phenomenon is needed. Foundational analysis (Saariluoma 1997, Taatila 2004) leaves room for the intuitive ideas that result from the experience of the researcher. Analysis needs to incorporate the hidden and tacit knowledge presuppositions (Taatila 2004) and guiding principles of scientific thinking (Saariluoma 2007). The multidisciplinary nature needs to be preserved. Cognitive science is a fundamentally interdisciplinary activity (Bermúdez 2014, 87) and offers tools for the construction of the framework for the interpretation of tabloid headlines. This research falls in the scope of cognitive sciences.

The studies and expert interviews conducted in this research are aimed at demonstrating the phenomenon, which is the key issue for the construction of the framework. The various studies represent different perspectives into the phenomenon. The empirical part is not employed in order to achieve generalizations, but to show the existence of the phenomenon and to create a conceptual model. This calls for cognitive concept analysis that has a foundational basis to integrate the various sciences. The world of perception and interpretation can be derived from the worlds of different sciences, but it needs to be an integration, a multidisciplinary model of understanding. This research will present a model for the interpretation of tabloid headlines, from their perception to the building of personal meaning.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This research draws its theoretical background first from the perception of reality. Language and culture are discussed. The personality of human beings is affected and affects all perception and the construction of narratives offers an important enrichment in the process of the interpretation of tabloid headlines. Emotions form a vital part of the appraisal processes that via apperception lead to the forming of mental representations. Their construction is affected by feeling rules, fear of death and uncertainty, and the collective nature of representations. The underlying processes of media exposure are also discussed.

### 2.1 The Perception of Reality

Many things affect the perception of reality. Its many definitions and forms are discussed first.

Allan (1986, 104) refers to perception as "a mental act or reflex using knowledge as a filtering device to categorize cues that typically come from phenomena in the real world we live in." James (1981/1890) argues that perception is an apperceptive process; brain-processes and sensations produce the content of perceptions. In this research, perception is defined based on these definitions combining the information of the senses and its so to say primary phase of interpretation.

"Phenomenological reduction means leading phenomenological vision back from the apprehension of a being, whatever may be the character of that apprehension, to the understanding of the being of this being." (Heidegger 1988, 21). Husserl (1995) argues that phenomenology is primarily concerned with the systematic reflection and analysis of consciousness, it is to take place from a highly modified "first person" viewpoint: studying phenomena not as they appear to "my" consciousness, but to any consciousness whatsoever. The challenge with that viewpoint is that it postulates the existence of a consciousness "whatsoever". This research is based on the notion that all things are seen

from subjective perspectives, the self, taking into account that this subjective experience is based on specific cultural-historical grounds and collective representations form an important part of them. There is no "self" independent of one's cultural-historical existence (Bruner 1986) and there can be no consciousness without it being the consciousness of someone. There can be discussion of a person being conscious or unconscious, but once the person is conscious, individual interpretations have much room to operate even inside common cultures and histories.

James (1907) argues that there is not one self, but many. It depends on the various and changing interests, intentions, and life situations with which self people identify themselves. Kelly (1963, 40) states that: "The outlook of the individual person is itself a real phenomenon, no matter how badly he may misrepresent the rest of reality to himself." James (1981/1890, 920) writes: "The whole distinction of real and unreal, the whole psychology of belief, disbelief, and doubt, is thus grounded on two mental facts - first, that we are liable to think differently of the same; and second, that when we have done so, we can choose which way of thinking to adhere to and which to disregard." There is an infinite way to understand different matters. Some choices will be made consciously, others unconsciously. At times, people may want to interpret things in certain ways because of the psychological purposes they serve. On other occasions the choices are made unconsciously because of the underlying mental constructions of the mind. And sometimes, these two intermingle; choices are made consciously, but the purposes they serve may be unconscious or denied.

The world that is represented in people's minds is not a precise replica of reality (Kahneman 2012). This even trivial sounding statement that should be almost obvious does actually not appear to be so at all when it is analyzed more closely. There are numerous examples of witness testimony where people who should be looking at the same event taking place, see and remember it very differently (See for example Wells and Olson 2003 and Roediger and McDermott 1995). Turunen (2004) assesses that perceptions, especially visual perceptions, are often seen as guarantees of objectivity. But perceptions are within a person and dependent on the way the subject is built. Even though they result from an encountered object, they are the product of the observer's visual system and the effect of its stimuli on the brain (mind). Moscovici (2000) argues that true knowledge of the external world could be acquired through perception and observation, but social factors challenge and distort this process.

The physical stimulus (tabloid headline) is but one input in a complex cognitive and motivational context (Nuttin 1984). Even with visual stimuli present, activation can be nonspecific and only the individual experiences and interpretations define how it will be manifested (Mustonen 2001). The appraisal of visual emotional material and the meanings of emotional visuals depend on the respective contexts in which they are generated and perceived (Müller and Kappas 2011). Tabloid headlines are seen in various situations. The information retrieved sporadically from tabloid headlines blends in the current thoughts of the individual causing very little, if at all, or even major changes in the flow of



those thoughts. Edie (1987) argues in relation to William James that people live in several worlds at once. "The world of perception is not the world of scientific explanation." (Edie 1987, 35). Yet, the world of perception is the world people live in and mostly base their arguments on, or draw conclusions from. There is no reason to believe that people would at all the time in all situations carefully ponder their perceptions in relation to the so-called scientific world, or objective reality.

According to Durgin (2002), Physicist Michael Faraday argued in the 1850s that human perception is not a direct consequence of reality but rather an act of imagination. Imagination can be used to make visions of the future and ponder different outcomes, but it may also distort the perception of reality. Dennett (1997) discusses the notion that the capability of humans to believe seems to have no limits. This is where lies the challenge of the interpretation of headlines: the individual capability to extract an unlimited amount of meanings from a certain heading. The motivation for meanings arises from cognitive and functional predispositions (Allen 2001). According to Kamppinen (2009) beliefs are crucial when the dynamics and preconditions of man are studied. Beliefs and values colour the interpretation of perceptions. Pyszczynski, Solomon and Greenberg (2003) write that people are forced to rely on social consensus as primary evidence of the validity of their beliefs and values since there is a multitude of ways to apprehend the universe and all cultural worldviews are symbolic illusions. Leea Virtanen (1988) has studied beliefs and states that everyday reasoning puts more emphasis on individuals than large samples (statistics by acquaintance, in Finnish "mutta tuttavani" -tilastotiede). New information, even with weak evidence, is incorporated into already possessed knowledge structures. It forms beliefs that may be hard to alter even with contradictory evidence (see for example Anderson, Lepper, & Ross 1980 and Guillory & Geraci 2013). Causal relationships may be determined by individual, random situations.

Humans have a need for meaning (Klapp 1969). This meaning refers both to causal relationships and to the deeper meanings of life that humans tend to look for. Many tabloid headlines are based on this: IS 25.04.2013: "Miracle recovery from stomach cancer: Ilona refused to die, fell in love, and got married"; IL 28. -29.3.2013: "A bishop, murderer, communist, and 15 other confess. At that moment I almost lost my faith. Discuss the crises of their lives."

Anecdotes have a much stronger effect than abstract statistical information (Taleb 2010): IS 26.04.2013: "Woman died in labour"; IL 26.04.2013: "Woman just out of labour got a horrifying message: you cannot be the mother of your child". People tend to see what they expect to see. That is why the effects of randomness for example are missed (Mlodinow 2009). Lotman (1990) argues that the dialectics between regularity and randomness (chance) need to be taken into account in order to understand the mechanisms of social psychology. Fromm (1975) points out that facts need to be clearly distinguished from values. This may be done on a conscious level of thought and when placing more effort

into the thinking processes. But tabloid headlines are often seen in situations that do not usually call for much effort to be put into this process.

Reality is socially defined (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Bruner (1990, 33-34) writes: "When we enter human life, it is as if we walk on stage into a play whose enactment is already in progress." Culture offers people the frames for their understanding of the world. Individuals may end up creating changes in the world, but they first need to form part of the culture they are born in, or at least understand the beliefs and values enforced by this culture. Chandler (2007) argues that people learn the codes into which the world has been structured, not the world itself. Even inside the same culture, realities differ among individuals; there are many social codes. Social identities are communicated in various ways. Understanding the individual interpretation processes and their various forms of expression are the key to understanding the individual perception of reality. Lehtinen (2010) makes reference to Kant (1998) and states that the world people experience is always partially created by them. "There is not one reality, but many." (Lazarus & Lazarus 1994, 145).

Reality is defined by Berger and Luckmann (1966, 13) as "a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition". As stated already previously, objective reality becomes a concept with many interpretations. "The I is not an experience, but the one experiencing." (Husserl 2006, 2). Berger and Luckmann (1966, 154) assess that the symmetry between objective and subjective reality is never static, once-for-all state of affairs. It must always be produced and reproduced in actu and societies need reality-maintenance procedures to safeguard a measure of symmetry between objective and subjective reality. "The self is a repeatedly reconstructed biological state" (Damasio 2006, 226-227). The world surrounding humans offers multiple stimuli and ways to interpret reality. The importance of understanding the ways people construct their worlds is vital to understanding humans (Bruner 1986).

The study of tabloid headlines has challenges with regard to their perception and interpretation since the information they convey and the fact that they are tabloids can be interpreted in various ways. People experience an emotion because of how they interpret the occurrence, not because of what objectively happened (Epstein 1994). Von Glasersfeld (1995) argues radical constructivism and that an individual's subjective experiences form her meanings and ultimately humans remain cognitively isolated even if social interaction has effects. This issue of individuality versus collectiveness is an interesting one. While all humans are individuals and thus cognitively isolated so to say, the effects of culture in the form of collective representations are powerful. The collective nature of representations will be discussed in chapter 2.6.

Selective perception is a tendency to reinterpret media messages in a way that serves to maintain existing beliefs and attitudes (Oliver 2002). Festinger (1957) states that people will actively avoid information that causes them cognitive dissonance. There are multiple stimuli affecting the perception and interpretation processes. But that is the case in all human behavior. This presents

various challenges for the study of human behavior, but the more various stimuli can be taken into account, the more thorough will the understanding of human behavior be. "In the fields of observation, chance favors only the prepared mind. (Dans les champs de l'observation le hasard ne favorise que les esprits préparés.)" Louis Pasteur

[http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Louis\\_Pasteur](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Louis_Pasteur)

The reality offered by tabloid headlines bases itself often on social constructions, but their final interpretation, the meanings extracted from them, are individual.

### 2.1.1 The Role of Language and Culture

The use of language needs to be discussed in relation to the perception of reality, especially when trying to understand tabloid headlines that are made of words used and defined in a cultural context. "Language is not a neutral medium and our choice of words matters." (Chandler 2007, 123). Lotman (1990) states that it is not just interpretation, but stepping into contact with the text, being in relations with the text, that takes place. The use and interpretation of language is always individual (Wittgenstein 1967, Honkela 2010). There is no pure objectivity in the use of language since individuals will interpret meanings on individual basis. Honkela (2010) argues that this does not mean that all interpretations and viewpoints would be as good or valuable (extreme relativism). Wittgenstein (1967) characterizes the concepts of language as instruments. Barthes (1994) discusses meanings and states that myth is a language and collective representations should be discussed as a system of signs. Mass culture transforms everyday issues into myths and gives collective meanings to words. Even if language incorporates many individual meanings, it also offers them on collective level.

"Direct communication between minds is impossible, not only physically but psychologically. Communication can be achieved only in a roundabout way. Thought must pass first through meanings and then through words." (Vygotski 1971, 150). Dewey (1971) refers to communication as most wonderful of all affairs; events are turned into things with a meaning and inner experimentation, thought, uses them: "Where communication exists, things in acquiring meaning thereby acquire representatives, surrogates, signs and implicates, which are infinitely more amenable to management, more permanent and more accommodating, than events in their first estate." (Dewey 1971, 138).

Leino (1987) notes that humans react to the environmental stimuli via the symbolic system that is constructed by culture. People cannot experience everything they have knowledge of, but have acquired this knowledge by being told of it (Goldschmidt 2006). Language is the most important sign system of human society (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Language reflects the everyday reality and offers a perspective in which to view things. Vygotski (1971) argues that since thought is born through words, the relation between thought and word is a living process. In order for human communication to take place effectively,

there needs to be some common accord of what different words in general mean, relate to. Every word has a meaning, the meanings of sentences depend on the words used and left out (Wittgenstein 1967). People will interpret words and sentences individually although usually understanding the generally intended meaning (as for headlines), but because of the different connotations words hold and the ways in which they are used, they may activate different emotions in different people. There can never be a complete agreement on the exact meanings of words under all possible circumstances (Wittgenstein 1967, Honkela 2010). They depend on the context in which they are used (Kohler Riessman 1993, Östman 2000). Halliday (1973) identifies three interdependent functions of language that are all essential for the interpretation of meaning: ideational (content), textual (how something is said), and interpersonal (role of speaker and listener).

Rossi (2010) argues that representations are politics and politics is a struggle about meanings. Different phenomena can have different meanings for different individuals and they will be labeled with words. But, the words used for the description of the phenomena can and will be different depending on the meanings they convey to the user of those words. It is relevant to understand that even if language evokes different phenomena in different individuals because of individual experiences (memories), society as a whole represents the facts of experience in language. Durkheim (1971) calls collective representations the ideas that correspond to the diverse elements of language. In this way, language can be objective, but the meanings remain subjective. Society is not often interested in the unique and variable characteristics of things (Durkheim 1971), but decisions on societal level are based on generalizations.

Wittgenstein (1967) discusses the question whether it is relevant to know if a person understands a word or just imagines understanding it. With regard to tabloid headlines this may have consequence depending on the issue and its importance to the person. Collective representations are needed in order to allow for communication, but misunderstandings and various interpretations of the same phenomena are possible. Cultural script knowledge affects interpretation of things and retrieval from memory (Harris, Lee, Hensley, & Schoen 1988).

Hofstadter (1979) argues that the role of language in molding thoughts should not be overstressed. According to him, the differences in culture (or sub-culture) give rise to the perceptual differences. Nisbett (2003) writes that language influences thought when the language is associated with a system of representation. Cognitive processes can be modified by living for a time in another culture (Nisbett 2003). Veivo (2000) discusses Eco's (1977) interpretation of language according to which language is a dictionary-like container of cultural knowledge. Hofstede (1998, 21) treats culture as the "collective programming of the mind". Humans categorize by nature, but the systems of categorization are created by a certain culture (Wilson 2002) and society offers a framework for classification (Durkheim 1971). Moscovici (2000) argues that categorization presupposes the choice of a paradigm from the ones in our memory. Gunter (2000) discusses various studies on media effects and concludes that the meanings ex-

tracted from media content will depend critically upon the social knowledge already held by the individual, and this is in turn affected by the particular community to which that individual belongs or aspires to belong.

Raatikainen (2004) discusses the Sapir (1921)-Whorf (1956)-thesis, which declares that the language people speak has a strong impact on the thinking processes. Raatikainen argues that it is not entirely clear how strongly Sapir and Whorf intended their thesis to be taken. But he concludes that because languages are so different, they form worldviews that are very different from each other. Leino (1987) states based on the Sapir-Whorf-thesis that language guides human thought and perception of reality, but is not undisputed. Onikki (2000) refers to the Sapir-Whorf-thesis and argues that language categorizes the world and when a person grows to speak a certain language, she also gets used to that certain way of categorizing the world. But inside the same culture and language, individuals still have different ways of interpreting the world. "While grammars neutralize the difference in various experiences, cognition and memory bring differences even to common experiences." (Sperber & Wilson 1986, 16).

The words used in tabloid headlines may be based on collective meanings, but each individual will place them in the framework of her mental constructions and individual meanings. Some times these meanings may share a lot of common cultural ground, but other times the interpretations will be very individual based on experiences and other unique incidents that have affected the meanings.

### 2.1.2 Narratives

Narratives need to be discussed in relation to language and also memory. Personal experiences are often remembered through narratives. Gee (1991, 3) states that "any event is contingent on a narrative, and any single narrative is contingent on a wider set of narratives." Polkinghorne (1988) refers to narrative as one of the operations of the realm of meaning. Tabloid headlines evoke narratives in relation to an incident that is a story or part of a story, for example. A headline on cancer may evoke memories of a relative who had cancer. These memories could come to mind in the form of thinking of the occasions (stories) when one met the relative when she was suffering from cancer. McCabe (1991) argues that the existence of an experience may be dependent on whether there are narratives of this experience. McAdams and Pals (2006) place self-defining life-narratives among the big five principles for an integrative science of the whole person. Scheibe (1986) states that in order to construct and maintain satisfactory life stories people require adventure. Tabloid headlines provide cues for constructing adventures: IL 15.04.2013: "A patient stabbed the nurse in the neck with a knife. The passer-by who intervened tells her story"; IS 12.04.2013: "Did someone kill Sanna? She disappeared on her way to work at the garrison."

Tabloid headlines offer pathways for the creation of narratives. Individuals need to feel that they are meaningful contributors in a culture (Becker 1971). In order to accomplish this, life stories can be constructed based on the clues

offered by tabloid headlines. Psychological growth, development, coping, and well-being are influenced by a meaningful narrative that integrates life experiences (McAdams & Pals 2006). Donohew, Finn, and Christ (1988) argue that there was significantly more arousal generated in news stories written in narrative style when compared to a more traditional inverted-pyramid newspaper style (most important news first and the following in order of diminishing importance). Narratives help in keeping things in memory (Mandler 1984, Bruner 1990). Dunlop, Wakefield, and Kashima (2008) argue that narrative is a particularly effective means of triggering self-referent emotional responses. Social lives and psyches are shaped by narratives (Berger 2005). They are representations and the human mind decides what to include and exclude in narrativization (Kohler Riessman 1993).

Bruner (1986) discusses Gordon Mill's (1976) book called *Hamlet's Castle*. It includes the following account of a visit to Kronberg (Denmark) castle: "Isn't it strange how this castle changes as soon as one imagines that Hamlet lived here. As scientists we believe that a castle consists only of stones, and admire the way the architect put them together. The stone, the green roof with its patina, the woodcarvings in the church, constitute the whole castle. None of this should be changed by the fact that Hamlet lived here, and yet it is changed completely. Suddenly the walls and the ramparts speak a different language. The courtyard becomes an entire world, a dark corner reminds us of the darkness of the human soul, we hear Hamlet's "To be or not to be"" (Bruner 1986, 45-46) This account expresses well the way humans use imagination, based on stories they have read or heard and how this changes the meaning of things, places, and events. This contributes to the forming of mental representations.

Different things trigger different responses in different people. In order to make sense of their lives, people construct stories (McAdams 2012). Schemas are constructed to help minimize the processing energy needed to understand narratives (Raney 2004). It will be argued that people prefer minimizing processing energy when interpreting information, with the help of narratives or by other means. Robinson and Hawpe (1986) argue that narrative thinking is a type of causal thinking. People are eager to draw causal relationships of issues to make sense of the world and the forming of narratives help.

Narratives are one way to enrich perception. The narratives evoked by tabloid headlines can transform the interpretation process into personalized stories.

### **2.1.3 Fear of Death and Uncertainty**

According to Berger and Luckman (1966) death is a most terrifying threat against the taken-for-granted realities of everyday life. Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg (2003) discuss research findings according to which mortality salience effects occur when thoughts of death are highly accessible, but not explicitly conscious. This will be argued as being a common case scenario when reading tabloid headlines. Goldschmidt (2006) writes that as remarkable as the

human ability to use logic is, the human ability to suppress and distort information is even more so and continues that a great deal of culture is devoted to manipulating information and sentiments in the hope that people can face up to reality without being defeated by it. Cultural values and beliefs provide protection against existential fear (Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg 2003). "Consciousness is not an unmixed blessing but comes with great cost and makes humans aware of the inevitability of their own death." Goldschmidt (2006, 43). James (1922) notes that immortality is one of man's great spiritual needs.

Becker (1998) has examined disruption in American life. She states that continuity is an illusion. But continuity is used to organize life. Becker claims that this is true especially in a culture like the United States where order and predictability are supposed to reign. Continuity protects from chaos. According to Hofstede (1989) Finns avoid uncertainty more than the US citizens do (for comparison, see [geert-hofstede.com/finland.html](http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html)). Stereotypes, categorizations, and causal relations are needed in order to restore meaning and fight chaos that can be created by tabloid headlines. Culture is used to maintain order in the human mind and cultural resources are used in order to make sense in the face of disruptions (Becker 1998).

Lotman (1988) argues that predictability does not exist; future cannot be predicted even by the abundance of ideas. This means allowing for randomness and unpredictable things, which do not tend to be favored among people. Life may seem too vulnerable if it cannot be predicted in some way. Tabloid headlines use negativity a lot. They employ headings that inflict fear. They exploit issues that create chaos in order to draw attention. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) suggest that a feeling of disconnection may result from sporadic news. If the issues in tabloid headlines are not looked into more from either the tabloids or from some other form of media, they may add to the feelings of discontinuity.

## 2.2 Mental Representations and Appraisal

Human functioning is based on mental representations. Meanings are processed and constructed and acted upon based on representations (Kamppinen 2009). The construction of personal meanings represents the key issue in the interpretation process of tabloid headlines. Saariluoma (2003) states that the process of forming mental representations (apperception) is affected by perceptions, emotions, and memory. Mental representations are formed by mental contents that constitute the informational contents of these representations (e.g. beliefs, perceptions, memories) (Saariluoma 2012). Markman (1999) uses mental representations to characterize the formats that are used for the information that makes up mental life. The mental contents of the mind have two processes, the cognitive and the emotional. Appraisal connects these processes. Mischel (2004) discusses the cognitive-affective processing system (CAPS) according to

which the personality system contains mental representations whose activation leads to the behavioral consistencies that characterize the person. According to Mischel these representations consist of cognitive-affective units (CAU) such as the person's construal and representations of the self, people, situations, enduring goals, expectations-beliefs, feelings states, and memories. The consciousness and intentionality are attributes of mental contents (Saariluoma 2012). Consciousness is always intentional (Berger & Luckmann 1966, Saariluoma 2012).

Mental states must be the consequences of mental processes (Fodor 1976). The interpretation of emotions (appraisal) forms a vital part of them. Therefore, it is important to understand the stimuli that give rise to emotions. Various processes come into play in the individual interpretation of the stimuli and their impact is very subjective and susceptible to situational constraints that enter into play. As Heidegger (1988) argues, being is always being of beings and accordingly becomes accessible at first only starting with some being. But while acknowledging the complexity of the area, it is important to understand the possible effects that stimuli may have in order to comprehend human behaviour. While claims for e.g. the so called marketing forces governing economies are sometimes put forward and offered as explanation for the world being as it is, it should be noted that all behaviour, of anyone, comes down to individual human functioning. The understanding of it forms basis of the understanding of all behaviour. The behaviour of organizations can be traced down to human behaviour, be it individual or collective.

In the understanding of human behaviour, one needs to take into consideration the impact of things that are not conscious. "It is essential for models of social judgment, memory, and behavior to include an account of the preconscious mechanisms that transform sensory data into the stuff that conscious experiences and judgments are made of" (Bargh 1989, 35). With reference to deviant behavior, Freud (Epstein 1994) introduced a dual theory of information processing making it possible to understand the pervasive irrationality of human beings as a natural outcome of the properties of the unconscious mind. Freud (1981b) argues that large portions of the ego and super-ego can remain unconscious and are normally unconscious. Epstein (1994) discusses two parallel interacting modes of information processing (two minds): a rational system and an emotionally driven experiential system integrating them into a global theory of personality: cognitive-experiential self-theory (CEST). He states that "failing to understand the operation of the experiential mind and its influence on the rational mind, try as we may to be rational, our rationality will be undermined by our inherently experiential nature" (Epstein 1994, 721). The dual-process theories of information processing place a central role to affect (Slovic, Peters, MacGregor & Finucane 2005).

Dividing the processing of information into two processes facilitates the analysis of the way the mind works and the interpretation of e.g. heuristics and biases. The two systems of the mind include theories that divide cognition into two different, but interdependent systems (Ronkainen 2011). These can be referred to also as two forms of thinking (Kahneman 2012). Kahneman (2012) uses



system one and system two to describe them. These terms were first proposed by psychologists Keith Stanovich and Richard West. These two systems have fairly different functions and different strengths and weaknesses (West, Meserve & Stanovich 2012). System one operates automatically and does not require a lot of input and conscious control. System two is slow and requires mental effort. System one is characterized by the autonomy of its processes, stimulus triggers action. One of the most critical functions of system two is to be able to bypass system one processes, if needed. This may be required if those processes are irrational in view of the situation at hand (West, Meserve & Stanovich 2012). Stanovich (2011) divides system two further into two parts: the algorithmic mind, which is the traditional intelligence measured by tests, and rationality.

Kahneman (2012) concludes that people identify themselves with system two, which makes choices and decides what to think and do. System one includes impressions and emotions, which are the main sources of beliefs and decisions made by system two. System one produces complex thinking models, but system two which operates slowly, builds these thoughts into an organized sequence of events. Timothy Wilson (2002) discusses the adaptive unconscious. Kahneman (2012) refers to Wilson's book *Strangers to Ourselves* (2002) and concludes that the adaptive unconscious (system one) may guide most of the things people do although people very seldom seem to get any glimpse of it. Bargh (1989, 40) argues that it is possible to have an illusion of full control, because "the actual formation of a judgment or decision is intended and controllable, although the inputs and influences largely may not be."

Slovic, Peters, Finucane and MacGregor (2005) have studied risks and decision making processes. According to their findings, one of the most important traits that characterizes our experience system is its affective basis. It is faster, easier, and more effective to rely on emotions and affect. Information processing requires effort (Sperber & Wilson 1986). Tabloid headlines are seen in various situations, how much effort is put into the processing of the information they convey?

With reference to the unconscious, it is necessary to discuss briefly the matter of intuition. Intuition is developed through experiences, when something old is recognized from a novel situation. Haidt (2003) emphasizes that the use of intuition is suspect to a lot of flexibility, modification, and sensibility to reaction to new information and circumstances. Haidt (2001) discusses moral judgment and presents a social intuitionist approach. According to this approach, moral judgment is based upon fast, automatic evaluations, intuition. This model highlights the meaning of social and cultural aspects compared to individual evaluation (Haidt 2001).

The theories on the two systems of the mind offer a good way to illustrate the functioning of the mind, the way mental representations and mental contents of the mind work at a conscious and unconscious level and the emphasis placed on emotions. People place a lot of validity on their subjective experiences (Bargh 1989). Apperception is different in different situations and illustrating

the process by systems one and two make it easier to grasp the difference between for example instant forming of mental representations and the possible changes in them after some consideration. It is important to note that when discussing thinking processes (the working of the mind), their contents can and do change. What is appraised in a certain way at one moment may be seen differently the next (Saariluoma 2001).

Hofstadter (2007, 256) writes about a friend of his telling him about a scenic trip he had taken and describing it to Hofstadter in such a vivid detail that a few years later Hofstadter thought he had been on that trip himself not remembering the friend having to do anything with the trip. One day this trip had come up in a conversation, and both had insisted being on it. Hofstadter concludes that the difference between actual, personal memories and pseudo memories may be very little. "Memory deceives, regardless whether it is empirical or phenomenological memory" (Husserl 2006, 57). Beliefs, or memories, can be based on real life situations, but the situations do not need to be actual personal experiences. They can be stories told by someone or read from somewhere, or even vivid dreams. Time has converted them into memories. The truthfulness or accuracy of the event or person may have been simplified or coloured, decorated with things that memory sees "fit". Henkel and Mather (2007) discuss the strong influence on memory reconstruction that goals and beliefs at the time of memory retrieval have and that post-event information can have an effect on the accuracy of what is remembered. Dennett (1997) argues that the contents of the mind become conscious by winning the battle against other contents of the mind and getting thus a chance to have a long lasting impact. Ecker, Lewandowsky, and Tang (2010) and Lewandowsky, Ecker, Seifert, Schwarz, and Cook (2012) discuss misinformation effects. The issues that are not accurate (misinformation) may be retrieved from the memory first on an automatic basis and the accurate information contained in memory as well will not be used.

The brain and peripheral nervous system form an essential basis for mental representations and the mental contents of the mind (Saariluoma 2012). This is the underlying argument for the functioning of the mind discussed in this research, but the composition and structure of the neural basis will not be explored further in this research. "What we learn from personal experience, or the models we choose to emulate from the range of models available, depends on our genetic constitution as well as from our unique experiences" (Zuckerman 1988, 189).

The instances in which people see tabloid headlines, in shop windows when passing by on the street, when queuing at the cashier, are usually situations where people do not employ a lot of energy in the conscious mental processing of the headings, unless their content in some way requires more effort be put into the process. The appraisal processes elicited by tabloid headlines may even be quite automatic eliciting emotions that are encoded in the personal or collective meanings evoked by the headings. It depends on the issues on the

headlines how these meanings will represent themselves and which other issues are or will be seen as interconnected.

### 2.3 Appraisal and Emotions

"Every emotion does signal the "me" I put into seeing "you"" (Hochschild 2003, 29-30). Ellsworth and Scherer (2003) state in the *Handbook of Affective Sciences* that Magda Arnold (1960) first used the term appraisal in the sense of direct, immediate, and intuitive evaluations to account for qualitative distinctions among emotions. There has been some controversy about the nature of emotions with regard to appraisals. According to Scherer (1999, 637) "a central tenet of appraisal theory is the claim that emotions are elicited and differentiated on the basis of a person's subjective evaluation or appraisal of the personal significance of a situation, object, or event on a number of dimensions or criteria." Lazarus and Lazarus (1994) describe appraisal as the heart of the emotion process and Frijda (1993) states that emotions involve a process of appraisal in all instances. Ellsworth and Scherer (2003) claim that if appraisals are viewed as components of emotion, this view dissolves the dichotomy between cognition and emotion (passion and reason). "As soon as the initial appraisal is made, the organism is in a sense "emotional", compared to what it was before" (Ellsworth & Scherer 2003, 575).

Manstead and Fischer (2001) discuss social appraisal and by that mean the appraisal of the reactions of other people to the emotional event and argue that they can have an influence on the emotional experience itself in addition to the effect they have on the overt expressing of emotions. While in the issues concerning the study of tabloid headlines, the impact of overtly expressing emotions and other social influences are of considerable importance, this research will include the many aspects of social appraisal in the term appraisal tout court. The issues taken up with reference to social appraisal are important, and a part of them will be discussed under the label of feeling rules (Chapter 2.4).

Appraisal processes guide emotional reactions to external and internal events or conditions (Müller & Kappas 2011). Emotions affect and colour the ways of experiencing the world through emotional states. They are important sources of information when interpreting events and the world in general. If an affective state has no obvious object, its cause may be misattributed to substitute objects (Clore & Gasper 2000). In the case of tabloid headlines this could mean attributing one's affective state to something else than the headline, if headlines are deemed not to be important enough to cause effects ("I could' t be bothered by those headlines!" (Comment made by a participant in the interviews of Study Five)) What triggers the imagination can vary much from person to person. The objects and events represented in the mind are tagged to varying degrees with affect (Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, & Johnson 2000). Hofstadter (2007, 231) assesses in relation to a picture of his late father: "For us, that

photo is not just a physical object with mass, size, color, and so forth; it is a pattern imbued with fantastic triggering-power."

The salience of positively toned memories may be increased by a "cognitive loop" that is promoted by positive affect (Moore & Isen 1990, 14). Moore and Isen (1990) also claim that happy people give more favourable evaluations on the performance of their cars, for example. Kahneman (2012) notes that having a good mood leads to cognitive ease, which in turn makes people less vigilant and more prone to logical errors. Merton (1966, 421-436) discusses the self-fulfilling prophecies and the Thomas theorem that states: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" and argues that men do not respond only to the objective features of a situation, but to the meaning this situation has for them.

Emotions are above all psychological although they have many characteristics, some behavioral and others physiological (Lazarus 1991). People may not be aware of their emotions, and decision-making processes can be veiled in rational reasoning although a more trustworthy explanation could be found from the emotion preceding or following the decision. For the sake of understanding the appraisal of tabloid headlines, the question of whether cognition precedes emotions or vice versa, is not an essential one. Scherer (1999) claims that a substantial part of the appraisal processes occurs in an unconscious fashion and Frijda (1993) writes that the fact that cognitive processes involved in appraisal are nonconscious is a core supposition of appraisal theory. Individuals do not know the contents of the unconscious parts of the ego and super-ego and making them conscious requires an expenditure of effort (Freud 1981b). According to Lazarus and Lazarus (1994) emotions depend on appraisal.

One of the major determinants of emotion are beliefs (Frijda, Manstead, & Bem 2000). Beliefs result from hopes, goals, and desires (Sunstein 2009). Lazarus (1991) claims that an encounter with the environment may be appraised as harmful or beneficial, hence emotion generating, without the person being aware of the operative motivational and cognitive agendas or of the environmental influences that have contributed to the appraisal. Emotions are useful in decision-making and have naturally developed into being so (Kirman, Livet, & Teschl 2010). Relying on emotion is faster and easier (Slovic, Peters, Finucane, & MacGregor 2005 and Epstein 1994). Kahneman (2012) states that many people find cognitive effort at least somewhat unpleasant, they rely on intuition, and are overconfident in order to avoid making the effort. Moscovici (2000) defines the ordinary person as a cognitive miser. Heuristic processing of information may be the preferred mode of processing in issues that are seen as not important enough to be taken under careful consideration (Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly 1989). This could be argued to be the case with regard to issues posted on the tabloid headlines. Judgments of risk and benefit are guided and limited by affect (Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, & Johnson 2000). Doan (2012) argues that everyday moods have impact on many social and psychological phenomena. Priming guides people in various ways (Kahneman 2012). Media acts as a prime

(Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Dillman Carpentier 2002), but the resulting mood may not be seen as a consequence of reading a tabloid headline.

Dunlop, Wakefield, and Kashima (2008) discuss the understanding of emotional reactions to public health advertisement (mass media messages). They distinguish between three classes of emotions differentiated by the referent of the emotion. The first category is the immediate response to the message itself (message-referent emotional response). The second class is plot-referent messages, i.e. emotions experienced in relation to a character or situation. The third class is self-referent emotions. They argue that the first two classes are driven by stimuli that are a property of the advertisement, either the message itself or the plot. The third includes emotions that are triggered by thoughts about one's life and self that are stimulated by the advertisement. Message- and plot-referent emotions may also trigger self-referent emotions. Self-referent emotional responses are proposed to be unique in that they directly influence the individual, through increasing perceived risk and facilitating learning for future behaviour. Individuals extract meaning from media content selectively and often in accordance with subjective perceptions of what are being identified to be of personal relevance or significance (Gunter 2000). Others, objects, and environments constitute the ecology of the self (Hormuth 1990). According to the ecology of the self, social experience develops a person's understanding of the self through self-related cognitions. Tabloid headlines are representations of social experiences. They may evoke self-related thoughts (self-referent emotions) in various forms (headlines about matters that affect directly or vicariously). Raskin (2002) argues that human meaning making processes are in the attention of constructivism. Meanings can be constructed on the basis of tabloid headlines. The construction of personal meaning is the key issue.

The juxtaposition of rationality and emotions (intuition) is still emphasized quite much. Kirman, Livet and Teschl (2010, 218) conclude their article by stating that admitting rationality and emotions as inextricably interlinked would be best even for the most conservative segregation advocate. Lazarus (1991) argues that there is no appropriate sense in which emotion and reason are opposed to each other. "The flavor of social behavior is determined by an interpretative process within which affect and cognition are effectively inseparable" (Norem & Cantor 1990, 59). Damasio (2006) argues that the brain systems required by feelings, reason, and those that regulate the body are all meshed together. Sypher and Higgins claim (1988, 7) that cognition and affect "are interrelated phenomena separated only for purposes of conceptual analysis." Emotions could be said to "act" in rational ways, by choosing to experience, or at least publicly show, the emotion that is guided by feeling rules and could be said to represent the emotion "required" by society or at least by the situation at hand.

The appraisal processes guide reactions to tabloid headlines. The emotional and cognitive components are evaluated and meanings will be derived.

### 2.3.1 Classification of Emotions

There are various ways of classifying emotions. According to many appraisal theorists, emotions are elicited and differentiated on the basis of a person's subjective evaluation or appraisal of the personal significance of a situation, object, or event on a number of dimensions or criteria (Scherer 1999). Frijda (1986) lists that events, situations, and objects may possess intrinsic attractiveness or averseness, that is positive or negative valence. Human beings usually classify emotions as positive or negative. The values people hold, the assessment of the situation, the interpretation of things, will stipulate the feelings into the categories of "good" and "bad". According to Lazarus (1991) a positive (negative) emotion will be elicited by the evaluation that the person-environment relationship caused by the emotion is beneficial (harmful). Colombetti (2005) claims that calling an emotion positive or negative simplifies the normal level of complexity and Lazarus (2003) discusses the approach of assigning an emotion automatically to either positive or negative valence describing it as over simple. He refers to it as the emotion valence problem. This also reflects the challenges in perception. When a person is in a good mood, she may interpret events differently than when being in a bad mood (Lazarus 1991).

While agreeing with these assessments and acknowledging the problems in classifying emotions, some form of classification needed to be adopted for the sake of illustrating the process of emotion elicitation with regard to tabloid headlines. Figure 2 offers a tool for this classification. Its origin is the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, PANAS that was developed by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988) for measuring the two primary dimensions of mood, Positive and Negative Affect. Watson and Clark (1994, updated 1999) later published the PANAS-X manual for the expanded form of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule providing for mood measurement at two different levels. The higher level reflects the valence of the mood descriptors (negative or positive states) and the lower level reflects their specific content (the distinctive qualities of the individual affects) (Watson & Clark 1999). Watson, Wiese, Vaidya, and Tellegen (1999) pointed out that Positive Affect and Negative Affect are predominantly defined by the activation of positively and negatively valenced affects respectively. It has been argued that the positive affect and negative affect should be renamed positive activation and negative activation (Crawford & Henry 2004).

Watson, Clark and Tellegen selected terms that were relatively pure markers of either positive or negative affect (1988). Watson and Clarke (1999) developed the expanded version, which is illustrated in Figure 2 and with its larger scale of emotions was better to illustrate the emotions the tabloid headlines evoked in participants and was therefore chosen for this research.

**General Dimension Scales**

- Negative Affect: (10) afraid, scared, nervous, jittery, irritable, hostile, guilty, ashamed, upset, distressed  
 Positive Affect: (10) active, alert, attentive, determined, enthusiastic, excited, inspired, interested, proud, strong

**Basic Negative Emotion Scales**

- Fear: (6) afraid, scared, frightened, nervous, jittery, shaky  
 Hostility: (6) angry, hostile, irritable, scornful, disgusted, loathing  
 Guilt: (6) guilty, ashamed, blameworthy, angry at self, disgusted with self, dissatisfied with self  
 Sadness: (5) sad, blue, downhearted, alone, lonely

**Basic Positive Emotion Scales**

- Joviality: (8) happy, joyful, delighted, cheerful, excited, enthusiastic, lively, energetic  
 Self-Assurance: (6) proud, strong, confident, bold, daring, fearless  
 Attentiveness: (4) alert, attentive, concentrating, determined

**Other Affective States**

- Shyness: (4) shy, bashful, sheepish, timid  
 Fatigue: (4) sleepy, tired, sluggish, drowsy  
 Serenity: (3) calm, relaxed, at ease  
 Surprise: (3) amazed, surprised, astonished

Note: The number of terms comprising each scale is shown in parentheses.

FIGURE 2 Item Composition of the PANAS-X Scales (Watson and Clarke 1999, 2)

Charland (2005) discusses emotion science and valence and distinguishes affect valence and emotion valence. He states that affect valence is a property of individual conscious emotional feelings and emotion valence is a property of individual whole emotions. Colombetti (2005) discusses the appraisal of valence and argues that there is no agreement on what makes an evaluation positive or negative and that it seems too simple to reduce appraisals in an emotion to a single evaluative dimension. Lazarus (2003) discusses the methodological and conceptual problems of the positive psychology movement arguing that assigning an emotion automatically into one of the two valences, positive or negative, oversimplifies the issue.

This research could not agree more with this statement. This is why in Study Five of this thesis, the interviews B and C were carried out in a slightly different way than Interview A in order to better understand the meaning of the emotions to each participant. A person might experience happiness in relation to somebody else's misery while another person will feel compassion and sorrow. These are results of the personal significance and social context. In Study Five emotions are classified as positive and negative according to what were the emotions evoked in the participants. The same headline might elicit feelings of sadness in one participant while the other would remain calm.

Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold, and Viehoff (2008) discuss the human ability to have emotions about emotions. They argue drawing on appraisal theories of emotion that meta-emotion is a process that monitors and appraises emotions and recruits affective responses toward them, which results in a motivation to maintain and approach emotions, or to control and avoid them. Emotion valence as used in Study Five, is a related issue to meta-emotion. Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold, and Viehoff (2008) discuss the view according to which the emotion process is exactly the same in primary emotion and in meta-emotion, and only the object of appraisal differs: appraisal of environmental events or media events evokes primary emotions, whereas appraisal of one's own emotions incites meta-emotions. The emotions may then be altered with regard to considering the source of the emotion, the tabloid headline. Elster (1999) uses the term meta-emotion to describe the possibly new emotions that result from an emotion becoming conscious and the following cognition leading to this new emotion, or meta-emotion. Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold, and Viehoff (2008) have discussed the role of emotions in guiding selective media use. The fact that tabloids can be so widely perceived by everyone who can read, makes the selection possible only at a later stage with regard to the buying of the newspaper or visiting the tabloid's internet pages. The exaggeration may be used as defence mechanism and the related meta-emotion could result from this.

### 2.3.2 Implications of Dealing with Emotions

Since emotions form an integral part of human life, they play an important role in many processes and have various implications. According to Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey and Palfai (1995) handling emotions in a self-conscious and self-controlled way is associated with positive outcomes such as psychological well-being, social competence, and health. The selection of specific messages for consumption could serve the regulation and altering of mood states (Zillman 1988). The reading of tabloid headlines is not always a sought after experience, but something that will "just" take place when queuing to get to the cashier at a supermarket because the headlines easily strike the eye. Depending on the issues in the headlines, the time and place may not be ideal for self-conscious and self-controlled ways of dealing with emotion.

Epstein (1994) claims that when people are emotionally aroused they think in a manner that is categorical, personal, concrete, unreflective, and action oriented. Heuristic media processing mediated the effects of affect message acceptance in contrast to using systematic message processing (Dillard, Plotnick, Godbold, Freimuth, & Edgar 1996). Attention and recall are altered by affect (Moore & Isen 1990). Baumgartner and Wirth (2012) state that news content that elicits affective states is remembered better than neutral news content. Tabloid headlines use individual accounts in relation to catastrophes and accidents. Media often offers emotional accounts of concerned individuals instead of critical analyses of events (Pantti 2011). "By personalizing the impact of remote forces and providing potent points of identification, human interest stories in-



vite readers to see themselves as members of an extended community of "ordinary" people that transcends geography, class, and party" (Murdock, Petts, & Horlick-Jones 2003, 167). Crimes that have a victim receive a lot of attention. Scherer claims (2001) that systematic analysis of events has been replaced by highly emotionalized interviews with concerned individuals.

Dunlop, Wakefield, and Kashima (2008) propose that the distinction between self-referent and other kinds of emotional responses has important implications for subsequent outcomes and should therefore be included in evaluations of advertisement effects. They suggest that it is important to ask viewers what their emotions are about – the message and its images, the plot or characters, or their self. When tabloid headlines are analysed as advertisements, this same issue can be related to them.

Holbert and Hansen (2008) argue that the study of message-induced emotion should not focus solely on the study of emotion that is sparked, but also on emotion that is suppressed. With time, the source of information may fade and things read from tabloid headlines may be converted to the recollection of reading from somewhere. Dillard and Nabi (2006) argue that coping styles impact the perception of information. The way the information is processed will affect the appraisal of it and lead to the resulting emotions.

Oldham (2010) argues that in today's world stress is abundant and for those people who have risk factors for depression, anxiety, or other psychiatric conditions, it is easy to be succumbed by negativity. Weary (1990) states that depressive are more sensitive to and gather more social information in order to try to assuage their feelings of uncertainty. Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death in the United States and most developed Western Countries, also in patients with mental illness (Newcomer & Hennekens 2007). Studies provide clear and convincing evidence that psychosocial factors contribute to the pathogenesis and expression of coronary heart disease (Jovanović, Jakovljević, Paunović, & Grubor 2006). Williams, Kunik, Springer, and Graham (2013) argue that depression, anxiety, social isolation, hostility, and drug and alcohol abuse have a relationship with the development of heart disease. McEwen (2011) argues that stress being a condition of the mind is a factor in the expression of disease that differs among individuals and reflects not only major life events, but also the conflicts and pressures of daily life that elevate psychological systems so as to cause stress burden. Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, and Lazarus (1981) state that in predicting adaptation outcomes the assessment of daily hassles and uplifts may be a better approach than life events approach. The reading of tabloid headlines is one of the daily occurrences that causes emotions. Elster (1999) notes that even while emotions may be transient, they may cause physiological changes that may have durable effects, such as worse prognoses for cancer, hypertension, and coronary heart disease.

But not all the so-called negative issues induce negative emotions. Positive affect may result from tragic, violent or sad things. They can serve coping, venting, or feeling uplifted processes and entertainment plays an important role in the quest for positive affect (Oliver & Woolley 2011). The selecting of appropri-

ate forms of entertaining stimulation is used to manage moods (Zillman 1988). Tragic things happening to other people may make own life seem more tolerable. Enjoying a movie with no happy ending may offer gratifying emotions of sadness. Also, the context will affect. Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold, and Viehoff (2008) state that when watching the film *Casablanca* (USA 1942) feeling sad is a rewarding experience to many people. But usually the same is not true when losing love in one's own life. Tragic or sad entertainment may serve therapeutic functions. Frightening and distressing content may be chosen as entertainment (Cantor 2011). Entertainment can soothe, calm, and excite (Zillmann & Bryant 1986). The so-called negative emotions may be boosters of positive action. Envy can lead to more effort being put on work related issues in order to obtain a better status or salary. Anger can help to stand for oneself. Becker (1971) argues that anger is an alternative to fading away. The employment of anger may be a method of survival. But envy can be destructive (Elster 1999) and anger lead to one-sidedness.

Kramera, Guillory, and Hancock (2014) manipulated the extent to which people were exposed to emotional expressions in the News Feed of their Facebook and tested whether this led people to post content that was consistent with the exposure, similar verbal expressions. The results showed emotional contagion. When the positive content was reduced in the News Feed, a larger percentage of words in people's status updates were negative. When negativity was reduced, the opposite occurred. Although this study was made in Facebook, it gives reason to argue that when people are exposed to negativity/positivity, this can affect their way of experiencing the world and resulting behaviour. People's emotions are transmitted via mass communications (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson 1994). Baumgartner and Wirth (2012) discuss findings that show moods elicited by news messages being carried over to subsequent news items and influencing processing in a mood-congruent way. They claim the effects found were not based on differences in length of exposure. Yamashita, Joutaki, and Takahashi (2013) analysed the relationship between headlines in the news and stock market in Japan. According to the analysis, there was a significant relationship between the stock index return change and the negative (positive) news classified by keywords.

Konijn and ten Holt (2011) argue that without emotions, there would be no media effects. "Emotions matter because if we did not have them nothing else would matter" (Elster 1999, 403). Although science is still not ready to answer all questions concerning human emotions, understanding the psychology behind tabloid headlines is hopefully one step further into the understanding of emotions. "From the time of my first contact with psychology, I was sure that we would not understand people unless we understood their emotions" (Lazarus 1991, 3).

The self-reference of emotions could be the defining factor when analyzing the effect of tabloid headlines on emotions. Emotions are most likely always elicited, but if they have no personal meaning, reference, their impact will remain very small.

## 2.4 Feeling Rules (Emotion Norms)

Each culture has a certain amount of common cultural and social understanding, shared values and views and so called feeling rules that determine behavior with regard to which emotions can be overtly expressed and which cannot. Wilson (2002) states that the human consciousness is quite sensitive to the personal and cultural norms about which emotions are most suited to which circumstances. For example, parents should love their children and vice versa. Wilson (2002, 118) illustrates his point with the help of Mary Kierstead's novel. In the novel two adult cousins, Blake and Kate, discuss their childhood and their pony called Topper. Blake tells that it was not till he was thirty that he realized having always hated this pony. The pony had been mean, spoiled, had bit and trampled. Kate notes that now that Blake brought the subject up, she had not liked the pony either. But as twelve-year-olds they would have both stated loving their pony since that is what children are supposed to do. As grown-ups they were convinced never having really loved the pony at all. A person may be wrong even when quite honestly stating her feelings. Feeling rules guide the expressing of an emotion and also the experiencing of it through the adaptive unconscious (Wilson 2002).

According to Hochschild (2003) people evaluate their emotions according to standards. These evaluations are secondary reactions to emotions. The existence of feeling rules may be deduced from these secondary reactions. Hochschild (2003) continues that feeling rules are culturally scaled "traffic regulations" and they do not contain any universal or objective moral truths, but they define a person's inner world. They are not always obeyed, but disobedience may cause guilt. Kuran (1997) discusses preference falsification when one's own wantings are misrepresented under perceived social pressures.

Hochschild (2003, 260) illustrates the idea of feeling rules with the help of a cartoon that makes fun of mentally handicapped. The cartoon is amusing. But, at the same time the reader of the cartoon knows that jokes on mentally handicapped are no laughing matter. Instead, she ought to feel sympathy. Feeling rules define boundaries. According to Stets and Carter (2012) feeling rules or emotional norms define the direction of the emotion (positive or negative), its intensity (from strong to weak) and durability (from passing to lasting). Feeling rules are not formally codified, but they are learned and reinforced in interaction. Durkheim (1971) refers to the collective consciousness that acts upon individual consciousnesses.

Hochschild (2003) argues that Sigmund Freud (1981a & 1981b) referred to feeling rules as part of the super-ego. According to Freud the super-ego operates independently to a certain degree with its own intentions and uses its own energy, which is not dependent on the ego. The functions of the super-ego are among others self-monitoring, acting as conscience, and the maintenance of the ideal self (Freud 1981a, 458-464). Freud depicts the conscience as something that is in a person, but that has not been there from the beginning. According to him,

it is a complete opposite of sexuality that operates in a person from the start and does not develop later. Because a child is amoral, her pleasure stimulates are not constrained by any inhibitions, an outside force, the authority of parents, acts in the beginning in the way that is later transferred to the super-ego (Freud 1981a, 459).

With no deeper interference into Freud's theory on sexuality, his view on the super-ego and the development of the conscience is very interesting. It supports the conception that through interaction a person develops and gets feeling rules, or a conscience, that regulates the open experiencing and showing of emotions.

Virtanen presents in her Handbook of Modern Magic (Nykykymagian käsikirja 1988) common magical ideas and customs. She states that magic that used to be characterized as a societal, collectively regulated phenomenon has become more of a personal matter that is not easily discussed. The belief in magic seems to exist more as feelings than as clearly expressed thoughts. (Virtanen 1988) Virtanen (1988) offers an example from a Finnish study among the youth where the question "Do you believe in magic" resulted in very few positive answers. But when the same young people found a four-leaved clover, many told that they would make a wish. Kelly (1963) discusses therapeutic work and states that understanding the cultural controls is important in finding out about the cause and force of anxieties in clients. Feeling rules may be powerful determinants of behaviour.

"It is difficult to see through the smokescreen of personal and cultural feeling rules" (Wilson 2002, 129-130).

Since tabloid headlines form part of the concrete collective representations of culture, their assessment is most likely governed by feeling rules. They may be necessary in order to (publicly) express a shared opinion of headlines or they can be used to explain (to oneself) things that may seem frightening, confusing, or chaotic. Or, issues that people want to deem as trivial.

## 2.5 Personality and Contextuality

Behavior is a function of both the person and the situation (Bem and Funder 1978). Temperament is used in this research to describe the part of personality that arises from genetic endowment (Rothbart, Ahadi, & Evans 2000), but it is important to notice that also environment affects the manifestation of temperament and its underlying brain structure (Keltikangas-Järvinen 2004). A human being is in constant interaction with changing situations. In order to understand behaviour in those situations, it is important to realize how a person appraises the situation. This appraisal includes the people in the situation, the relationship one has to those people, and the expectations, goals, and competences that are activated in the situation and are in one's own control (Mischel 2004). Kelly (1963) refers to personal constructs as the dimensions of meaning used to antic-

ipate and predict behaviour. These personal constructs are important in order to understand behaviour. Text always comes to life (from the point of view of the reader) in the situation where it is read (Halliday 1978) and will be interpreted in accordance to people's personal constructs that are affected by the situation.

The situation always needs to be taken account for when evaluating and judging personality (Mischel 1968). Human judgment is always context-dependent (Schwarz 1999). The evaluation of the context sheds light on the purpose of a certain behaviour and is vital in order to solve possible ambiguities. It also helps to resolve the intended meaning of words. Words and phrases that have been taken out of context may lose their original meaning. Dor (2003) emphasizes the importance of context as a psychological construction and the meaning of comparison and memory. Emotions always have a social context (Lazarus 2003).

Wilson (2002) makes reference to Mischel's (1968) research and concludes that it shattered the domain. According to the results the correlation between personality traits and behaviour was weak, only barely better than comparing with the results of horoscope predictions. At the same time, there is a need to recognize that different people react to different situations in different ways. These reactions may largely be the result of personality traits and the personal life history with all past encounters (situations) and their consequences. Williams, Kunik, Springer, and Graham (2013) have studied veterans and state that higher scores on variables suggesting personal strength in terms of levels of responsibility, tolerance for others, a high capacity for status, sense of well-being, positive intellectual efficiency, and independent achievement were less likely to develop heart disease.

Since there is practically no way of knowing with 100% certainty the life history of any person and personality scores on various variables, it is very difficult to define whether her reaction results from certain personality traits (temperament influenced by experiences) or from situational effects. Also, it is very difficult to take into consideration all interfering factors. There can be sense in apparently irrational inferences when all the relevant information is taken into account (Jern, Chang, & Kemp 2014). Fromm (1975) argues that differences in character are ethically of the most fundamental importance. Individual behavior, ways of experiencing emotions, and ways of thinking depend largely on individual's character traits.

People react in different ways in different situations. Whether this is the result of character traits or other means of describing personality, is not relevant for this research. But the understanding that this is so, is vital to all understanding of human behaviour. A thorough describing of it needs to be conscious of all related factors. The attributional approach to the third-person effect (Perloff 2002) assumes that people attribute their own actions to situational factors, but believe that others' behavior is governed by personality dispositions. This is also known as the fundamental attribution error (Ross 1977).

Dillard and Nabi (2006) have studied persuasive messages and state that the intensity of emotional response may be partially governed by both trait-based and situation-specific variables. Bandura (2001, 293) argues that socio-structural and psychological determinants of adoptive behaviour should be treated as complementary factors in an integrated comprehensive theory of social diffusion. McAdams and Pals (2006, 212) offer a definition on personality that integrates the various sides: "Personality is an individual's unique variation on the general evolutionary design for human nature, expressed as a developing pattern of dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and integrative life stories complexly and differentially situated in culture."

Allan (1986) describes three categories of context. The setting is the spatio-temporal location of an utterance (utterance in this research refers to the tabloid headings), the world that the utterance is of (the framework for what is said), and the textual environment i.e. the text in which the utterance takes place.

Tabloid headlines can be seen in various situations at different times and it could be argued that this can have much effect on what kind of things get extracted from the headlines. When sitting in the car and waiting for a traffic light to turn green, there may not be time to read the whole headline posted on the kiosk window whereas when queuing for the cashier at a shop, there may be very little other things to do than observe the headline. The choice of words and the context into which the heading is placed will matter. Personality features will guide attention and contribute to the selective perceptions and also interpretations drawn from the headline. Identity forms an important part of personality and it is discussed more in detail in the following.

### 2.5.1 Identity

Because of the social nature of identity (Erikson 1950), it needs to be highlighted in this thesis. McAdams (2006) defines identity as the integrative level of personality that joins an individual to her community. Its construction is an interactive process between the individual and her environment (Piaget 1952, Kelly 1963, Fadjukoff 2010). Media offers identification models (Maccoby & Wilson 1957, Basil 1996, Mustonen 1997) and comparison points and has an impact on the development process of identity. Needs and personality define which messages are selected, refused and modified in order to fit them into an individual's identity. The challenge with tabloid headlines is that since they can be seen without special need to look for them, the messages in them although open for further selection process, render their first effects without warning, so to say.

Identity can be studied on group (collective) level (gender identity, national identity, social identity). When a headline states "gold" (kultaa) it usually refers to the medal won by an athlete or team. There is no need to elaborate the word further in the headline; it is based on national identity. Social identities are communicated through very common things: ways of working, talking, dressing, eating (see for example Chandler 2007). Collective identity is a social phenomenon and bears a close relationship to ethnocentrism (Lehtonen 1997).

Moscovici (1985) discusses the omnipotence that is proper to the crowd. According to him this may be acquired by many people reading the same newspaper or book. He continues by assessing that media modifies relationships between groups. Media offers possibilities for constructing social identities, but at the same time makes possible the exclusion of others from these groups.

Kaunismaa (1997) underlies the importance of myths (small and big stories, means of expression, and symbolic signs and customs), symbols, and meaningful constructions as manifestations of identity. Humans need to meaningfully understand experiences. Constructivist psychology investigates this process (Raskin 2002). Culture provides a tool for a shared recognition of meanings. Tabloid headlines offer ways for constructing and discovering meanings and connections and contribute to the building and development of identities. Tabloid headlines exploit especially collective identities. Success in sports events will bring about headlines that contribute to the construction of national identity, for example. The touching of a more personal identity construction process will depend on the personal meaning the heading has for the individual.

## 2.6 The Collective Nature of Representations

Durkheim (1971) states that man is double; he is an individual, but also a social being. The public opinion is outside, but society is also represented inside people. In addition to the individual nature of humans, people have a strong social component in them. Moscovici (2000) discusses social representations instead of collective highlighting the varied nature of collective (Durkheim 1971) representations. Social representations implicate a sort of popular opinion of issues (Karvonen 2005). In this research the term collective representations will be used, but as including the nature of social representations. Collective is used in the meaning of shared, common, not excluding the varied nature and specificity to a certain society and culture of the representations. Tarde (2010) discusses the taking of shape of currents of opinion. He argues that sharing an idea at the same time bonds people together. Tabloid headlines are means of communicating these ideas.

Habermas (1997, 105) defines public sphere as "a domain of our social life where such things as public opinion can be formed". McKee (2005) argues that in everyday discourse the "media" often substitutes the term "public sphere" since they refer to similar things. Tabloid headlines form part of the factors that affect public opinion. McKee (2005) identifies three kinds of attitudinal disagreements in relation to the public sphere: disagreement about the importance of things, disagreement about the value of things, and disagreement about the reality of things. These are all interesting issues with regard to the opinion towards tabloid headlines. Is there a general common agreement of what issues can be considered important, valuable, and real? Does the appearing of an issue on a tabloid headline render it trivial and less real?

Tabloid headlines portray issues that are of common interest, otherwise they would not appear on headlines. A retired journalist that had spent 38 years of his career working for a tabloid discussed in his opinion page comment in *Helsingin Sanomat* (Suomalaismedian uutisointiin voi luottaa 21.1.2014) the results of the recently published TSN Gallup study (yle.fi/uutiset 11.01.2014) and asked why tabloids were so easily viewed as less reliable sources of information. He stated that Finnish newspapers, including tabloids, were reliable. The reader could be deceived only once, he continued, the reader would not buy the newspaper again if the information were not accurate.

An interesting issue is the question of truthfulness. Truth may be understood from various points of view depending for example on the attitude or intentions of the teller. This relates to the question of objectivity. Who owns truth? Durkheim (1971) states that collective truth is impersonal reason and all people have something social in them, and therefore have something impersonal in them. But where does the decision of what is the correct impersonal reason come from? Issues that are in sight are easily remembered. Issues that are in sight can also be judged as important since they occupy much of the public space and cultivate notions. The various bias related to this issue are discussed in chapter 2.7.

Postman (1987, 107) refers to the old tradition to banish or kill the bearer of bad news and raises a relevant question: Is the truthfulness based on the acceptability of the publisher of the news? McLuhan (1964) emphasized the importance of the medium. What is the content of the collective representation of tabloid headlines in the Finnish society?

Tabloid headlines evoke stories and stories have different plots. Plots vary in type: tragedy, comedy, romance, and satire (White 1973). Headlines may elicit different kinds of stories in people's minds depending on their reference to the individual. They may bring about memories of actual people, things, issues related to the topic of the headlines. But they may also serve as the vicarious living of other people's lives: lives that may seem more interesting than the one being lived by the individual.

Propp (1973) analyzes the morphology of folktales and examines how the functions of the "dramatis personae" of the stories are distributed. Headlines can be analyzed in a similar manner. Tabloid headlines provoke the narratives that are individual, but based on common culture, fairy tales for example. Ojala (1997) states that there are three kinds of characters in heroic tales: heroes, criminals and victims. Apo (1986) has studied Finnish Southwestern magic tales and identifies several characters used in them: heroes, future spouses, princesses, donors, magical objects, helpers, providers of the courting assignments, competitors, and opponents of the hero.

Tabloid headlines may use all these characters. The following presents some examples of the storied nature and the use of the celebrities or main characters of incidents posted on headlines:



- IL 21.3.2013: "A member of parliament wonders: Did Heidi Hautala lie in court or to the media?"; IL 26.3.2013: "The renovation company has connections to the waistcoat gang. Hautala's male friend's villa."  
At the time Minister of International Development Heidi Hautala was much in news in 2013 and later resigned from her position. Politicians make perfect candidates for the character of the villain.
- IS 27.3.2013: "Nykänen to be coach for Olli. The cork will stay closed. Heading for Sotshi; IL: 30.3.-1.4.2013: "Love affairs get destroyed. Why can't Matti be happy?"  
The former athlete and celebrity Matti Nykänen can be said to represent one of the "eternal" characters of the tabloids. First a national hero, then more of an antihero, but one that still raises much sympathy.
- IS 12.4.2013: "Did someone kill Sanna? She disappeared on her way to work at the garrison."; IS 23.4.2013: "Spouse arrested. The police suspects. The disappeared Sanna has been killed. Neighbours: they were a peaceful couple."  
The incident of the disappearing woman makes perfect news for constructing a story. These headlines also included a picture of a fair-haired smiling Sanna ("princess" story, but with no happy ending).

Because this research studies the point of view of the reader of the headlines, the more profound nature of the analysis of tales is not discussed on theory level, but the studies and conclusions will make reference to this fairy taled nature of tabloid headlines.

Heroes (celebrities) need to be analyzed more in detail, because tabloid headlines use them so much. Virtapohja (1997) assesses heroes as those that society has given the status of hero; he/she represents the good. Karvonen (1999) writes that in today's world there are no real heroes, but celebrities that are products of the publicity machine. He continues by affirming that many celebrities feel that they are not the kind of people that the public thinks they are, and this results in feelings of guilt and embarrassment. This research argues that the definition of hero is more individual than celebrity. Celebrities are usually people brought up and reinforced by some form of media, but an individual may select her hero based on very individual criteria. Their use may originate from very individual needs in the construction or maintenance of personality; they may even be antiheroes on social level, but serve an important need for the individual. Or, they may be used to serve a more social need in the form of social or national identity building, for example. Klapp (1969, 211) has labeled three ways in which heroes can be used in relation to social structure: reinforcement, seduction, and transcendence. Heroes can be used to the vicarious fulfillment of dreams that people cannot accomplish themselves. This may also lead to some frustration since the pleasure is vicarious and its origin may also be the target of some amount of envy. This may partially account for the high numbers in sales

of tabloids when the news is about a public figure's fall from the heights to the depths. Heroes/celebrities can provide inspiration and comfort. They provide identity voyages and psychological journeys (Klapp 1969). Mass hero worship is a shared experience (Klapp 1969). It is an important contributor to community spirit (social cohesion). Klapp (1969) discusses celebrity hunger and institutions that offer places for watching celebrities (restaurants, nightclubs, and other celebrity hangouts). Tabloid headlines are one "institution" that can feed this hunger.

Durkheim (1971) discusses the negative cult, the forbidding of certain ways of acting in order to better attain the sacred. This relates to the protestant ethic (Weber 1970) and especially work ethic that is strongly rooted into the Finnish culture (Helkama 2014). This is an issue that needs to be considered when discussing the use of entertainment and celebrities in headlines and how openly people are, or are not, willing to express positive comments about celebrities or the use of entertainment. Durkheim (1971) also makes reference to the rites celebrated. If a member of the community does not perform the rite, the whole group is menaced. With regard to tabloid headlines, one form of rite Durkheim mentions is especially interesting, the *piacular*, designating the rites "celebrated by those in a state of uneasiness or sadness" (Durkheim 1971, 389). Tabloid headlines may serve various functions in the performance of this rite. Klapp (1969) sees ritual as language that enforces social cohesion. Rites are needed in order to enhance nonrational consensus. Agreement in values and many feelings related to public matters as well as thoughts are necessary for people to be able to live together and cooperate. Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) discuss the notion that mass media is a way to connect with others.

Lotman (1990) argues that only those acts that are given social meaning are relevant for a community. Social meaning can be designated by tabloid headlines. This may lead to the simplifying and categorizations according to the social codes used in the society and promoted by the tabloids. Lotman continues in stating that the individual adopts the views of society and becomes more typical. The tabloid headlines thus promote the typical notions they give to the characters in headlines offering examples of types of people in society and the qualities and defaults of those types. These types may be ones to idolize, loathe, or something in between, but they do contribute to setting examples and reinforcing or building stereotypes. Representations are used to make unfamiliar things familiar (Moscovici 2000) and the building of typologies contributes to this process. Franiuk, Seefelt, and Vandello (2008) discuss the use of rape myths in headlines as sources of myth reinforcement and how culture influences journalists. They state that the temporarily triggering of myth related thoughts occurs even after only a brief exposure to a few headlines.

## 2.7 Underlying Processes in Media Exposure

Even though this research does not take any standing to what, if anything, tabloid headlines intend to do other than advertise the actual newspaper and offer news, it is important to discuss some of the consequences the issues posted in them may lead to. These effects are not related to tabloid headlines only, but can be discussed with relation to all media exposure. Since headlines may well be the first element related to an article that a person reads, they make a case apart with regard to the guiding effect they may have on the process of interpretation of the article (Otero & Kintsch 1992, McCrudden & Schraw 2007, Surber & Schroeder 2007, and Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, & Pillai 2014). Or, with regard to tabloid headlines, the guiding of the interpretation of the issue when no article is read at all.

The agenda setting model states that media does not necessarily tell how to think, but what to think (Dearing & Rogers 1996, Mustonen 2011). McCombs and Reynolds (2002) discuss the agenda-setting role of news media as the ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. Media has strong indirect effects, such as media telling their audience what news issues are most important (Rogers 2002 and McCombs & Gilbert 1986). Tabloid headlines direct the attention of people towards certain issues. Gerbner (1977) argues in relation to the cultivation theory that a more fundamental and ultimately decisive process is what communication contributes to the meaning of all that is done, accepted or avoided. According to him, the principal effects of mass communication are in the fundamental assumptions, definitions, and premises they contain and cultivate, not necessarily in agreements or disagreements with their overt suggestions.

The issues that are taken up in the headlines may also be framed with certain things that may lead to thinking of these issues as connected. Or, things that are left out may be seen as definitive implications of something. In spring 2014 a woman and a man were arrested and accused of planning an attack against the University of Helsinki. (Mies ja nainen vangittu iskun suunnittelusta Helsingin yliopistoon 2014) In the comments in the social media following this arrest and with reference to the news coverage of the issue, one participant of the commenting noted: "The news told that these people (the accused) have Finnish citizenship. But they are not Finnish. Where are now the counterarguments of those that talk about the enriching effect of multiculturalism? The issue is discussed in secrecy most likely because it deals with foreigners." <http://www.helsinginuutiset.fi/artikkeli/284888-mies-ja-nainen-vangittu-iskun-suunnittelusta-helsingin-yliopistoon> The author of this comment had made this conclusion based on the term "Finnish citizen" that was used in media. This illustrates how easily conclusions are drawn if the right set of mind is available.

The issues taken up in media are more salient in the minds of people and people tend to judge the importance of issues by how easily they can be

brought into mind (Kahneman 2012). In a situation that involves decision-making or problem-solving people's minds should go through different kinds of information to base the decision on. However, often people tend to use only the most salient and recent information and this may lead to one-sidedness and emphasis being placed on certain factors at the expense of others (Williams & Dickinson 1993). If people evaluate probability by representativeness prior probabilities will be neglected (Tversky & Kahneman 1985a). Some instances or occurrences are easier brought to mind than others. If they are easy to imagine or recall, the heuristic of availability judge them likely or frequent (Slovic, Fischhoff and Lichtenstein 1982). Availability biases may have consequences (Taylor 1982). People's perceptions of the world are heavily influenced by mass media, risk judgments by the memorability of past events and the imagining of future events (Slovic 2000).

Mlodinow (2009, 182) argues, "Our mind is constructed in order to assimilate information, fill in gaps, and look for patterns." Causal explanations are easy to form (Nisbett and Ross 1980). Rauhala (2009) argues that the spirituality of men does not seem to tolerate gaps in its worldview. People strive to achieve a coherent interpretation of the events that surround them, and the organization of events by schemas of cause-effect relations serves to achieve this goal (Tversky and Kahneman 1985b). If events can be easily explained, there is no need for change in one's own view and perceptions of the world. People tend to look for patterns and causal relations even in situations where there is none to be found. Chandler (2007) discusses metonyms, which are "the evocation of the whole by a connection" (Chandler 2007, 130). Since tabloid headlines are short they need to use words that can elicit more and where connection can be made easily.

The spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann 1974, Kunelius 2003) illustrates the impact that mass media has on what people think that other people think. If people think that the publicly held opinion of a certain issue is contradictory to their own, they may be afraid to express their own opinion (silence). Thus the publicity will lead to the strengthening of a certain opinion (spiral) at the expense of others. If tabloid headlines post many fear inducing issues, insecurity could be drawn as conclusion. Insecurity is a social construct, a mental entity based on collective imagination, media and other sources of information (Koskela 2009). All social reality is precarious and all societies are constructions in the face of chaos (Berger & Luckmann 1966). The message system of a culture not only inform but form common images (Gerbner 1977). The images depicting reality are formed as social constructions and not only from people's own experiences (Heiskanen 2002). Pyszczynski, Solomon and Greenberg (2003) argue that subtle reminders of mortality produce more vigorous worldview defense and increased worldview defense is a result of heightened accessibility of death-related thoughts outside of conscious awareness.

Mlodinow (2009) and Wilson (2002) argue that a sense of personal control, being well informed, is integral to our self-concept and sense of self-esteem. This is in line with the explanations offered for the third person effect (Perloff

2002). People cannot think that media influences them too much since media is overwhelming and there would be too much influence. Also, things people fear in themselves, in this case the possible influence of tabloid headlines, may be projected onto others and thus distanced from themselves (Schimel, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, O'Mahen, & Arndt 2000). People may be influenced by media, but cannot consciously acknowledge it. That is why the effects of media are projected onto others.

Stewart, Pavlou, and Ward (2002, 359-360) identify five factors of consumer characteristics that influence the effectiveness of marketing communications in a particular media: (1) Attitudes toward the medium, (2) Uses of the medium, (3) Involvement while using the medium, (4) Mood states affecting media usage, and (5) Interactivity of the medium. Tabloid headlines offer no interactivity, but the other characteristics are all discussed in relation to tabloid headlines.

Hostile media perception (Hwang, Pan, and Sun 2008) or hostile media phenomenon (Vallone, Ross, & Lepper 1985) argues that individuals of opposite ideological standing perceive the same media content as being biased against their own standing. While this presents a challenge in the form of the need to know the standing (to whatever issue) of a person in order to understand her interpretations, it also is a proof that when one is familiar with some part of another's way of thinking, there is some way to predict or understand behaviour. It also helps to identify the various emotions that certain headlines may elicit.

Mutz's (1994) research analyses how much a person's way of reading newspapers, watch television and actively look for information affected the way the person interpreted news. She argues that the more for example unemployment is discussed in media, the more the individual experience becomes generalized. Mass media can make individual experiences seem part of a social trend and it can offer a possibility to find a public scapegoat for one's personal experiences (Mutz 1994). The posting of events where negative emotions are successfully resolved (others have survived similar circumstances) or minimized can aid in the reappraisal of those events (Nabi, So, & Preston 2011). Headlines also use humour. Zillman (2000) argues that humour can be used as mood repairer that enhances the so-called quality of life. Chandler (2007) argues that there are three kinds of knowledge required by interpreters of texts: knowledge of the world, knowledge of the medium and the genre, and the relationship between these two. How much knowledge is required for the exact understanding of issues posted on tabloid headlines?

Because of their availability, tabloid headlines are in a good position to exploit several of these issues. Tarde (2010) discusses the public mind and states that humans have a need to agree with the public one belongs to and that represents enormous power.

## 2.8 From Theoretical to Empirical

Each of the issues discussed in this chapter opens a new dimension into the study of tabloid headlines. The perception of reality, its manifestations via the mental representations, appraisal processes, and personality constructions form a basis for the interpretation process of tabloid headlines. The basis manifests itself in the framework of feeling rules, gathering from the collective nature of representations, and other culturally defined phenomena, and taking place in the realm of changing situations influenced by the underlying processes of media exposure. This process leads to the construction of personal meaning.

Special emphasis will be placed on the study of emotions elicited by tabloid headlines. Emotions are very subjective; the arousal of a certain emotion can be true only in the case of one participant. Still, it is a genuine human emotion. Certain types of stories elicit certain types of emotions. Some celebrities will evoke pity or disdain, others will be looked upon with proud or reverence. Certain types of issues or organizations easily bring about positive emotions, others are more prone to create impacts on the negative side.

The analysis cannot be accomplished without recourse to an empirical section that will analyse the nature of these issues and demonstrate the multifaceted structure of the study of tabloid headlines. The empirical part serves to identify the phenomena that are used in the construction of the mental model for the interpretation of tabloid headlines.

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The following discusses the methodology used in the research. First the objectives and frames are defined. Second, the terminology is described. Finally, the empirical section is introduced.

#### **3.1 Research Objectives and Frames**

This research is a user-oriented study about the effect of tabloid headlines, their appraisal, and interpretation processes. This research concentrates on tabloid headlines, but sometimes the cover of the tabloid is posted similarly available than the headline thus serving similar purposes as is the case by the cashiers in the supermarkets for example. While the cover usually contains much more information than the headline and is thus not as easily read, when people have the time to read a cover, its effects can be compared to those of the headline. Some of the pictures in this research are from the covers of tabloids. They were taken from similar places where headlines can be found. Users are seen as active participants in a reality that is analyzed by sciences (Lehtinen 2010). In order to explain media effects, there needs to be understanding about the characteristics, motivation, selectivity, and involvement of audience members (Rubin 2002). In this research, tabloid headlines are studied from the point of view of the viewer. No reference is made to what are the intentions of the maker of tabloid headlines except for the fact that the marketing of the tabloid is seen as one of headlines' functions and the observations on media effects discussed in chapter 2.6.

The main research question is: What affects the interpretation process of tabloid headlines? A conceptual framework for the interpretation of tabloid headlines is constructed in order to answer the question. Other issues discussed in more detail are the appraisal of tabloid headlines (emotions) and the purposes that the headlines serve for people.

This research will draw general conclusions on the effects of tabloid headlines, but with bearing in mind that all humans are individuals with their own

experiences and memories. A single one thing causes nothing, but all things are caused within a system of interacting factors (Diener 2003). Rauhala (2009) argues in relation with the professionalism of psychologists that the great merit of Freud was that he pointed out that the interpretations of a conception of the world need to be studied and regulated at their own psychic level of being. Psychoanalytic theory was the first modern psychological system which subject matter is the total personality of man instead of isolated aspects (Fromm 1975). Rauhala (2009, 109) states that there is not and will not be any uniformed theory that would enable to rationally in an equal manner analyse the different sides of the being of humans. "There is no one explanation of man" (Bruner 1990, 137-138). "A world-view always includes a view on life" (Heidegger 1988, 5) Dennett (1997, 61-61) presents the mind as an anticipator, a producer of expectations that are based on past experiences, use the present to find clues and cultivates these to form expectations of the future. The understanding of human behaviour does not necessarily lead to finding direct causal relationships but it enables to take into consideration the potential consequences of different stimuli. Lazarus (2003) argues that causation is given too much attention in psychology in contrast with careful description of the phenomena and processes of interest. This research describes the various effects tabloid headlines may cause and discusses their impact.

Knuutila (2010) states that people are used to thinking that science depicts reality with most precision and veracity. But, according to Knuutila, science uses complex and sophisticated tools and various ways of representation making it thoroughly instrumentally mediated. Scientific models have a medium specific and intentionally limited nature and that makes science inevitably predisposed by theoretic ideas and human artifacts, organizing of the studies and the conclusions drawn based on them (Knuutila 2010, 349-350). Scientific paradigms are based on generalizations. Participants had their own interpretations of reality. Realities are constructed of individual interpretations in a socially constructed culture. These interpretations are included in the area studied by human research (Raatikainen 2004). In order to promote scientific discussion, generalizations are needed, but they should never exclude the variations that have to be taken into consideration in the study of human behaviour. "In all social life, in fact, science rests upon opinion" (Durkheim 1971, 438).

Kahneman (2012) discusses arousal and its effects and writes that the findings of studies that deal with arousal are contradictory to people's perception that they usually see themselves as conscious and independent makers of judgments and evaluations. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) state in their article "Telling more Than We Can Know: Verbal Reports On Mental Processes" that people can seldom offer justifications for the answers they give because they have very little if at all introspective access to their higher mental processes. Their reports on these processes are not more accurate than the predictions of such processes made by observers. People still believe in their own introspection as an explanation to why they answered the question as they did.



This research argues that emotions are important and form a vital part of the appraisal processes and in the interpretation of tabloid headlines. For the sake of illustrating the human functioning it is important to characterize and describe different processes, but it should be noted that what matters in the end, is the whole experience as interpreted by the individual.

### 3.2 Terminology

According to the Handbook of Affective Sciences (Davidson, Scherer, & Goldsmith 2003) emotion refers to a relatively brief episode of coordinated brain activity, autonomic, and behavioural changes that facilitate a response to an external or internal event of significance for the organism. Feelings are the subjective representation of emotions. They can reflect any or all of the components that constitute emotion. Lazarus (1991) restricts the word feeling to the awareness of bodily sensations and emotion for occasions on which there has been an appraisal of harm or benefit. Mood refers to a diffusive affective state that is often of lower intensity than emotion, but considerably longer in duration (Davidson, Scherer, & Goldsmith 2003). Lazarus (1991) refers to moods as having to do with the larger background of one's life, which feels either troubled or trouble free, positive or negative. Doan (2012) argues that it may depend on the individual when emotion becomes a mood. People's behaviour and ways of thinking are influenced by mood states (Baumgratner & Wirth). Affect (Larson 2000) is a feeling tone that is evaluative and can be either positive or negative and comprises both mood and emotions. Affect may consist of various different emotional and mood states and is conceptualized as more global (Barlett and Gentile 2011). Lazarus (1991) refers to the use of the affect to refer to the subjective quality of an emotional experience. Emotion depends on an appraisal of personal meaning (Lazarus & Lazarus 1994, 199). In this research, the term emotion will be used in the general discussion and affect in the categorization of the first evaluation of the emotion as needed in Study Five. There is evidence that in addition to the intended emotional state evoked by a message, the message arouses other emotions as well (Dillard & Nabi 2006). This research makes no claim as to what kind of emotions are intended to be elicited by tabloid headlines. They may and do evoke several emotions.

The terms media and mass media both appear in this research. Mass media is used when there is a need to highlight the fact that the medium under discussion always has a wide audience, like tabloid headlines do. Media is a more general term that includes mass media (and tabloid headlines) and is used when a more general discussion is appropriate.

### 3.3 General Introduction to the Empirical Section

The empirical section of this research is important because it is the underlying basis for the framework that is created for the analysis of tabloid headlines. Qualitative analysis offers the building blocks for this conceptual framework. The studies are used in order to demonstrate the phenomenon. Because the interpretation of tabloid headlines is individual, the framework is built on cognitive sciences that discuss the mental representations and mental contents of the mind. Many other sciences enter into this study and the framework constructed needs to be formed in a way that can include all these sciences without losing their nature, but representing an integrative approach. Attention is called to careful analysis of argumentation

While collective representations are included and needed, the meanings derived are individual and their existence can be demonstrated with only small samples. While their impact on society may generally be of small importance, it is vital to understand that individuals form the society. Sometimes the behaviour of a single individual has tremendous consequences on society as a whole (e.g. Nobel Peace Prize Winners, perpetrators of school shootings, Green Peace activists that receive a lot of media coverage). The studying of large samples offers understanding on general scale, but may obstruct the detection of details.

This research has six studies. Before discussing the studies, there is a need to discuss the self-reporting of attitudes towards tabloid headlines used in the studies. One of the interviewees noted in a slightly embarrassed way that her brain was not really working in this kind of research situation. Schwarz (1999) argues that respondents do their best to be cooperative communicators. Although this may be nice, it may lead to conclusions that are not based on reality. Metsämuuronen (2009) notes that since people are the targets of human research reality making it interesting and challenging, it is also rendered vulnerable and sensitive. Research is always influenced by the features of the research instrument and is highly context-dependent (Schwarz 1999). The willingness of the participants to edit their private judgment (Schwarz 1999) before reporting it to the researcher is always a possibility. Frijda (1993) states that a subject may behave in a way that is in relation to a certain appraisal, but the account the participant gives may not reflect that appraisal. Emotions are subjective and self-reports are valuable in finding out about the actual emotion felt. Emotion antecedents, the appraisal processes that lead to emotion arousal, experience and response, are not well determined by self-reporting (Frijda 1993). It may even be quite useless to ask participants to define what affected their judgements, choices, and behaviour (Nisbett & Wilson 1977).

Konijn and ten Holt (2011) argue that memory seems to be influenced by emotionally laden content in media messages according to different emotions, conditions, and contexts. Careful observation was needed especially in the interview situations in order to gain a better understanding of the meaning of the answers that participants gave. Subjectivity and observer articulation enter into

the process (Adler & Adler 1994). Interviews are important in data collection, but words always have ambiguity (Fontana & Frey 1994) and observation offers a complementary possibility to check for the validity of the meanings of the words used.

Information about the knowledge structures of the processor of information is required for the understanding of the interpretation processes (Mandler 1984). Since the interpretation process of tabloid headlines consists of a potentially indefinite number of components which effect depends on the situational constraints and mood of the interpreter at the time of the reading of the tabloid headline, obtaining exact information about the knowledge structures of the interpreter proved to be very difficult. This statement could seem to render the task of interpreting human behaviour practically impossible. On the contrary, although keeping these challenges in mind is important, it is equally important to try to understand the various stimuli that influence behaviour. But this understanding does not need to lead to causal relationships that can be generalized to implicate all humans. Tabloid headlines are in sight for all who are able to read them. Creating laboratory environments in order to study their effects is a possibility, but as argued earlier, human behaviour is always dependent on the other stimuli, internal and external, that are present in the situations. Limiting their impact gives insight on the individual issue studied, but does not offer any more possibility to demonstrate direct effect-cause relationships, because those relationships will always be context dependent. "Emotional experience can be inarticulate for the very reason that it is emotional experience" (Frijda 1993, 361).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the studies, but the principal emphasis is placed on the qualitative part. This is due to the basic hypothesis of this research: human behaviour is individual. Quantitative methods need to be used in order to demonstrate issues and enable conclusions based on generalizations that are needed to demonstrate the larger impacts. But the understanding of human behaviour is based on individuality and this fact can never be excluded from the analysis.

Tabloid headlines often contain pictures in addition to words. Pictures were not analysed separately in this research, but as part of the heading and discussed when brought up by the participants.

The following presents the studies in the order that they were carried out. Some reference to the results of the studies is referred to already in the following presentation. This is due to the fact that although the general outline of studies was made following the theoretical framework, results of the studies led to some modifications in the order and construction of the subsequent studies.

It is important to remark at this point that participants of Study One to Three were university level students from the metropolitan area of Finland, and in Study Four also university students from the city of Jyväskylä. Although they are from different degree programmes, they share some common denominators such as age, education, urban way of living, etc., that may have an impact on the results. The possible generalizations can be applied to similar groups only.

In Study Five the participants consisted of both university level students from the metropolitan area of Finland and of pensioners from a small community in the Southern part of Finland. Since there was no significant difference in the answers, they were combined in all analyses. Based on this fact, it could be argued that there is a possibility to generalize the answers from the previous studies as well, but caution needs to be applied. Also, these studies serve to demonstrate the existence of the phenomenon; they are not intended to be applicable as such for the making of sweeping generalizations.

### **3.3.1 Study One**

In order to study the interpretation of tabloid headlines, it was first necessary to understand what people thought about them. The first study, Study One, was made in spring 2013. It was conducted in the form of a survey. Content analysis was used and the data was reduced. Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) argue that content analysis fails to take into account the context in which written text has meaning. The analysis sample used in this study was the smallest unity that formed a complete thought. This allowed for drawing meaning from the displayed data (Hurberman & Miles 1994). The answers were divided into 13 categories based on the content of the thought: criticality towards headlines in general, emotions related to the message itself, and "emotion free" commenting. These categories were formed based on the results of the survey.

### **3.3.2 Study Two**

Because Study One strongly suggested that the attitude towards tabloid headlines affected the way the headings in the tabloid headlines were interpreted, another study was carried out to test this hypothesis. It was conducted as a survey. The students received a questionnaire on the truthfulness of certain headlines. One group received the questionnaire with information about the fact that the headings were from tabloid headlines. The other group received no information about the origin of the headings. The purpose of the study was to analyze if the two groups' answers differed from each other. The possible difference would indicate that the knowledge of the tabloid headline origin had an effect on the answer. The qualitative data was reduced in the content analysis and the analysis sample used was the smallest answering unity that formed a complete thought.

### **3.3.3 Study Three**

Because it could be detected from the two previous studies that the exaggeration stigma placed on tabloid headlines affected their interpretation, but not to the same extent as suggested by the answers participants gave in Study One and by the study published by Kunnallisalan kehittämissäätiö (Median uutisoinnin luotettavuus 2014), a third study was carried out in the form of a survey. Since Helsingin Sanomat had been referred to as a reliable source of infor-

mation the reliability of headings was studied by giving the same headings to participants, but with different information as to where they came from. The headings were from a headline of Helsingin Sanomat, and one group received this information. Another group was given Ilta-Sanomat as source, and a third group got no information about the source of the headings. The qualitative data was reduced in the content analysis and the analysis sample used was the smallest answering unity that formed a complete thought.

### 3.3.4 Study Four

The results of Study Three did not support the notion that Helsingin Sanomat was a trustworthier source of information when assessing the reliability of headlines.

After this conclusion, it became important to test the influence of tabloid headlines per se, without “offering” for explicit possibility to comment on the truthfulness or exaggeration aspect of tabloid headlines. A study asking for short narratives was made. This was conducted in order to test if tabloid headlines had effect on issues that could be related to matters taken up in the headlines. The participants received three kinds of instructions for writing a narrative after being exposed to a headline. The purpose was to see if the issues taken up in the headlines could be detected from the stories. This is why the narrative analysis limited on the detection of the issues, not on the various elaborate forms of narrative analysis (see for example Manning & Cullum-Swan 1994).

### 3.3.5 Study Five

The results of Study Four supported the view that tabloid headlines affected people although people usually claimed they were exaggerating and lacked trust. It was necessary to study in more detail what kind of emotions were elicited by tabloid headlines. This issue had been addressed to already in Study One, but it was important to obtain more information related to specific emotions, since they form a vital part of the appraisal process.

Before Study Five could be undertaken, it was necessary to classify emotions in order to conduct a more precise analysis. The expanded form of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, PANAS-X (Watson & Clark 1999) was chosen to categorize the emotions evoked by the headlines (please see Chapter 2.3.1 for the Classification of Emotions and Figure 2 for the PANAS-X model). Thematic interviewing was used as method. Participants were asked about their opinions and emotions about headlines. Interviewing was chosen because it was seen as the best way to find out most about the real emotions felt when reading a tabloid headline. Fontana and Frey (1994, 361) argue that interviewing offers one of the most powerful ways in trying to understand human beings.

Interviewing presented some challenges since the previous studies had suggested that the exaggeration “stigma” related to headlines could be used as

justification for the answers given and it was suspected that this could also be used as an “easy” explanation for the emotion evoked by headlines. In interview situations participants may want to express their feelings according to the feeling rules, not the actual emotions felt. The standpoint of others is often included in the considerations of the self in self-reflection and self-evaluation (Manstead & Fischer 2001, 224). Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1990) argue that because of the societal cognitive bias, trying to appear logical may be seen as socially more desirable. Also, having an emotion does not mean being aware of it (Elster 1999) or being able to account for the source of the emotion (Mustonen 2001). Interviewing offered a possibility to ask specifying questions and observe the nonverbal communication of participants.

There were three sets of interviews, all comprising ten participants. In the first ten interviews (Interviews A), participants were given a complete headline and were asked about the emotions it evoked. This was found not to be an effective way although it mimicked real life headline reading situations. But the answers were difficult to classify since participants did not concentrate on one heading at the time and more questions were needed in order to classify the emotions and this was seen as harmful for the accurate interpretation of them. Asking for emotions also seemed to make participants first think of the definition of what is an emotion and second, it seemed they were also thinking if the emotion was one to mention (feeling rules). In the following 20 interviews (Interviews B and C), participants were instructed to concentrate on the main heading and asked to give two to five words that came to their mind when reading it. This method was chosen because it gave participants less possibility to alter their answers with regard to feeling rules and presented no problem as to the defining of an emotion.

The emotions evoked by headlines were divided first according to their affect valence (positive/negative activation) and second according to their emotional valence (quality of the individual affect).

The results of Study Five were in line with the previous studies with regard to the exaggeration aspect of headlines being brought up often. But if headlines were to be agreed with, the exaggeration stigma seemed to lose all importance. Headlines elicited many negative emotions; fear was present in all affect/emotional valences except for two headings.

### **3.3.6 Study Six - Expert Interviews**

Because of the importance of fear as emotion with many direct and indirect consequences, it needed to be studied with more detail. Expert interviews were carried out last to see if the fear elicited by tabloid headlines could be detected in everyday life on a more general level. Ten police officers with different roles inside the police were interviewed in order to discuss tabloid headlines and their possible effects as seen by the police. Police officers were chosen for the interviews because they were seen as the ones dealing with fear related issues in society, but not from a solely individual point of view, which might be the

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case for social workers for example. The solely individual point of view would more easily reflect other issues in a person's life.

## 4 EMPIRICAL SECTION

This chapter describes in detail the studies. Each description is followed by the introducing of the results and their discussion leading to the drawing of the conclusions.

### 4.1 Study One

#### Participants and Procedure

58 students of two undergraduate degree programmes of Laurea University of Applied Sciences in Espoo, Finland, participated in the first study. A tabloid headline was fastened on the classroom wall or board and students were given papers with a question and space for answering. The answering time was not limited and it varied between three and ten minutes.

#### Stimuli

A tabloid headline from Ilta-Sanomat of April 16, 2013 (Figure 3) was chosen for the first study. It contained four headings:

- **Ratko ristikko - voita tonni (Resolve the crosswords - win 1.000,-)**  
(smallest heading on top)
  
- **UUSI ASE SYÖPÄÄ VASTAAN - mullistava suomalaistutkimus (NEW WEAPON AGAINST CANCER - revolutionary Finnish research)** (biggest heading in the centre of the tabloid, in white against a black background, with a picture of a laboratory with two people working)



- **Päälouottamusmies opettajasta: Valitti rehtorista ennen potkuja. Koulu-  
lukohu (Chief Shop Steward of the Teacher: complained about the  
Rector before getting fired. School fuss)** (left downhandside corner  
with picture of the teacher)
- **Jo kaksi koiraa kuollut - Kuka kylvää myrkytettyjä lihapullia?** (Al-  
ready two dead dogs - who spreads poisoned meatballs?) (right down-  
handside corner)



FIGURE 3 IS Tabloid Headline April 16, 2013  
Picture by Sini Setälä

This headline was chosen because it had versatile headings: a positive one (new weapon against cancer), a potentially alarming one (already two dead dogs), and one on a current topic that had been in the headlines for a while (complained about the rector). Also it was decided to choose a headline with no celebrity because celebrities were thought to easily awake either positive or negative feelings as such.

### Questionnaire

There were three kinds of questions used where the same content was verbalized in slightly different ways. The preliminary analysis showed no systematic differences between the answers and they have been combined in all analyses. The content of the question was "What do the headings of the tabloid headline evoke and what kind of feelings do they arouse?" (Mitä lööpin otsikot tuovat mieleen ja mitä tuntemuksia ne herättävät?)

## Data Analysis

In the first phase, the data was reduced. The analysis sample was the smallest answering unit, which in some answers was a phrase, and in some a word depending on if these formed a complete thought. The answers were divided into 13 different categories. Each category is presented in its own table. The categories were formed based on the reduced answers (complete thoughts). In the second phase, the categories were compiled into three subcategories (tables 14-16).

### 4.1.1 Study One - Results and Discussion

The first six tables contain answers that are all critical towards the medium itself, the tabloid headline.

Table 1 compiles the answers in which participants commented what kind of people they thought read and drew conclusions based on tabloid headlines. The term wind coat people (tuulipukuihmisiä in Finnish) appears to refer to more suburban and rural inhabitants compared to city people who according to this categorization are seen to be better educated and thus more critical readers and interpreters of tabloid headlines. The answers show that people who believe tabloid headlines are thought to be controlled by media and not able to understand that the truth does not come from one way of writing a heading. This is in line with the studies that show that people generally believe that they are above average and are not as easily succumbed to bias but that they believe people on average do (Gilowich & Williams 2008).

TABLE 1 Category STEREOTYPING

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tuulipukuihmiset (wind coat people)</li> <li>• lööpit ohjaa itsetiedottoman ajatuksia väärin faktoihin (headlines direct the thoughts of non-self-conscious people to wrong facts)</li> <li>• otsikoiden perusteella tuomitaan, vaikka koko totuus ei ole tiedossa (judgments are based on the headings even if the whole truth was not known)</li> <li>• paniikin lietsominen lähdekritiikkiin kykenemättömissä ihmisissä (panic is stirred up in people who are incapable of criticism of sources)</li> <li>• epätoivo siitä, että tällainen paska vetoaa ihmisiin (despair about the fact that people are attracted by this kind of shit)</li> <li>• en käsitä, kuka ostaa lööpin perusteella lehden (I cannot understand who buys the newspaper based on the headline)</li> <li>• media määrittää asioiden tärkeyden, esim. lihapullat (media decides the importance of things e.g. meatballs)</li> </ul> |
|--|

The answers in Table 2 reflect the participants' view that tabloid headlines were trivial and made news only because there was nothing important to tell. The heading of a tabloid headline did not even merit an opinion: "I consider Ilta-Sanomat a medium that looks for scandals, has misleading headings and weak

informative value. I think that they lack real news.” Even a positive topic (weapon to cure cancer) was categorized as misleading and with low informative value because it was located on a tabloid headline.

TABLE 2 Category TRIVIALITY

- ei edes mielipidettä lööpin perusteella (not even any opinion based on tabloid headlines)
- huonoa informaatiota (bad information)
- liikaa samaa aihetta (koulukohu) => kiinnostuksen puute (too much of the same topic (school) => lack of interest)
- en välitä lihapullista (I don't care for meatballs)
- taas joku tutkimus (another research)
- uutisoidaan turhista asioista (news out of useless matters)
- koulukohu ja lihapullat ei kiinnosta (school drama and meatballs are of no interest)
- hyvät otsikot vähissä, lehti jää hyllyyn (there is a lack of good headings, the newspaper will stay in the rack)
- syöpä-otsikko ei herätä mielenkiintoa (the cancer headline does not raise any interest)
- taas samasta aiheesta, koulukohusta (the same topic again, school drama)
- IS otsikointi heikkoa (IS uses bad headings)
- sisältö lehdessä suppea (the content of the newspaper is limited)
- sivuja täytetään kuvamateriaalilla (pages are filled with pictures)
- aiheet sellaisia, ettei mitään uutisoitavaa tunnu olevan (the topics are those that implicate that there is nothing to make any news of)
- varmaan pulaa uutisista (certainly lack of news)
- koulukohu ollut tarpeeksi mediassa (this school topic has been enough in the media)
- otsikot lievästi kiinnostavia, en miettisi niitä enempää (headings are mildly interesting, I would not think about them more)
- ei mitään uutta (nothing new)
- ei mitään erilaista (nothing different)
- en osta lehteä (I do not buy the newspaper)
- en miettisi lööppejä, vaan jatkaisin matkaani (I would not think about the tabloid headlines, but would be on my way)
- en osta, oikeasti ei ole tapahtunut mitään uutisoitavaa (I will not buy, nothing worth making news has happened)
- taas tätä samaa (again this same stuff)
- tullut liikaa infoa joka tuutista (too much information from all over)
- jatkuvasti esillä olevat samat otsikot tylsistyttävät, ensi kertaa nähdessä herättävät mielenkiintoa (same headings continuously all over again make you feel bored, when you see them for the first time they raise interest)

Table 3 contains the answers that criticized tabloid headlines for spreading misleading and even false information. Many of the participants mentioned espe-

cially misleading information. It was suspected that headings were made for other reasons than for informative value and were seen as having no real content at all. "I have some doubts whether this is just tabloid talk". The headings were even suspected of reporting completely false facts.

TABLE 3 Category SPREADING OF MISLEADING INFORMATION

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• totuus muualla kuin is otsikoissa (the truth resides somewhere else than headings)</li> <li>• lööppi antaa tietyn käsityksen (the tabloid headline will offer a certain view)</li> <li>• todennäköisesti huijausta, esim. syöpälööppi (most probably cheat, i.e. cancer headline)</li> <li>• hyvä, mutta onko tosi, syöpä? (good, but is it true, cancer?)</li> <li>• epäilyksiä (doubts)</li> <li>• lihapullalööppiä vaikea ottaa tosissaan (it is hard to take the meatballs headline seriously)</li> <li>• pientä epäilystä onko vain iltapäivälehtien sanailua (small doubt is this just the tabloid headlines talking)</li> <li>• epäily (doubt)</li> <li>• harhaanjohtavia (misleading)</li> <li>• väärän tiedon levittämistä (spreading of false information)</li> <li>• vääriä faktoja (false facts)</li> <li>• uusi hoito syöpään =&gt;näitä on nähty =&gt; epäilyä (new treatment for cancer =&gt; been there, done that =&gt; doubts)</li> <li>• totuus jossakin välissä (truth is somewhere in between)</li> <li>• IS otsikointi harhaanjohtavaa (IS uses misleading headings)</li> <li>• (syöpä) parannus toiveajattelua (a cure for cancer is wishful thinking)</li> <li>• Iltalehti=roskalehti (Iltalehti=rubbish newspaper)</li> <li>• otsikot eivät kerro koko totuutta (headings do not tell the whole truth)</li> <li>• epäilyksiä otsikoiden harhaanjohtavuudesta (doubts about the truthfulness of the headings)</li> <li>• syöpä-otsikko epäilyttää (the cancer heading raises suspicion)</li> </ul> |
|---|

Table 4 illustrates the participants' opinion that tabloid headlines looked for sensation and the words used were chosen in order to cause a fuss. The headings were described by words such as social porn and gormandizing.

TABLE 4 Category LOOKING FOR SENSATION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tässäkin kaiveltu likaisia yksityiskohtia? (Is this again the digging of dirty details?)</li> <li>• tarkoitus pelotella (the target is intimidation)</li> <li>• tarkoitus dramatisoida (the purpose is to dramatize)</li> <li>• media määrittää tärkeyden (media determines the importance)</li> <li>• raflaavuus (showy)</li> <li>• lööpit kohunnostattajia, ei koko totuus (tabloid headlines are raisers of sensation, not the whole truth)</li> <li>• otsikot dramatisoituja (headings are dramatized)</li> <li>• Suomen ylistämistä (praising Finland)</li> <li>• keltainen lehdistö (the yellow press)</li> <li>• sensaatiohakuisuus (looking for sensation)</li> <li>• sanavalinnoilla pienestä tutkimuksesta tekemällä tehty jymyuutinen (the use of words make a small research into huge news)</li> <li>• IS skandaalinhakuinen media (IS is a media that is looking for scandals)</li> <li>• positiivista, että sensaatiohakuinen lööppi voi olla myös myönteisestä uutisesta (it is positive that a tabloid headline that looks for sensation can be of a positive news as well)</li> <li>• otsikot provosoivia (the headings are provocative)</li> <li>• otsikot joko hirveän positiivisia tai hirveän negatiivisia (the headings are either really positive or immensely negative)</li> <li>• asioilla mässäily (feasting (gormandizing) on matters)</li> </ul>
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Table 5 is the quantitatively third biggest category and portrays the fact that many participants felt that tabloid headlines exaggerated. Tabloid headlines were described as dramatic and boastful in which even trivial matters were turned into big deals. Different type of exaggeration was the main theme of the answers. This created the basis for the participants' opinion about the topic itself.

TABLE 5 Category EXAGGERATION

- lehdessä ehkä taas liioiteltu (the newspaper is possibly exaggerating again)
- epäily liioittelusta perustuu aikaisempiin kokemuksiin (the suspicion about the exaggerating nature is based on previous experience)
- innostunut, mutta epäluuloinen (excited, but doubtful)
- onko liioiteltu kuten lööpeissä tapana (is this exaggeration as tends to be the case in tabloid headlines)
- en usko suureen kehitykseen syöpähoidossa (I do not believe in major development in the treatment of cancer)
- toimiiko oikeasti? (does this really work?)
- koulujuttua halutaan paisutella mediassa (the media wants to exaggerate the school issue)
- ylilyötyjä (exaggerations)
- liioittelua (exaggeration)
- liioittelua, syöpä-uutinen oikeasti ihan pieni ja mitätön (exaggeration, the news on cancer is in reality tiny and meaningless)
- pelkän lööpin perusteella parannus syöpään (only a tabloid headline as basis for a cure for cancer)
- todellisuudessa liioiteltu (in reality this is exaggerated)
- liioittelu (koulukohu) (exaggeration, the school fuss)
- liioiteltuja (exaggerations)
- ei kai syöpää vastaan sotaa käydä? (there is no war against cancer, is there?)
- liioiteltu ase sanan käyttö (the use of the word weapon is exaggerating)
- lööpit antavat yleensä suuremman mittakaavan kuvan (tabloid headlines usually offer a picture that appears bigger than it actually is)
- noinkohan on mullistava tutkimus (is this really a revolutionary research)
- otsikot suurentelevat (headlines exaggerate)
- asioiden suurentelu (exaggeration of things)
- pienestäkin iso haloo (a big fuss out of even tiny things)
- aikaisemmat kokemukseni viittaavat liioitteluun (my previous experience point in the direction of exaggeration)
- onkohan asia näin vai onko taas liioiteltu kuten lööpeissä tapana (is this really true or is it exaggeration again, as customary to tabloid headlines)
- aikaisempien kokemusteni mukaan otsikot liioittelevat => sisältö köyhää (my past experiences tell me that headlines exaggerate => the content is poor)
- kyseessä varmaan lääketieteellinen kokeilu, joka vaikuttaa meihin tavallisiin ihmisiin vasta myöhemmin (this is surely a medical experiment that affects us ordinary people only later)
- käydäänkö sotaa (syöpä?) (is there war against cancer?)
- varmasti liioiteltuja! (most certainly exaggerations!)

Table 6 comprises the negative emotions that were directly related to the headline and not the topic of it. The headlines were found to be irritating and mainly negative.

TABLE 6 Category HEADLINE RELATED NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• iltapäivälehtien pitäisi miettiä otsikointia, sillä myös lapset näkevät (tabloid headlines should think carefully about their headings since also children can see them)</li> <li>• negatiivinen vaikutelma positiivisesta otsikosta (a negative impression about a positive heading)</li> <li>• kaikki taustat eivät selviä (koulukohu) (everything that lies in the background is not clear)</li> <li>• negatiivisuus (negativity)</li> <li>• tunkkaisuus (stuffy)</li> <li>• epäusko (disbelief)</li> <li>• ärsyttävää, kokemukseni mukaan lehden sisältä tyhjää (irritating, based on my experience the content of the newspaper is empty)</li> <li>• aiheet sosiaalipornoa (the topics are social porn)</li> <li>• valkoinen otsikko mustalla pohjalla on synkkä (a white heading on a black background is gloomy)</li> <li>• syöpä-otsikosta negatiivinen sävy, vaikka uutinen on positiivinen (the cancer heading has a negative implication although the news is positive)</li> <li>• tienaamista toisten epätoivolla (syöpä) (making money out of the misery of others, cancer)</li> <li>• ase-sana ja fontti aggressiivisia ja uhkaavia (the word weapon and the font are aggressive and threatening)</li> <li>• lööpit ärsyttäviä (tabloid headlines are irritating)</li> <li>• myötähäpeä (shared shame)</li> <li>• ärsynnystä, kokemukseni mukaan lehden sisältö tyhjää (irritation, according to my experience the content of the tabloid is empty)</li> </ul> |
|---|

The following five tables (Tables 7-11) are all related directly to emotions. Table 7 includes the answers which conveyed negative emotions related to the content of the headline. This was the quantitatively biggest category. Negative headlines are common in tabloids (Setälä 2007) and it could be expected that they arouse also negative emotions.

TABLE 7 Category TOPIC RELATED NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• myös lainsäädännössä parannettavaa (also the jurisdiction needs amendments)</li> <li>• suvussa syöpää, muttei lööpistä isoja tuntemuksia (there is cancer in the family, but no big emotions from the tabloid headline)</li> <li>• (koulukohu) läheinen aihe sosionomiopiskelijalle (the school fuss is a familiar subject for a student of social services)</li> <li>• (koulukohu) potkut rehtorin kosto opettajalle? (the sack was revenge on the Rector, school fuss?)</li> <li>• sadistista meininkiä (sadistic)</li> <li>• omat kokemukset vastaavasta tilanteesta (koulukohu) (my personal experiences of a similar incident, school fuss)</li> <li>• omat muistot myrkyä syöneistä koirista heräävät (this awakens the memories of my own dogs who ate poison)</li> <li>• tulee sotauutiset mieleen (syöpälööppi) (the cancer headline makes one think of war news)</li> <li>• mikä ruoka on enää turvallista? (is there any food that is safe anymore?)</li> <li>• koirien myrkyttäminen ei ole kivaa (poisoning of dogs is not nice)</li> <li>• koirien myrkyttäminen ei ole ratkaisu (the poisoning of dogs is no solution)</li> <li>• syöpä ahdistava asia (cancer is a distressing matter)</li> <li>• voiko kaupasta enää ostaa lihapullia? (can you still buy meatballs from shops?)</li> <li>• omat kokemukset, perheesä paljon syöpää (own experiences, there is a lot of cancer in the family)</li> <li>• suvussa ihmisiä, joilla ollut syöpä (there are people in the family who have suffered from cancer)</li> <li>• sääliä (pity)</li> <li>• ihmisten tarve valittaa pienistä asioista (people's need to complain about small matters)</li> <li>• ihmisten halu valittaa turhista asioista (people's willingness to complain about trivial matters)</li> <li>• kuka haluaa tappaa koiria? (who wants to kill dogs?)</li> <li>• otsikot herättävät lapsissa pelkoa (the headings cause fear in children)</li> <li>• monilla syövästä kokemusta (many have experience about cancer)</li> <li>• joku kyllästynyt huolimattomiin koiraihmiisiin, viattomatkin kärsii (someone is fed up with sloppy dog people, innocent get to suffer as well)</li> <li>• kaikki vakavia aiheita (all topics are serious)</li> <li>• kuka kehtaa myrkyttää koiria! (who dares to poison dogs?)</li> <li>• nykypäivänä ei sallita enää minkäänlaista kurinpitoa (there is no discipline allowed nowadays)</li> <li>• mielikuva uutisesta ei ole positiivinen (syöpäotsikko) (the image about the news is not positive, cancer)</li> <li>• surullista (sad)</li> <li>• järjetöntä (insane)</li> </ul>
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(continues)



TABLE 7 (continues)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mikä ihmisiä vaivaa? (what is wrong with people?)</li> <li>• ihmisten pahuus viatonta kohtaan (the evil of men towards the innocent)</li> <li>• koirien myrkytys -lööppi tekee vihaiseksi (the tabloid headline about the poisoning of the dogs makes me angry)</li> <li>• koirien myrkyttäminen -lööppi tekee surulliseksi (the poisoning of the dogs - the tabloid headline makes me sad)</li> <li>• ei väkivaltaa viattomia kohtaan (no violence against the innocent)</li> <li>• koskettaa yksityishenkilöitä, jättäisivät jo rauhaan (this deals with private people, they should be left alone by now)</li> <li>• muutoksen aikaansaaminen tärkeämpää, ärsyttää, kun tuomitaan tuntematta koko totuutta (making a difference is more important, it is irritating to convict without knowing the whole truth)</li> <li>• epäoikeudenmukaista opettajaa kohtaan (unfair towards the teacher)</li> <li>• valituksia ei oteta vakavasti (the complaints are not taken seriously)</li> <li>• koirien myrkyttäminen ilkeää (it is mean to poison dogs)</li> <li>• miten koirien myrkyttämiseen puututaan, jottei se toistu? (how is the matter of the poisoning of dogs stepped in in order to prevent its recurring)</li> <li>• (myrkytys)kamalaa! (poisoning, terrible!)</li> <li>• ärsyynnystä (irritated)</li> <li>• vihainen olo (angry feeling)</li> <li>• kuka tyhmä myrkyttää koiria? (who is so stupid as to poison dogs?)</li> <li>• epätoivo (despair)</li> <li>• ahdistus (distressed)</li> <li>• myrkkylihapullat pelottava oman koiran takia (the poisoned meatballs are frightening because of my own dog)</li> <li>• potkut ylireagointia ja väärin (giving the sack was an overreaction and wrong)</li> <li>• myrkytetyt lihapullat kamalaa (the poisoned meatballs are terrible)</li> <li>• ihmiset ovat hulluja, kun myrkyttävät koiria (people are crazy to poison dogs)</li> <li>• laki tms. estämään myrkytyksiä (a law or something to prevent the poisoning)</li> <li>• ihmiset kiduttavat viattomia eläimiä (people torture innocent animals)</li> <li>• mikä ihmisiä vaivaa? (what is wrong with people?)</li> <li>• onkohan oma koirani vaarassa? (is my own dog in danger?)</li> <li>• (myrkkylihapullat) surua (itsellä koira) (the poisoned meatballs cause sadness, I have a dog)</li> <li>• vihaa (anger)</li> <li>• surua (sadness)</li> </ul>
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The answers which evoked positive feelings can be found from Table 8. Except for five, all of these answers were related to one topic: NEW WEAPON AGAINST CANCER – revolutionary Finnish research. Interestingly, also in the answers categorized as evoking positive feelings, participants wanted to point out that the heading was from a tabloid headline and thus possibly an exaggeration. "It is positive that a tabloid headline that craves for sensation can be from

a good news, such as progress in cancer research. Generally speaking tabloid headlines tend to give an exaggerating picture of the actual news." Another comment emphasized the fact that even though this was a positive topic, that was not common in tabloid headlines. "An intelligent topic, for a change, and quite well-founded. I think it is good to publish news that have a real effect on human well being and future."

TABLE 8 Category POSITIVE EMOTIONS

- vaihteeksi järkevä aihe (a sensible topic for a change)
- ihan aiheellinen uutisaihe (a relevant news topic)
- merkitystä ihmisten hyvinvointiin (has an impact on the well-being of people)
- merkitystä ihmisten tulevaisuuteen (has an impact on the future of people)
- toivottavasti opettaja saa oikeutta (hopefully the teacher gets justice)
- arvostan opettajien ammattitaitoa (I appreciate the professional experience of teachers)
- (syöpäotsikko) toivoa (the cancer heading brings hope)
- innostunut, mutta epäluuloinen (excited, but suspicious)
- suomalainen lääketiede pitkälle kehittyntä (Finnish medicine is highly advanced)
- syöpää vastaan kehitetty keino (a method against cancer has been developed)
- suomalainen tutkimus hyvää (Finnish research is good)
- kiva, että suomalaiset pärjää (nice that Finns do well)
- terveys kiinnostaa (health is an interesting topic)
- kaverilla leukemia, auttaisiko tämä? (a friend has leukemia, might this help?)
- toivottavasti uusi ase toimiva (hopefully the new weapon works)
- hoito vakavaan sairauteen herättä mielenkiintoni (a cure for a serious illness rose my attention)
- hyvä, toiveikas tunne (syöpälööppi) (good, a feeling of hope, cancer tabloid headline)
- ihan oikein valittaa rehtorista ennen potkuja (it was really correct to complain about the rector before the sacking)
- ylpeyttä lääketiedettä kohtaan (proudness towards medicine)
- toivoa (hope)
- mielenkiintoa lukea syöpäartikkeli (interested in reading the cancer related article)
- toivoa (hope)
- suomalaisten menestys toivottavaa (the success of Finns is desirable)
- suomalaisten menestyksen kasvu toivottavaa (the growth of Finnish success is desirable)
- mielenkiintoa ja toivoa, syöpä parannettu? (interest and hope, cancer cured?)
- positiivinen tunne ikävään asiaan (a positive feeling to a sad issue)
- kuitenkin mukava juttu? (a nice thing after all?)
- suomessa tutkittu? (investigated in Finland?)
- lääkkeet kehittyvät (medicine develops)

(continues)

TABLE 8 (continues)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• suomalainen tutkimus herättää mielenkiintoa (Finnish research raises interest)</li> <li>• merkittävä terveystuuletinen (a remarkable health news)</li> <li>• tutkimus tehty suomessa, herättää ostohalun (the research was made in Finland, raises desire to buy)</li> <li>• hienoa, jos syövän hoito tehokkaampaa (great if the treatment for cancer is more efficient)</li> <li>• mielenkiintoa herättävä tutkimus ( a research that raises interest)</li> <li>• toivottavasti uusi syöpälääke tulee pian markkinoille (let's hope that the new medicine is on the market soon)</li> <li>• toivottavasti hinta kuluttajaystävällinen (hope the price will be consumer friendly)</li> <li>• hyvä suomi! (way to go Finland!)</li> <li>• hienoa, jos parannus löytyisi (great if a cure could be found)</li> <li>• hienoa, jos suomalaiset keksineet parannuksen syöpään (great, if Finns have discovered a cure for cancer)</li> <li>• voisi olla mielenkiintoinen lukea (it could be interesting to read)</li> <li>• koulukohu herättää taatusti mielipiteitä (the school fuss is sure to raise opinions)</li> <li>• toivo (syöpä) (hope, cancer)</li> <li>• tiedonhalu (rehtori) (need for knowledge)</li> <li>• (syöpä) toiveikas (hopeful, cancer)</li> <li>• aiheet herättävät mielenkiintoa (the topics raise interest)</li> <li>• hienoa, että suomalainen tutkimus (great that the research is Finnish)</li> <li>• hienoa, kun suomalaiset menestyvät syöpätutkimuksessa (great that Finns do well in cancer research)</li> <li>• vaikuttaa uskomattomalta, jos syöpään löydetty keino (it seems incredible if a cure for cancer has been found)</li> <li>• toiveikkuutta (hope)</li> <li>• ylpeyttä (pride)</li> <li>• mielenkiintoa (interest)</li> </ul>
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Table 9 represents the answers that illustrated feelings of confusion or perplexity.

TABLE 9 Category CONFUSION

- itsellä koira, myrkkylihapullat ihmetyttävät => mistä näitä ihmisiä löytyy? (I have a dog myself, the poisoned meatballs astonish => where do they find these people?)
- täytyy mennä vihdoinkin katsomaan se kohuvideo (I finally need to see the fuss video)
- suomalaisen yhteiskunnan tulevaisuus (työpaikat vaarassa?) (the future of the Finnish society, jobs in danger?)
- koulukohu mietityttää (the school fuss makes one think)
- opeasiassa olikin tausta (there was a story behind the teacher issue)
- koulukohu - taustalla olevat syyt (katkeruus, oikeudenmukaisuus, asioiden oikaisu?) (the school fuss, issues behind the story: bitterness, justice, setting things right?)
- koulukohu: valitus mahdollinen peruste potkuille, kuka tietää? (the school fuss: a possible cause for the sacking, who knows?)
- hämmennystä (confusion)
- ihmetystä (astonishment)
- otsikot herättävät lapsissa hämmennystä (the headings confuse children)
- myrkytetyt lihapullat outo (the poisoned meatballs is a strange one)
- jälkireaktio ihmettelevä (the aftertaste astonishing)
- jälkireaktio epätoivoinen, kuka ostaa tämän perusteella lehden (the reaction afterwards is desperate, who buys a newspaper based on this)
- omistaja vastaa koirastaan (the owner answers for his dog)
- ihme, ettei julkiksista otsikkoa (wonder that there is no celebrity on the headline)
- (koulukohu) miksi nousut näin suuri kohu tavallisesta tapahtumasta? (why has an ordinary issue risen so much interest? school fuss)
- sählinkiä (hassle)

The answers that show amusement towards the tabloid headlines are collected in Table 10. Some answers also portray an element of sarcasm: "Headings often appear dramatized which is partly also amusing." The headline can also offer entertainment and the participant wishes to express that it should be seen more as amusing than as news that should be taken seriously.

TABLE 10 Category AMUSEMENT

- naurua (laughter)
- otsikot dramatisoituja, huvittavaa (the headings are dramatized, amusing)
- huvittavaa (amusement)
- surkuhupaisaa (tragicomic)
- aiheet viihteellisiä (the topics serve entertainment purposes)

Table 11 contains the answers in which participants referred to past experiences they have of tabloid headlines or the content of them. Those past experiences gave rise to memories and affected the answers given.

TABLE 11 Category EFFECT OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

- lukenut aiheesta jo muualta (have read about this topic elsewhere already)
- näitä aiheita ollut esillä paljon (these issues have been on headlines a lot lately)
- koulujärjestelmä ei vastaa nykyajan haasteisiin (the school system is not adequate for the challenges of today)
- omat kokemukseni tukevat mielipidettä (my own experiences support the opinion)
- syövän yleistymisestä puhuttu viime aikoina (cancer becoming more general has been discussed much lately)
- aiheesta uutisoitu vuosien varrella (there has been news about the issue during the years)
- omat kokemukset vastaavasta tilanteesta (koulukohu) (my own experiences about a similar kind of incident, the school fuss)
- omat muistot myrkyä syöneistä koirista heräävät (own memories of dogs who ate poison are awoken)

The following tables 12 and 13 represent the so-called “emotion free” commenting of tabloid headlines. They either make reference to technical aspects (e.g. size of text) or marketing methods in general (sales promotion).

The answers that commented technical aspects are gathered in Table 12. The use of pictures was mentioned only once stating that the picture used was not clear. In one of the answers regarding the triviality of headlines, one participant commented that pictures were used to fill in blank spaces because no real news could be found.

TABLE 12 Category TECHNICAL ASPECTS

- iso fontti (big font)
- isot kirjaimet kiinnittävät huomion (big letters draw attention)
- suuri teksti kiinnitti huomion (big text rose attention)
- raskaita kirjaimia (heavy letters)
- ase-sana ja fontti aggressiivisia ja uhkaavia (the word weapon and font aggressive and threatening)
- näyttävä otsikko, musta tausta, valkoinen teksti (an impressive heading, black background, white text)
- valkoinen otsikko mustalla pohjalla on synkkä (white heading on black background is gloomy)
- kuva epäselvä (the picture is unclear)

Table 13 contains those answers which highlighted the meaning of the heading for sales promotion and marketing of the tabloid. Sales promotion and advertising in general were seen as using exaggerations and grandiose adjectives in order to describe products. Tabloid headlines were seen as advertisements of the

tabloids and based on this view it was only logical that the headlines were interpreted as exaggerating since they were understood more in order of attracting buyers than offering information. (Viestintätoimisto Pohjoisranta Oy Media trust study 2011) This offers in a sense legitimate grounds for exaggeration if that is the general opinion on what advertisements usually anyway do.

TABLE 13 Category SALES PROMOTION

- tavanomaisia lööppejä, joilla kalastellaan lukijoita (ordinary tabloid headlines that fish for readers)
- markkinointia, tehty vain rahan takia (marketing, made only because of money)
- myynnin kasvattamista (the raising of sales)
- dramatisoituja otsikoita myynnin edistämiseksi (dramatized headings in order to promote sales)
- otsikoilla houkutellessaan ostamaan lehti (the headings are used to lure people to buy the newspaper)
- negatiivisuus uppoaa paremmin (negativity is more attractive)
- pelkoa herättävät uppoavat paremmin (things that evoke fear are more attractive)
- otsikot muotoiltu houkutteleviksi (the headings were designed to be attractive)
- otsikot muotoiltu kiinnostaviksi (the headings were designed to be interesting)
- lööppi sen perusteella mikä myy (the tabloid headline based on what makes the sales)
- otsikot kiinnostavat, mutta sisältö jo ennalta tiedettyä (the headings raise interest, but the content is already known)

#### 4.1.2 Study One - Conclusions

The first six tables all characterize the participants' critical opinion towards tabloid headlines. They are combined in the following Table 14: Critical Opinion Towards Tabloid Headlines.

TABLE 14 (combined) Category CRITICAL OPINION TOWARDS TABLOID HEADLINES

- ❖ Stereotyping
- ❖ Triviality
- ❖ Spreading of misleading information
- ❖ Looking for sensation
- ❖ Exaggeration
- ❖ Headline related negative emotions

During the analysis it became clear that the medium, tabloid headlines, had a strong impact on the answers participants gave. The headings of tabloid headlines were often considered either exaggerating, news about trivial matters, or spreading misleading information and causing negative emotions. Participants

wanted to first comment the location of the heading (the tabloid headline) and only after that commented the content. The opinion on the heading itself was likely to be colored by its tabloid headline basis. "I don't even form an opinion based on a tabloid headline in this kind of stories (rector), that are based on *Il-talehti* or *Ilta-Sanomat*."

An important question is how much do feeling rules and situational constraints affect these answers. If the tabloids are basically considered to be looking for sensations and their headlines by rule exaggerating, participants may feel it important to convey this information to the researcher. This way the participant maintains her credibility as a critical observer. The quantitatively third biggest amount of answers emphasized the exaggerating aspect of the headline in different ways (Table 5). This same subject matter falls within the category of Look for Sensation (Table 4), which can be considered as exaggeration taken a step further. The extreme level of this classification is the category of Spreading of Misleading Information in Table 3. The answers in this category reflected the participants' opinion that tabloid headlines gave a completely false or at least misleading picture of the published news. Compiled together these three categories represented the quantitatively largest amount of answers illustrating the strong negative stigma that tabloid headlines hold.

The participants wanted to portray the people who read and believed tabloid headlines as easily maneuverable (table 1 category Stereotyping) thus creating a typology. This study was carried out to university level students. Universities generally teach the study of research reliability and validity. This could have an effect on especially university students wishing to emphasize their ability to make critical observations. "This (headline) tries to stir up panic in people who have no ability to be source critical." Participants also felt that tabloid headlines were trivial news (Table 2).

The situations where the participants answered the inquiries were research situations. A research situation could be seen at least by most as a fairly serious circumstance where researchers are looking for new information. Thus it would also seem reasonable for the participant to be critically aware and comment the location of the heading. This offers a possibility for the assumption that the participant might suppress her first intuitive thought and write the answer down only after giving more thought to the implications of the answering situation. The participant may want to offer a critical observation because the heading was located on a tabloid headline. The answers then reflected the participant's wish to make sure that the researcher did not think she believed in the "yellow press". On the other hand, it would seem likely that the participant's opinion about tabloid headlines also affected her emotional reaction and the content of the headline was judged colored by the medium.

The nontruthfulness of the tabloid headlines forms part of everyday beliefs. The everyday belief seemed to be that the news posted on a tabloid headline was not accurate, at least not as such. It could be that participants have more bias against tabloid headlines than against headlines of major newspapers such as *Helsingin Sanomat* for example (Median uutisoinnin luotettavuus. Kun-

nallisan kehittämissäätiö 2014). Freud pointed out (1981a, 482-483) that the fear of super-ego should under normal circumstances never cease since the emotional distress that arises from it is vital to life in a society. It is very rare that any individual can obtain complete independence from all forms of societal ties. With regard to this study, it is interesting to understand why the participants felt it was so important to stress the fact that they did not consider tabloid headlines trustworthy sources of information. Does the Finnish society incorporate an unwritten rule that tabloid headlines are mainly looking for sensations and their headings should be considered as such? And more importantly, is it because participants considered themselves to be critical observers or at least wanting to appear so, that they needed to let the researcher see that they had noticed the heading was from a tabloid headline? Feelings rules are those traffic rules people operate by in social interaction. According to those rules it may be appropriate to assure the researcher that tabloid headlines cannot be trusted and thus the emotions evoked by those headlines were to be suppressed. Feeling rules are important when participants decide what kind of answers they give. Even if the participant was well aware that he couldn't be recognized from the answer, the society's feeling rules may still guide behavior. This standardization is probably not done consciously, but if the participant classifies tabloid headlines as generally craving for sensation, her answer will most likely be colored against this background. At least, she feels it important to mention that she knows tabloid headlines usually exaggerate so she is cautious as she well should.

The tables classified as containing directly emotion related answers (Tables 7-11) are combined into Table 15 Emotion as follows:

TABLE 15 (combined) Category EMOTIONS

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Topic related negative emotions</li> <li>❖ Positive emotions</li> <li>❖ Confusion</li> <li>❖ Amusement</li> <li>❖ Effect of past experiences</li> </ul> |
|--|

What are the implications of the emotions that rise from the headline? The topics of the headings evoked emotions and they formed the biggest category. At this point, it is important to argue that in the category of critical opinion towards headlines (Table 14), the answers evoked emotions as well. But they have been categorized according to whether the emotions elicited resulted from the fact that the headings were in tabloid headlines or from the actual content of the heading.

When discussing tabloid headlines, their effect on children is often brought up: "I have thought for a long time already that tabloids should think more about the way they use headings because also children are able to see them. Headings cause confusion and fear in children." The study made by the



Office of the Ombudsman for Children in Finland (Tuononen 2007) discusses the worry parents have regarding headlines and their possibly negative effects on children. Negative emotions can be harmful for adults as well, but adults are seen as being better able to take care of themselves. Damasio (2006) expresses worry about the fact that feelings are seen as important but no effort is put into the understanding of their complex biological and sociocultural machinery. According to him, children's overexposure to violence downgrades the value of emotions and feelings in the acquisition and deployment of adaptive social behavior. Vicarious violence without moral framework adds to its desensitization effect (Damasio 2006).

Negativity attracts more attention because of its potential threat to well-being. This makes the use of it understandable from the marketing and attention-drawing point of view. Media is usually more interested in the growth of some form of criminality than the lowering of another (Koskela 2009). This may lead to the use of the availability heuristic when pondering probabilities. Its use is not irrational, but it may result in errors (Sunstein 2006). Media covers risks in a selective manner (Eldridge & Reilly 2003) and fragmentary information may lead to its inappropriate weighing (Kuran 1997). People ponder alternatives constantly, meanings are negotiated, opinions formed and when seen appropriate, all are re-evaluated and revised (Brockmeier 2009).

The relationship between negativity and health is discussed in more detail in the conclusions after Study Five. McDaid (2004) discusses in his article "Headlines and Deadlines: The Media and Health Issues" the benefits that the public gets from good links between media, health policy makers, and researchers and the fact that individuals should be better equipped in order to make informed choices on health related issues. He concludes that in reality the focus seems to be on negative events rather than on positive health messages.

The negative emotions reflected several issues. The cancer heading made participants think about relatives or friends that had suffered cancer. Cancer was experienced as agonizing. The heading presented a new cure for cancer, but it still evoked negative emotions: "The image of the news is not positive". The heading that handled dogs being poisoned elicited the largest amount of content related negative comments. Dogs were pictured as innocent creatures suffering from the evil of man. It evoked a lot of anger and sadness. One participant stated that this brought up memories of the terrible day when her own dogs ate poisoned food. The fear of food being poisoned was also seen as possibly happening to anyone: "Is there any food that can be trusted anymore?" "Is it still safe to buy meatballs?"

The headline about the firing evoked various negative emotions. On the one hand it was seen as a complaint of minor, trivial importance and on the other hand it evoked questions whether laws should be amended and disciplinary measures at school more allowed. It was also seen as a private matter that should not be commented on tabloid headlines.

The answers that portrayed positive emotions were inspired by the hope of a cure for cancer been found and arose feelings of patriotism because of the

Finnish research. Feelings of national identity were strong. These answers were well justified. This could indicate that positivity in tabloid headlines requires more explanation than negativity, which is interpreted more as the norm.

If a heading causes confusion (Table 9), it might not be overlooked quickly, but could stay and irritate the mind for a longer period of time. Answers such as "a desperate aftertaste" or "wondrous amazement of who believes these headlines" illustrated the feelings toward those who were thought to believe headlines. These answers could be interpreted as expressions of the feeling rule "tabloid headlines are not to be trusted".

The previous experiences (Table 11) relied on the participants' past experiences of the content of the heading. "The headlines are designed to allure and attract attention. Often I am myself also interested in the headlines, but the actual text was already known information. The headings do not tell the whole truth. They are either really positive or dreadfully negative." Many headings evoked personal memories and the content of those memories affected the interpretation of the headline.

The category of Rational Explanations (Table 16) combines the two categories (Tables 12 and 13) where the tabloid headline was viewed in a more objective way so to say, without emotional discharges.

TABLE 16 (combined) Category RATIONAL EXPLANATIONS

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Technical aspects</li> <li>❖ Sales promotion</li> </ul> |
|--|

Claiming an answer to hold no emotional discharges is controversial, but in this study it is used to distinguish between the more emotion arousing answers. Also, in these answers the truthfulness of the heading was dealt with the basic understanding that it was on a tabloid headline. The headlines of tabloids were thought to be formed according to what was beneficial for marketing and selling purposes meaning that tabloid headlines were referred to as mainly advertisements: "The headline is made based on the selling arguments and the informative value is nonexistent". The technical aspects e.g. print size and use of pictures were referred to in few answers.

The research report "Sustainable Growth Model: A Global Model" commissioned by Finland's Prime Minister at the time Jyrki Katainen, and produced by Professor Manuel Castells and Philosopher Pekka Himanen (Castells & Himanen 2013) was published on November 7, 2013. It caused a lot of criticism and one of Pekka Himanen's counterarguments was:

"The impact of the research is measured in the academic world, not on the pages of tabloids" (hs.fi/kotimaa/Himanen).

Pekka Himanen's answer supports well the conclusions of Study One. The trust in the news the tabloids release is not big and they can be referred to when in general one wants to understate the importance of non-academic discussion, for example. This, however, seems to have very little impact on the fact that tabloid

newspapers are widely read (KMT Lukija helmikuu 2014 tiedote). Their trustworthiness may be questioned, but they are read all the same. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) pointed out that it may be quite useless to ask participants to define what affected their judgments, choices, and behavior. Although tabloids were not to be trusted, they evoked emotions either based on the medium itself or the content of the heading. Relying on emotions and affect is faster, easier, and a more effective way to move in the world (Slovic, Peters, MacGregor & Finucane 2005). Affect cues are perceived as highly salient information (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield 1990). Epstein (1994) argues that the experiential system is the default option or dominant system in most situations because it is less effortful and more efficient, whereas the rational system is activated primarily in situation with cues, suggesting the need for rational analysis. Heuristic processing consumes fewer cognitive resources (Dillard, Plotnick, Godbold, Freimuth, & Edgar 1996).

Tabloid headlines could be used as an easy medium for filling in the gaps and look for patterns described by Mlodinow (2009). It is important to note that this most likely would happen at an unconscious level since people were eager to state that headlines exaggerated and even posted false information. But because incorporated in the memory, and because the source of the information may later be forgotten, the information that was originally acquired from a tabloid headline may later be retrieved from memory without the tabloid label.

Swedish scientists (Johansson, Hall, Sikström & Olsson 2005 and Johansson, Hall, Sikström, Tärning & Lind 2006) challenged the Nisbett and Wilson (1977) article's conclusions in their own experiments but ended up with the same outcome that people do not have introspective access to their own decision making processes and they do not even always remember their past experiences. Petitmengin, Remilleux, Cahour and Carte-Thomas (2013) have repeated the Johansson et al. experiment, but adding another phase, the elicitation stage, to some of the decisions. Their results resembled those of Johansson and his colleagues except in a situation where the participants were helped with the elicitation of their experience. They conclude in their article that it is possible to examine one's own decision-making processes by evoking the process and directing one's attention towards its different dimensions.

Nisbett and Wilson (1977) also discussed situations in which it was possible for an individual to interpret right the reasons behind his decision-making and behavior. According to them this became possible if the stimuli were available and possible explanations of the response. In addition, there should be only few or no other explanations available. Bargh (1989) argues that intentional search and examination of relevant evidence could reduce preconscious influences on interpretation. Stanovich and West (2008) have shown that cognitive competencies correlate with some of the attempts to avoid rational thinking biases. According to this, it could be reasonable to assume that in addition to feeling rules, situations and beliefs, also placing special attention on cognitive competences affect the interpretation of tabloid headlines and their impact on an individual and society in general. The participants' answers reflected this when

they stated that they were worried about other people's ability to be media critical.

When glancing at tabloid headlines one is rarely in a situation where directing special attention to the origin of thoughts or decision-making processes is needed or felt needed. The everyday situations in which people usually see and read tabloid headlines deal with a different kind of situational aspect than in the research situation.

According to the answers participants gave, the headings were suspected to exaggerate because they were from a tabloid headline. With reference to Kahneman's (2012) and Wilson's (2002) findings regarding the two systems of the mind, the feelings people have regarding the exaggeration may arise from the fact that system two concludes that the emotion arisen from the headline, interpreted as exaggeration, is justified because tabloid headlines are seen as exaggerating. Actually, there is no need for the interpretation of system two at all since system one would have already classified the tabloid headline as exaggeration and there was no discrepancy between the classifications. But when the heading was agreed with, there was a discrepancy between the general thought that headlines exaggerated and the need to agree with this particular one. System two would then need to offer an explanation if asked for such, as was the case in the research situation.

Many thoughts or basis of thoughts are constructed unconsciously and it may be difficult to identify the factors that they are based upon. The participants of this research emphasized the fact that the heading was on a tabloid headline. This fact seemed to determine the truthfulness and meaning of the headline. One participant concluded as follows: "I consider *Ilta-Sanomat* a media that looks for scandal and has misleading headings with weak informative value." Why did the participants consider it so important to stress the fact that the headline was from a tabloid? Kuran (1997) argues that in many cases a person's perceived self-interest results from public discourse. Meaning that what an individual sees as her self-interest may actually be the interest of others.

There are various important aspects that can be drawn from the previous discussion. First, the exaggeration (triviality, false information) stigma that is placed on tabloid headlines is very strong. This, in turn, has an impact on the interpretation of the content of the headings in headlines. The exaggeration aspect can be interpreted in two ways. Either it is the genuine feeling of the person reading the headline, or then, it is the result of the feeling rule. Whatever the case, there is an emotion evoked. This is the second important issue that merits attention. The emotion, or emotions, originates from the headline or the content of the headline. More likely, from both. But the impact of the emotion will be stronger if it is self-referent. In all cases, the emotion or emotions form part of the mental representations of the individual. The force of the impact is very subjective and depends on the appraisal of the individual. The appraisal may be unconscious and it could also be that it is not attributed to the headline at all.

## 4.2 Study Two

### Participants and Procedure

61 students of two degree programmes at Laurea University of Applied Sciences answered a questionnaire on how truthful they considered certain headlines. The students were divided into two groups. The questionnaires were given to the students with no limitation in the answering time. It varied between five to twelve minutes.

### Stimuli

The headings were the same as were used in the first study (Figure 4) except for the heading "Resolve the crosswords - win 1.000,-" which was left out because it was seen as not containing any value on the scale of whether it was interpreted truthful or not.

The headings used were:

- **UUSI ASE SYÖPÄÄ VASTAAN - mullistava suomalaistutkimus**  
(NEW WEAPON AGAINST CANCER - revolutionary Finnish research)
- **Päälouottamusmiehes opettajasta: Valitti rehtorista ennen potkuja. Koulu-  
lukohu** (Chief Shop Steward of the Teacher: complained about the Rec-  
tor before getting fired. School fuss)
- **Jo kaksi koiraa kuollut - Kuka kylvää myrkytettyjä lihapullia?** (Al-  
ready two dead dogs - who spreads poisoned meatballs?)



FIGURE 4 IS Tabloid Headline April 16, 2013  
Picture by Sini Setälä

### Questionnaires

Both groups had identical headings in the questionnaire. All questionnaires contained the same answering options: complete lie, greatly exaggerated, somewhat exaggerated, possibly truthful, very likely truthful, entirely truthful. The participants were asked to mark with a cross the answer they considered most appropriate and to justify their answer. The difference between the questionnaires was in the information given about the origin of the headings. 28 participants answered the questionnaire identical to the description above with no information about where the headings were taken from. 33 answered an otherwise identical questionnaire except that it contained a picture of the tabloid headline from which the headings were taken from.

### Data Analysis

The quantitative data answered two hypotheses. The hypotheses were:

H1: The assessed truthfulness is dependent on whether the participant knows where the heading is taken from.

H0: There is no difference between the answers of both groups.

The assessed truthfulness of each heading was counted to form a sum variable of the average of the items so each answer has one general credibility index between 1-6 (1= complete lie (täyttä valetta), 2= greatly exaggerated (suuresti liioiteltu), 3= somewhat exaggerated (jonkin verran liioiteltu), 4= possibly truthful

(mahdollisesti totuudenmukainen), 5= very likely truthful (todennäköisesti totuudenmukainen), and 6= entirely truthful (täysin totuudenmukainen).

The qualitative data consisted of the answers to the open question at the end of the questionnaire asking for the justifications of the answers given. Content analysis was used to examine this data.

#### 4.2.1 Study Two - Results and Discussion

The mean of the truthfulness index of the participants who did not know about the headline origin was 3.8 (SD=0.72). The mean of the truthfulness index of those participants who knew about the headline origin was 3.4 (SD=0.64). The difference between the means, 0.36 [0.11, 0.72] is statistically significant,  $t(59) = 2.1$ ,  $p = .044$ . The difference is equal to half ( $d=0.5$ ) of the truthfulness index standard deviation. The truthfulness index is relatively normally distributed, so the t-test can be used. The non-parametric Mann Whitney U-test also suggests that  $H_0$  should be rejected,  $U = 317.5$ ,  $p = 0.34$ .

The qualitative results will be analyzed according to heading.

#### *UUSI ASE SYÖPÄÄ VASTAAN - mullistava suomalaistutkimus (NEW WEAPON AGAINST CANCER - revolutionary Finnish research)*

In the group where participants had knowledge of the tabloid origin of the headings, the answers were divided as follows:

Complete lie	0%
Greatly exaggerated	52%
Somewhat exaggerated	27%
Possibly truthful	12%
Very likely truthful	9%
Entirely truthful	<u>0%</u>
	100%

The figures for those participants who had no knowledge of the tabloid origin of the headings were:

Complete lie	0%
Greatly exaggerated	39%
Somewhat exaggerated	25%
Possibly truthful	32%
Very likely truthful	4%
Entirely truthful	<u>0%</u>
	100%

The qualitative analysis of the justifications given revealed that when the heading was shown with information about the tabloid headline origin, participants characterized the heading as exaggerating and spreading misleading information for the most. Many answers referred to the exaggerating nature of tabloids ("Ilta-Sanomat is not a very reliable source of information", "Tabloids often use exaggerating headlines"). Quantitatively the largest amount of answers was in the category of "Greatly exaggerated" which contained 52% of the answers. Cancer was considered a difficult disease and remedies hard to find. The truthfulness of Ilta-Sanomat was pondered upon and participants thought that news of this magnitude would not be published in tabloids only. Even those who thought the heading was very likely truthful (9%), mentioned the possibility of exaggeration.

When looking at the answers with no knowledge of the tabloid headline origin, it could be noted that the answers were justified more based on the choice of words (weapon, revolutionary). Those who knew about the tabloid headline origin were content in just referring to tabloid headlines as justification for exaggeration or mistrust. Exaggeration was used as quantitatively most also when participants did not know about the origin of the heading. In both groups, most participants thought the heading to be greatly exaggerated, 52% of those who saw it with the knowledge of its tabloid origin and 39% of those who had no information of the tabloid.

32% out of those participants who saw the heading with no knowledge of its tabloid origin, thought it to be possibly truthful. The justifications used were the constant invention of new methods and drugs and the reliability of Finnish research. This figure for those who saw the heading with the knowledge of its tabloid origin was only 12% and 4 out of 7 mentions had exaggeration in the justifications.

27% of those who had knowledge of the tabloid thought it to be somewhat exaggerated as compared to the figure 25% for those who did not have information of the tabloid. In this category the answers resembled each other most and justifications used were exaggeration and spreading of misleading information. Those who knew of the tabloid justified their answers with tabloids ("A heading in Ilta-Sanomat is enough to raise suspicion", "Because the heading is in a tabloid the research may not be trustworthy"). Those who did not used more justifications based on the vagueness of the heading or the rare possibility of such a miracle drug been invented.



*Pääluottamusmiehes opettajasta: Valitti rehtorista ennen potkuja. Koulukohu (Chief Shop Steward of the Teacher: complained about the Rector before getting fired. School fuss)*

In the group where participants had knowledge of the tabloid origin of the headings, the answers were divided as follows:

Complete lie	3%
Greatly exaggerated	9%
Somewhat exaggerated	27%
Possibly truthful	34%
Very likely truthful	27%
Entirely truthful	<u>0%</u>
	100%

With no knowledge of the tabloid origin of the headings the figures were:

Complete lie	3,5%
Greatly exaggerated	3,5%
Somewhat exaggerated	11%
Possibly truthful	46%
Very likely truthful	36%
Entirely truthful	<u>0%</u>
	100%

Most of the participants who saw the heading with knowledge of the tabloid thought it to be possibly truthful, 34%. The justifications given were the fact that new methods were being constantly discovered. But also in these answers the possibility of this being misleading information or looking for sensation was brought up. 27% thought the heading to be somewhat exaggerating. Interestingly, the figure was the same for the answers in the category of very likely truthful. Those participants who considered it very likely truthful, justified the answers with the possibility of this kind of event taking place. Those who opted for the answer somewhat exaggerated, justified it with sales promotion, look for sensation, spreading of misleading information and exaggeration.

The two biggest categories for those who saw the heading without information of the tabloid were possibly truthful (46%) and very likely truthful (36%). Those who thought the event to be possibly truthful justified it with the statements like "This could have taken place", "This is just basic news" and "News like this could not be invented without the risk of getting into trouble". The answers "Very likely truthful" were justified with the same possibility of a similar event taking place ("Finns like to accuse one another", "Why not complain if you get sacked").

When comparing the participants who answered with knowledge of the tabloid to those who did not have this information, it can be concluded that the

tabloids were referred to (“Ilta-Sanomat is not a reliable source of information”) when justifying why the heading was considered as exaggerating or looking for sensation. In those answers where the participants did not know of the tabloid origin, the justifications were based more on the formatting of the heading and past experiences.

*Jo kaksi koiraa kuollut – Kuka kylvää myrkytettyjä lihapullia? (Already two dead dogs – who spreads poisoned meatballs?)*

In the group where participants had knowledge of the tabloid origin of the headings, the answers were divided as follows:

Complete lie	3%
Greatly exaggerated	3%
Somewhat exaggerated	30%
Possibly truthful	40%
Very likely truthful	24%
Entirely truthful	<u>0%</u>
	100%

With no knowledge of the tabloid origin of the headings the figures were:

Complete lie	4%
Greatly exaggerated	11%
Somewhat exaggerated	18%
Possibly truthful	7%
Very likely truthful	39%
Entirely truthful	<u>21%</u>
	100%

Most participants who knew about the tabloid considered the heading possibly truthful, 40%, with justifications such as this issue being too important to be a lie and that there really were people on a crusade against dogs. In the second biggest category, somewhat exaggerated, the answers were justified with most doubt cast on the verb “spread” (in Finnish kylvää) that was thought to be exaggerating as such.

Out of those participants who did not know the heading was from a tabloid 39% thought it to be very likely truthful. The justifications used were mostly the past experiences; knowledge of similar kind of things taking place or being published in the media (“the poisoning of dogs is sadly common”). The exact figure used (two dogs) was seen as bringing trustworthiness. One participant wrote that the truthfulness depends on where the heading is published. When comparing with the answers of those participants who knew the heading was from a tabloid, 24% thought it to be very likely truthful. The justifications used were mostly the fact that this kind of things do happen. But it is worth-

while noticing that as many participants as justified the previous also thought that the heading contained some form of exaggeration even though they categorized it as very likely truthful. The exaggeration dealt mostly with the use of the verb “spread” (kylvää in Finnish), which was thought not to apply in this case (“Spreading feels too much aggravated as expression”).

This was the first heading where participants used the category entirely truthful while 21% answering that heading was completely true. The justifications given were reference to this kind of things happening and being in headings a lot and the heading leaving no space for guessing.

#### 4.2.2 Study Two - Conclusions

This study supports the media trust study (Median uutisoinnin luotettavuus. Kunnallisalan kehittämissäätiö 2014) results, but not to the same extent. In the media trust study different media were directly compared with each other and different aspects come into play than in the analysis of individual headings. In the case of individual headings the exact content of each heading matters more. This could be due to the fact that the headings in different media do not differ that much. Same type of headlines can be found in different type of newspapers. When the fact that the headings were from tabloid headlines was known, this origin was used as justification of the felt exaggeration whereas when the origin was not known, the justifications contained more explanations about the words used in the headings, the formatting, or the general improbability of news like this. When participants knew about the origin of the heading, they suspected that news of this magnitude would be published in other media as well. This is an interesting note since the study contained no reference as to whether this information had been in other media or not. It could be argued that since finding a cure for cancer would be a news of great media value, participants would have gotten the information elsewhere already and that is where the reflection that the news had been exaggeration originates from.

For the first two headings, the distribution of the answers was very alike regardless of whether the participants knew about the tabloid origin or not. In both groups the same categories got most mentions (greatly exaggerated for the cancer heading and possibly truthful in relation to the teacher heading). The last heading “Already two dead dogs – who spreads poisoned meatballs?” had most differences in the distribution of the answers. Those who knew about the origin stated it was possibly truthful for the most and those who did not thought it to be very likely truthful. 64% of those who knew about the origin, thought it to be more likely truthful than exaggeration with a comparison of 67% for those who did not know about the origin. The category of “entirely truthful” was used only with regard to this heading with 21% of the answers when participants had no knowledge of the tabloid origin.

It is important to note that when analyzing the answers of those participants who saw the headings with the tabloid the first heading (cancer) was more justified with tabloids (category greatly exaggerated). In the justifications

for the answers of the following two headings the tabloids were not used as much. This may result from the matter being put forward already in the first answer and thus not seen necessary to repeat in the following. Although the headings used were from a tabloid headline from April 2013, it is still possible that participants of these fall inquiries may recall that those headings were used in tabloid headlines or guessed that they were from one and this could also have had an effect on their answers. One participant, who answered without knowledge of the tabloid origin, actually did write in his justification of greatly exaggerated that this was normal Ilta-Sanomat stuff and Ilta-Sanomat seems to be on the move again.

The differences are very small and the extent to which the verbal answers seemed to implicate the exaggeration nature of the tabloids, which was evident in Study One, is not as noticeable in this study although it can be detected. The conclusions of this study suggest to the same phenomenon that was argued with regard to Study One. The exaggerating nature of tabloid headlines seems to be more something that is brought up when justifying the answers rather than something actually affecting the interpretation of the headlines.

### 4.3 Study Three

Study Three was carried out in order to test the hypothesis that the knowledge of the medium affects the evaluation of the reliability (assessed truthfulness) of the heading. The study published by Kunnallisalan kehittämissäätiö in January 2014 examined the reliability of media news (Median uutisoinnin luotettavuus 2014). The trust in the reliability of tabloid news was lowest among the 11 parties evaluated, Ilta-Sanomat 18% and Iltalehti 16%. 43% of the participants stated said that the two tabloid newspapers were neither reliable nor unreliable. Also those who read the tabloids regularly gave this same answer. 66% trusted the news posted on Helsingin Sanomat. When considering only the people living in the metropolitan area, 78% thought that Helsingin Sanomat was a reliable source of information.

#### Participants and Procedure

76 students from three degree programmes Laurea University of Applied Sciences participated in the study. They were given answering sheets and no information on the time limit. The time varied between five and ten minutes. 30 participants answered with the information that the headings were taken from Helsingin Sanomat and 35 with the information that the headings originated from Ilta-Sanomat. 11 participants answered with no knowledge of the source of the heading.

## Stimuli

The headings used in Study Three were taken from a headline of Helsingin Sanomat from Sunday March 24, 2013. The headings were:

- **KOTIHOITO EI TAKAA HYVÄÄ HOITOA** (Homecare Is No Guarantee for Good Care) and
- **SOLUJA KASVATETAAN SUOMESSA LÄÄKKEEKSI** (Cells Are Grown for Medical Purposes in Finland).

These headings were chosen because they were seen as ones that could potentially be used in tabloid headlines with issues that were of current interest (homecare vs. care in an institution) and something that might not be of common knowledge (growing of cells) and could evoke questions about its truthfulness.

## Questionnaire

The answering sheets contained the following instruction:

"How truthful are the following two headings. Please mark with an X the appropriate answer (complete lie, greatly exaggerated, somewhat exaggerated, possibly truthful, very likely truthful, entirely truthful). Please justify your answer."

## Data Analysis

The answers were divided in two categories: exaggeration and truthful. The answering categories complete lie, greatly exaggerated and somewhat exaggerated were combined as exaggeration and the answering categories possibly truthful, very likely truthful and entirely truthful as truthful. The qualitative part of the answers, the justifications, was examined with content analysis.

### 4.3.1 Study Three - Results and Discussion

Table 17 depicts the results for the heading Homecare is No Guarantee for Good Care.

TABLE 17 Homecare Is No Guarantee for Good Care

Origin	Category		Total
	Exaggeration	Truthful	
Helsingin Sanomat	70%	30%	100%
Ilta-Sanomat	54%	46%	100%
No knowledge	64%	36%	100%

The biggest amount of mentions in all three groups (Helsingin Sanomat, Ilta-Sanomat and No knowledge) was in the categories expressing exaggeration. Also, most participants in all groups chose "Somewhat exaggerated" as best describing the truthfulness of the heading. For both those who thought the heading was from Helsingin Sanomat and those who were informed its origin was Ilta-Sanomat the category "Somewhat exaggerated" got 40% of mentions. Those who had no knowledge of the origin of the heading the figure for "Somewhat exaggerated" was 55%.

Table 18 presents the answers for the heading Cells Are Grown for Medical purposes in Finland.

TABLE 18 Cells Are Grown for Medical Purposes in Finland

Origin	Category		Total
	Exaggeration	Truthful	
Helsingin Sanomat	33%	67%	100%
Ilta-Sanomat	25%	75%	100%
No knowledge	0%	100%	100%

Again, all groups made similar choices. The heading was seen as truthful much more than exaggeration. All three groups selected "Possibly truthful" as best describing the truthfulness of the heading; 57% for those who thought it came from Helsingin Sanomat, 55% for those who thought it originated from Ilta-Sanomat and 82% for those who had no knowledge of the origin.

Five participants in the group that answered with information of Ilta-Sanomat as the source of the heading mentioned Ilta-Sanomat as an exaggerating medium that was only looking for sales as justification for their answer. Otherwise, the justifications given did not differ significantly between the groups and were mostly about the credibility of the content itself and thoughts or own experiences about homecare often with relation to care in an institution. For the heading concerning the growing of cells in Finland, the justifications dealt with the overall possibility to grow cells. Finnish research was given much credit, but many participants commented having no knowledge about the topic and for that reason chose to consider it possibly truthful.

#### 4.3.2 Study Three - Conclusions

This research does not support the assessment that Helsingin Sanomat is a trustworthier source of information as such than Ilta-Sanomat. In fact, slightly more participants found the headings more exaggeration than truthful when the news was published in Helsingin Sanomat: 70% compared with 54% for the heading dealing with homecare and 33% compared with 25% for the heading discussing cells. Interestingly, participants in all groups had most amounts of mentions for both headings in the same categories: "Somewhat exaggerated"

for the heading that dealt with homecare and "Possibly truthful" in the case of cells.

The origin of the heading appeared only in five justifications stating the exaggerating nature of *Ilta-Sanomat*. It is possible that when reading answering instructions, participants did not always pay attention to all that is said and for that reason might not mention the origin in the justifications. A picture of the headline might be more apparent as suggested by Study Two. The results of this study indicate the same issue that was referred to already in the discussions of Studies One and Two. Although tabloids may be heavily criticized for posting exaggerating news, this does not seem to have much impact on the assessed truthfulness of the heading. Tabloids are widely read. This cognitive discrepancy needed an explanation if a participant wanted to appear critical in her relationship with media.

The results suggest that the truthfulness of the heading is judged based on its content more although justifications might imply the tabloid origin. The results of Study One suggested that the medium affected the interpretation of the content. Based on the results of Studies Two and Three it can be argued that when the study dealt with the analysis of the tabloids, their impact was obvious. But when the tabloid was mentioned as origin, but not with vivid information about that fact, the actual content mattered more than the knowledge of its origin. After Study One it was observed that participants who wanted to present themselves as critical observers of media, wanted to make sure the researcher knew they had noticed the tabloid origin of the heading. It could be suggested that participants feel it necessary to point out the origin of the heading and its possible lack of credibility, but that in reality this information may not affect the actual emotions participants get from the content of headings. The exaggerating nature of tabloid headlines will be used as justification, when such justification is needed. However, the content of the heading seems to have more impact on the judgment of the trustworthiness.

This could implicate that tabloid headlines may have more effect on people than they are willing to admit since the exaggerating nature of tabloid headlines loses its impact when it is not directly questioned.

## 4.4 Study Four

### Participants, Procedure, and Stimuli

144 students of three degree programmes of the University of Jyväskylä and Laurea University of Applied Sciences participated in this study. Study Four comprised three different kinds of instructions (A, B, and C) for writing a story.

## Instruction A

The first instruction had the picture of the headline on the answering sheet and the instruction read as follows: "Picture the following situation. Your friend has been diagnosed with mouth cancer and she is hospitalized. On your way to visit her for the first time you notice in the hospital lobby a kiosk which newspaper stand portrays this tabloid headline (Figure 5):



FIGURE 5 Tabloid Headline for Instruction A.  
New weapon against cancer. Revolutionary Finnish Research. Chief shop steward of the teacher: complained about the rector before getting fired. School fuss. Already two dead dogs. Who spreads poisoned meatballs. Picture by Sini Setälä.

When you arrive in her room, you discover your friend in bad condition. Her mouth is so sore that she cannot talk. But she seems happy that you came and you sit on the chair by the hospital bed. Please write what you say to her (please write as if you were talking to her)."

## Instruction B

69 students were given the picture of the headline below (Figure 6) and an answering sheet with the following instructions: "As part of your studies you have been asked to come up with a story about the interaction between man and nature. You decide to write about an outing to the forest. Please write your story."





FIGURE 6 Tabloid Headline for Instruction B and Slide Show Headline for Instruction C. The moments of horror of lumberjack Juhani: "The bear chased me and bit in the hip". Aku Hirvieniemi. Bloody mockery about the Duudsons. Special interview of Saku Koivu: "Feeling emotional" Picture by Sini Setälä.

#### Instruction C

39 students first watched a power point presentation consisting of 8 slides. Each slide was shown for 15 seconds. The slides pictured wintery scenes from the streets of Helsinki with the fourth slide showing a kiosk and the fifth slide portraying the headline in figure 6.

After watching the slide show students were given answering sheets with the following instruction: "The slide show you just watched represented glimpses from your walk to school this morning. Please write a story about what you saw along the way and what feelings were evoked in you."

#### Data Analysis

The answers were examined with content analysis in order to find if they contained reference to the tabloid headlines presented. The amount of mentions was counted for to deduct impact.

#### 4.4.1 Study Four - Results

The following discusses the results of the studies based on the instructions A, B, and C.

#### 4.4.1.1 Results based on Instruction A

36 students answered this narrative questionnaire. 12 would tell their sick friend about the new treatment posted on the headline when trying to find words of comfort. The fact that it was Finnish research was emphasized. "Guess what!? There is a new treatment for cancer!" Four wrote that they would not discuss the tabloid headline because headlines exaggerated, posted false news, and they did not want to raise false hopes. One participant stated explicitly that 50% of headlines exaggerated. One wrote that she did not want to interfere with the treatments given by the hospital nor discuss cancer-linked thoughts and would therefore not discuss the headline news. Two would discuss the case of the poisoned meatballs. Others would talk about non-tabloid related wishing well matters and everyday issues.

#### 4.4.1.2 Results based on instruction B

25 out of 69 participants wrote a story involving a bear. 15 of them had a threatening element in them and 8 were directly related to the forest worker Juhani mentioned by name on the headline. One participant wanted to emphasize that animals did not attack because they were evil, another wrote that stories about bears being dangerous were greatly exaggerated. One participant stated that hysterical media induces fear. One participant commented that newspapers really had all sorts of things on headline these days. Many highlighted the importance of nature for human well-being, e.g. as stress reliever and the good feeling that an outing in nature brings about.

#### 4.4.1.3 Results based on Instruction C

Altogether 29 out of 39 participants mentioned the headline in their stories. Two stated that they had stopped to read the headlines and one had bought the newspaper. "The tabloid headlines were exaggerating as usual." Eight participants commented seeing a headline that had nothing interesting on it: "Tabloid headlines: Easy reading for stupid people, exaggerating and looking for sensation". 17 commented the content of the headline. "The headline that struck my eye did not make me feel any better", "Terrible this thing that happened to forest worker Juhani", " I feel compassion for the forest worker", "Wonder what I would do in a similar situation", "The earth is not here for just humans. Media foments useless juxtaposition. I feel sad for the dead bear." Only two commented some other heading than the one about the forest worker. One participant wrote: "These silly newspapers (hömppälehdet in Finnish) had same things in the headline again. Though the interview of Saku Koivu might actually be interesting."

#### 4.4.2 Study Four – Discussion and Conclusions

33% of the participants who read the cancer headline and 36% of those who viewed the story of the encounter of the bear and forest worker Juhani used the headline in the narratives they wrote. Although tabloid headlines were seen as exaggerating by some participants, they were used by many as consolation (cancer) or inspiration (bear) for a story. This indicates that they are not viewed as nontruthful matters that could not take place and the information contained in them will be used if needed. Apart from one mention, the heading of the forest worker was not accused of exaggeration neither was the accuracy of the story being questioned. The aspect of exaggeration was most mentioned with regard to the heading about new treatment for cancer.

The slide show presentation relied more on memory since participants had to remember the headline in order to mention it in their story. 74% did mention the headline and many were emotionally touched by the forest worker's fate. Many condemned the headlines for useless news: "I do not understand who bothers to read these". Although accused of exaggeration, the comments did not question the accuracy of the headings and felt compassion for the forest worker.

The first four studies all suggested that even if accused of exaggeration, headlines affected participants. Since emotions form an important part of the appraisal process, it was necessary to study directly the emotions raised by headlines. This is done in Study Five.

### 4.5 Study Five

#### Participants and Procedure

The interviewees were undergraduate students from one degree programme at Laurea University of Applied Sciences in Espoo and pensioners enrolled at a watercolour painting class in Kisko, Salo. Preliminary analyses revealed no systematic differences between student and nonstudent responses, and they have been combined in all analyses. The thematic interviews were carried out under the theme "What are your opinions and feelings about tabloid headlines?"

In the first 10 interviews (Interviews A), the participants were shown a complete tabloid headline (Figure 7) and asked about the feelings it evoked. In the next 20 interviews (Interviews B and C) participants had to mention 2-5 words that first came into their mind when reading a certain heading from a tabloid headline.

The interviews progressed in a similar way to all participants except for the difference in the tabloid headlines that were shown to the participants and the related instructions. The answers to the questions about the emotions and the words that came into mind about distinctive tabloid headlines and headings

were divided according to their valence into positive and negative. First according to the affect valence (the primary affect) and second according to their emotion valence (positive or negative emotions elicited, quality of the individual affect). These classifications originated from the interviews and the positive or negative character the participants gave to their answers.

After the analysis of the results of the first ten interviews (Interviews A), it was assessed that presenting the whole headline to participants was not very effective for analytical purposes. This method had originally been chosen because in real life tabloid headlines are viewed in this manner, the whole headline is in sight. But for analytical purposes, there were too many issues in the headings to be studied efficiently. This is why in the following Interviews B and C the participants were instructed to concentrate only on the main heading. The main heading was always printed with biggest letters and was most likely to attract attention even if one did not stop to read the complete headline. Participants were asked to name the first 2-5 words that came to their mind when looking at the headline instead of asking what feelings did the headings evoke, as had been the case in Interviews A. This method of asking words was chosen because it was seen as giving the participants less possibility to alter their answers with regard to the real emotions the headings evoked and that could also produce reactions that participants themselves would not classify as emotions.

#### Stimuli

There were various kinds of headlines chosen for the studies in order to get a thorough understanding of the emotions elicited by headlines. It proved to be difficult to find positive main headings (biggest print). The tabloid headlines that were collected for this research were from the months of March, April and May 2013. In addition to weather related headings that could be classified as neutral or positive ("Ist of May (Vappu) will be celebrated in sunshine"), there were no really positive main headings. They were either survival stories ("Ilona refused to die, conquered cancer and got married") or guidelines for a better future ("The use of low-carbohydrate diet to get rid of diabetes", "This is how to get rich - the richest man in Parliament provides instructions"). The survival stories were thought to elicit positive feelings, but due to the nature of the survival, also possibly negative emotions. There were positive news about celebrities, but considering that the celebrity herself might elicit various feelings, only one main heading with a celebrity was chosen. In order to have positive headings in the study, two headings commenting the success of Finnish athletes at the Winter Olympic games of Sotshi from February 2014 were included.

#### Interviews A

In the first ten interviews the participants commented one headline from the *Ilta-Sanomat* of April 8, 2013 (Figure 7) that had three headings:

- **Levottomuus lisääntynyt rajusti NÄIN HÄIRIKÖT PILAAVAT OPE-  
TUKSEN. Opettajat kertovat.** (Restlessness in class has grown a lot.  
THIS IS HOW THE TROUBLEMAKERS RUIN TEACHING. Teachers tell  
the story.)
- **Elokuvaohjaaja Claes Ohlsson kertoo rankoista hoidoistaan: VASTA  
KOLMAS LÄÄKÄRI LÖYSI SYÖVÄN.** (The Movie Director Claes  
Ohlsson tells about his heavy treatments. ONLY THE THIRD DOCTOR  
DIAGNOSED CANCER)
- **Oudoin ilmiö miesmuistiin: missä ovat muuttolinnut? KEVÄT KOH-  
TA KUUKAUDEN MYÖHÄSSÄ.** (Strangest Phenomenon for ages:  
where are the migratory birds? SPRING SOON A MONTH LATE)

Participants were shown the actual tabloid headline and were asked to describe what feelings the headings evoked. This headline was chosen because it had three distinctive headings. The first was about school, which is a topic everyone has experience of. The second heading was a topic about cancer, which is a disease that can be seen as something that could affect anyone. It also pictured a celebrity though not a very known one. The third topic about weather is a subject that frequently comes up in tabloid headlines.



FIGURE 7 Tabloid Headline for Interviews A.  
Picture by Sini Setälä.

## Interviews B

The next ten participants had four tabloid headlines shown to them and participants were asked to tell the first 2-5 words that came into their minds when looking at the main heading. Participants were instructed to concentrate on the main heading which is something that also passers-by were likely to notice even if they did not stop to read the complete headline.

The four main headings were:

1. (IL 8.4.2013). **Äiti syyttää: Pula henkilökunnasta vei vauvani hengen. Sairaala kiistää.** (Mother accuses: Lack of personnel at hospital took my baby's life. The hospital denies.)  
This heading was chosen because of the dramatic incident occurred. It was seen as one that was plausible, yet rare, but because of the on going discussion about notices, something that could potentially take place.
2. (IS 15.4.2013). **Ilta-Sanomat selvitti: Varo Tallinnan matkalla! Nämä ovat suomalaisten vaaran paikat.** (Ilta-Sanomat investigated: Beware when in Tallinn! These are the dangerous places for Finns.)  
This heading was chosen because Finns frequently visit Tallinn and very likely most participants would have visited Tallinn.
3. (IS 27.3.2013). **Nykänen Ollin valmentajaksi. Korkki pysyy kiinni. Tähtäin Sotshissa.** (Nykänen to be coach for Olli. The cork will stay closed. Heading for Sotshi.)  
This headline was chosen because the celebrity pictured in it is one of the most famous ones used by tabloids for decades already. Everyone potentially knows him.
4. (IL 21.3.2013). **Näin Kela pompottaa suomalaisia: paperit hukkuvat, päätökset viipyvät, opiskelijat ahdingossa. Näin Kela vastaa.** (This is how Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland) bounces Finns: papers get lost, decisions linger, students in distress. This is how Kela answers.)  
This heading was chosen because Kela is an institute with which practically all Finns deal at some point in their lives.

## Interviews C

The Interviews C were similar to Interviews B except for the headings chosen. The headings were:

1. (IL 18.04.2013). **7-vuotiaiden uskomaton urotyö. KAKSOSPOJAT PELASTIVAT PALAVAN ÄIDIN. Syytyi tuleen keittiössä.** (7-year olds'

incredible heroic deed. THE TWIN BOYS SAVED THEIR BURNING MOTHER. Caught fire in the kitchen.)

This heading was chosen because of the positive news even if resulting from a negative event.

2. (IL 13.04.2013). **Tytär löysi äitinsä 33 vuoden jälkeen. KOSKETTAVA KOHTAAMINEN. IL paikalla.** (Daughter found her mother after 33 years. TOUCHING REUNION. IL at site)

This heading was chosen because it was thought to be interpreted as positive.

3. (IL 10.2.2014). **Suomen mitalitili auki! Hopea-Ennin HUIKEA SAN-KARITARINA.** (The Finnish medal account opened! THE FASCINATING HEROIC STORY of silver Enni.)

This headline was chosen because it was recent news and thought to be positive.

4. (IL 22.-23.2.2014). **Pienessä maalaiskylässä kasvaneet. Niskasten IH-MEPERHE. Kulta-Iivo. Hopea-Kerttu. Muoti-Katri. Äiti: Menestys on lasten omasta asenteesta kiinni.** (Brought up in a small rural village. The Niskanen MIRACLE FAMILY. Gold Iivo. Silver Kerttu. Fashion Katri. Mother: The success results from the children's own attitude.)

This heading was chosen also because it was recent news and thought to be positive presenting a whole family of successful Finns.

#### Data Analysis

The analysis of the interviews was divided into two parts. First, the general results were examined and second, the valences were classified. The term affect valence is used for the first evaluative appraisal that will stipulate the headline either into the category of positive (positive affect) or negative (negative affect). This was classified as higher level in PANAS-X (chapter 2.3.1). Frijda (1993) uses the primary appraisal (event appraised as emotionally meaningful, in this research either negatively or positively). Emotion valence is used for the emotion experience the topic caused (quality of the individual affect, lower level in PANAS-X). Frijda (1993) uses secondary appraisal for the resulting kind of emotion. A participant told that the headline "Levottomuus lisääntynyt rajusti, näin häiriköt pilaavat opetuksen" (Restlessness in class has grown a lot, this is how troublemakers ruin teaching) was accurate; she had for example personal experience of it. This answer was categorized as positive affect valence (confident). But while agreeing with the truthfulness of the headline, the participant felt it was irritating because the participant thought that teachers lacked the capacities or possibilities to control or guide the ones provoking the disturbance in class. The headline caused negative emotion valence (irritable).

It is important to point out that for the sake of describing the affect valence and emotion valence in this research, affect valence precedes emotion valence in the illustrations (tables). In real life the two valences may sometimes be very similar (described by the same adjective in this research). Although the affect valence was used to describe the activation, it could be described by the same adjective than the emotion felt. Emotions are subjective experiences and it was not always necessary to name the emotion valence distinctively if it seemed to be very close to the affect valence experienced and could be described by the same word.

Many participants stated that the primary character of tabloid headlines was exaggeration. For this reason many participants were irritated about the headlines and judged also the topic irritable because of its tabloid headline origin. This is an important issue to note when reading the results. The emotion may result from the fact that it is posted on a tabloid headline or then from the actual topic (message itself) and its relationship to the participant. This study studies the emotions elicited and acknowledges that they result from different aspects of the same phenomenon (tabloid headlines). Their impact and duration may however be different, if the heading has for example personal meaning to the reader.

Calm and surprised are in the PANAS-X model classified as "other affective states" (Watson & Clarke, 1999). Surprise was found to have reasonably good markers of positive affect (Watson & Clarke 1999) and in this research it is classified into the category of positive affect for the reason that it presents no negative affect and when reading a surprising heading, the participant was interested in finding more about the topic. Calm was used more to describe an indifferent state to the news posted on the tabloid headline. This indifference presented no real positive activation, but since it describes a state of serenity, it was classified as positive affect for the sake of classification.

#### **4.5.1 Study Five - General Results and Discussion**

The general results common to all three interviews are discussed first. Then the individual parts of each interview, the headlines shown to the participants, are presented.

All participants except one admitted to reading tabloid headlines. Only one participant answered that she never read any tabloid newspapers in any version. One participant commented that it was practically impossible not to read the headlines since they were so widely available. Another said that people were forced to read tabloid headlines since there was no escaping them. Many had an active attitude towards tabloid headlines and said they always stopped to read the headings and paid much attention to them. Very few bought the actual newspaper itself. In two cases participants said that they bought a tabloid newspaper every day. Many read the newspaper's digital version daily and said that an interesting tabloid headline will refer them to the digital version.



With very few exceptions, the participants told that the first thing that came into their mind when discussing tabloid headlines was exaggeration or lack of trust. That was the intuitive thought that arose with regard to tabloid headlines: "I belong to those people who always think that tabloid headlines exaggerate, regardless of the topic in question". This fact was often attributed to tabloids' function as marketing device that were designed in order to sell the newspaper. This was illustrated with statements like headlines dramatize, use special language and present in pointed ways in order to grab attention. One participant added that with the ever-growing world of Internet, tabloids needed to find ever more sensational news into the headlines. Another questioned if in today's world everyone was only interested in scandalous news with a catastrophic flavour.

When asked where the notion that headlines lacked trust came from, many argued that there was a discrepancy between the heading and the actual story. Also those who did not admit to reading tabloids much gave this same justification. The use of strong superlatives was seen as suspicious. One participant commented that maybe her image of tabloids was bad, because it was negative right away, but that there was mismatch between the headlines and the actual story.

The fact that headlines exaggerated was seen as fallacious to the consumer. Participants feared that all consumers were not media critical and would buy the tabloid because of the headline only to discover that they had been misled. But it was acknowledged that tabloid headlines served the entertaining purpose, as did the actual tabloid newspapers as well. Participants argued that headlines raised the level of interest, but with a suspicious taste. The advertising purpose of the headlines was seen as one contributor to the exaggeration. One participant said that the tabloid headline was made only for the purpose of selling the tabloid and that they had no informative value.

Participants assessed that tabloid headlines looked for sensations and the topics addressed in them should be viewed doubtfully because they were feasting and wallowing on both positive and negative topics. But if the headline was one the participant agreed with, this general opinion of tabloids seemed to have no effect. One participant remarked that maybe this notion of tabloid headlines exaggerating is something people are taught to believe because according to her other forms of media were not viewed as critically. Another stated that compared to foreign tabloids, the Finnish *Iltalehti* and *Ilta-Sanomat* were quality newspapers, but if there were some really serious issue on headlines, he would check what *Helsingin Sanomat* had written about the topic. The statement that real information had to be looked for in *Helsingin Sanomat* was very common and comparison to *Helsingin Sanomat* was used often. Many participants argued that in order to be trustworthy, the news posted on a tabloid headline had to be found in other media also (e.g. *Helsingin Sanomat*).

Participants claimed that silly headlines took credibility off the actual issue and discredited the trustworthiness of tabloid headlines in general. Uselessness was also seen as one of the characteristics of headlines. Tabloid head-

lines were accused of spreading misleading or even false information. Participants assessed that few people read the actual story behind the headline and would therefore get wrong impressions of things. Many feared that other people might think the headlines were true even if oneself remained doubtful about this fact. Participants argued that tabloid headlines evoked feelings at least momentarily and that those feelings were mainly negative and this was irritable. People were scornful, loathing, and disgusted about the headlines and their assessed tendency to exaggerate and look for sensations. One participant wished that tabloid headlines did not exist because of the overwhelming negativity contained in them. Many participants put forward the notion that if mainly negative news were available, the general atmosphere would be negative also.

Participants acknowledged that the image they had of celebrities was usually based on media coverage and very often on tabloid headlines. When questioned about the issue, participants said that the news about celebrities might not be true, but during the same interview they could be laughing about a headline on a celebrity doing foolish things when drunk. The headline about Matti Nykänen was referred to as being "Salatut elämät" (a popular Finnish television series) in newspaper format. One participant said that her father's friend had been on headlines some time ago and it had not felt good. The heading had had a negative implication and she had felt bad for her friend, friend's father, and all close ones affected. She noted that the people in headlines are real and they have families and friends. Another participant noted that it was important that tabloid headlines offered entertaining news (celebrities) since news in general were otherwise mainly negative. Tabloid headlines were also seen as amusing and sources of scornful laughter. Many participants stated that it was important to read tabloids since they were often the source of discussion among friends, public discussions in general, and posted interesting news about people in general and celebrities especially. They were also found to be dealing with ordinary matters in people's lives and this was assessed as positive. The tabloids were seen as having a more personal touch on the issues handled. One participant said that the tabloid newspapers gave a soul to their articles.

One participant accused the tabloids of being racist in various ways. She said that the headlines never looked at things from various perspectives. If a person had committed a crime and was of foreign origin, this would certainly be mentioned in the headline. And if a person had a certain kind of reputation, the headlines would certainly just publish news that were connected to this reputation. The aspect of one-sidedness was brought up often in the interviews.

The following will present the affect and emotion valence classification results of each interview group.

#### 4.5.2 Interviews A - Results and Discussion

The following tables 19 and 20 illustrate that if the affect valence of a tabloid heading was classified as negative (exaggerations, disgust of tabloid headlines in general, and negative emotions), its emotion valence was also negative. The ones that had positive affect valence had either positive or negative emotion valence (feelings classified as "good" or "bad").

TABLE 19 AFFECT VALENCE. Tabloid headline from Ilta-Sanomat 8.4.2013

<b>NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE</b>	
ASHAMED	1
DISGUSTED	7
IRRITABLE	13
NERVOUS	1
SCARED	1
UPSET	3
	26
<b>POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE</b>	
ALERT	2
ATTENTIVE	2
CALM	2
CHEERFUL	1
CONFIDENT	11
INSPIRED	3
INTERESTED	2
SURPRISED	1
	24

TABLE 20 EMOTION VALENCE. Tabloid headline from Ilta-Sanomat 8.4.2013

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
ASHAMED	1	
DISGUSTED	7	
IRRITABLE	13	
NERVOUS	1	
SCARED	1	
UPSET	3	
ALERT	2	
ATTENTIVE		2
CALM	1	1
CHEERFUL	1	
CONFIDENT	8	3
INSPIRED	2	1
INTERESTED		2
SURPRISED	1	
	41	9

The following will analyse the answers categorized first as having positive affect valence and then negative or positive emotion valence.

#### ALERT

There has been fairly much discussion about fake doctors in the Finnish media lately. Fake meaning people who have for some reason been able to operate as medical doctors without having a qualified medical degree. In the ry "alert" one participant made reference to the fake doctors and was nervous about the possibility of this having more impact on Finnish health care. The weather issue caused one participant to be distressed because she worried that environmental changes could affect the arrival of spring also.

#### ATTENTIVE

Both participants who were attentive about the headings remained emotionally positively valenced. One participant thought that when studying to work in childcare, it is important to know about problems at school. The other stated that classes of special education have prepared for this kind of issues.

#### CALM

Those who were calm about the heading (eliciting no special emotional response) stated that the issues in the tabloid headline were quite irrelevant and did not affect their lives. One of them said that if having to classify this as emotion she would say that she was disgustingly tired of nonsense issues like this being brought up in tabloid headlines (negative emotion valence).

## CHEERFUL

The discussion around fake doctors caused one of the participants to be cheerful (positive affect valence) by the heading that only the third doctor was able to diagnose the cancer. She laughingly suggested that the two previous ones might have been fake doctors. But the idea that there were fake doctors operating in hospitals was one that evoked nervousness (negative emotion valence).

## CONFIDENT

In the category "confident" (positive affect valence), the participants agreed that the heading could be true, but for example the Finnish public health care was in general so good, that one should not complain and the participant was disgusted about one occasional case being taken up in media (negative emotion valence). Many also stated that the heading about the problems at schools was true (positive affect valence) and based this assumption on their own adulthood experiences (own background with working at school, relative working at school), but viewed the issue as disgusting, distressing, and upsetting (negative emotion valence). Those who were confident about the third doctor discovering the cancer retained their positive affect also as character of emotion and said that this did not have any effect on their trust on doctors and that accidents could happen anywhere. One participant argued that it was positive that the cancer was finally diagnosed.

## INSPIRED

In the category "inspired" one of the participants had in her childhood been very disgusted at school by pupils that obstructed teaching. She was happy to see the topic discussed in media (positive affect valence), but was disgusted by the fact that there still were problems of this kind at schools (negative emotion valence). Another participant stated that the problem was real (positive affect valence) and that she was happy to see media address the topic from this point of view (positive emotion valence). The third participant was happy that issues of this nature were discussed in society (positive affect valence) although she was worried and sad about the atmosphere in school classes (negative emotion valence).

## INTERESTED

The first participant who was interested about the heading argued that people in general were interesting and she would read the article about the person suffering from cancer (positive emotion valence: interested). The other said that weather issues are important and it was good to discuss them.

## SURPRISED

The participant who thought that the heading was surprising (positive affect valence) classified it as irritable because she thought that weather issues should not get that much attention in media (negative emotion valence).

The following Table 21 compiles the affects that first evoked positive activation into experienced positive and negative emotions.

TABLE 21 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. Tabloid Headline from Ilta-Sanomat 8.4.2013

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE	EMOTION VALENCE NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
ALERT (2)	NERVOUS (1), DISTRESSED (1)	
ATTENTIVE (2)		INTERESTED (1), PROUD (1)
CALM (2)	DISGUSTINGLY TIRED (1)	CALM (1)
CHEERFUL (1)	NERVOUS (1)	
CONFIDENT (11)	DISGUSTED (1), UPSET (1), DISTRESSED (6)	HAPPY (1), CONFIDENT (2)
INSPIRED (3)	DISGUSTED (1), SAD (1)	INSPIRED (1)
INTERESTED (2)		INTERESTED (2)
SURPRISED (1)	IRRITABLE (1)	
24	15	9

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

As illustrated in Table 21 more than half of the affects that first evoked positive activation, elicited negative emotion valence. Of the 24 affects that were first valenced as positive, 9 retained their positive character also as emotion valence and 15 were experienced as negative.

The main heading about the disturbances in class had a negative character since the troublemakers were accused of ruining teaching. This was experienced as negative but from different perspectives. The heading was seen as truthful because of own or a friend's or relative's experiences from school and the disturbances distressing. Participants were happy to see the tabloids discuss issues experienced as real. The fact that teachers were lacking resources or skills to handle the difficult situations was experienced as negative and according to this view the "troublemakers" were not to blame. It was to be expected that a heading of this kind would raise negative emotions.

The heading about the third doctor discovering cancer raised attention to Finnish health care issues. The recent fake doctor discussions gave the heading an amusing touch, but many were distressed about the possibility of having fake doctors treat them in hospitals. Participants in general seemed to have good confidence in the Finnish medical system and the fact that there might be loopholes in the system was causing some distress.

The third heading about weather issues made some participants think of environmental issues and the negative effects that have possibly resulted from human action. In general the weather heading was most commented as useless and dramatizing. Many participants stated that weather issues were always exaggerated in headlines.

#### 4.5.3 Interviews B - Results and Discussion

*Äiti syyttää: Pula henkilökunnasta vei vauvani hengen. Sairaala kiistää. (Mother accuses: Lack of personnel at hospital took my baby's life. The hospital denies)*

Table 22 illustrates the distribution into negative and positive affect valences.

TABLE 22 AFFECT VALENCE. (IL 8.4.2013). *Äiti syyttää: Pula henkilökunnasta vei vauvani hengen. Sairaala kiistää. (Mother accuses: Lack of personnel at hospital took my baby's life. The hospital denies)*

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
DISTRESSED	1
FRIGHTENED	1
IRRITABLE	4
NERVOUS	1
SAD	1
	8
POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
ALERT	2
	2

Table 23 shows the emotion valence distribution into negative and positive.

TABLE 23 EMOTION VALENCE. (IL 8.4.2013). *Äiti syyttää: Pula henkilökunnasta vei vauvani hengen. Sairaala kiistää. (Mother accuses: Lack of personnel at hospital took my baby's life. The hospital denies)*

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
DISTRESSED	1	
FRIGHTENED		1
IRRITABLE (4)	3	1
NERVOUS	1	
SAD	1	
ALERT	1	1
	7	3

The first participant was first frightened (negative affect valence) by the headline, but then thought it could be exaggeration or it could well be the fact the mother was experiencing a shock that made her throw these powerful accusations. She was attentive about the matter (positive emotion valence). The second participant said that she would first like to read the article, but the headline

made her nervous (negative affect valence). She then thought that it could be possible that the mother was not entirely healthy, but also that there was shortage of staff or a mistake had occurred. Both of these assumptions caused her distress (negative emotion valence). The third participant stated that the headline sounded dramatic and got alert. She noted that the hospital's view did not seem to occupy too much space in the heading and remained confident about the safety of hospitals and considered this either an exaggeration or an isolated event (positive emotion valence: confident). The fourth interviewee first experienced distress (negative affect valence). But then she said that this was once again an example of the one-sidedness of the tabloid headlines that she found very irritable (negative emotion valence). It was only offering the mother's point of view and she thought many would accept it without giving further consideration to the professional secrecy that staff at hospitals was bound to leaving them no possibility to defend themselves against accusations.

The following participant was irritated about the headline because it struck her as so obviously exaggerating, manipulating, and calculating. She found it very black and looking for emotional appeal (negative affect and emotion valence: irritable). The sixth participant was very sad about the issue. She was sorry for the mother and the baby and hoped that the heading was not telling the truth (negative affect and emotion valence: sad).

The following participant said that she was very irritated by the lack of resources at hospitals (negative affect valence) and acknowledged it to be true. Her husband had just been operated at a hospital and his experiences were in line with the message in the headline. This made her upset (negative emotion valence).

The next interviewee said that this was a matter of the future. She got alert by it (positive affect valence) and said that there would be fewer and fewer resources available in the future and that made her distressed (negative emotion valence).

The following participant said that this was again an irritable exaggerating headline (negative affect valence), but it actually made her cheerful when she thought about all the more nonsense that would be inside the newspaper (positive emotion valence). The last participant was irritated about the headline. She did not believe it. It made her think of the on-going reform in the social services and stated that the lack of resources was an exaggeration, there was always bound to be someone present at a hospital. She found irritable that people wanted to publish personal news of this kind (negative affect and emotion valence).

The following tables 24 and 25 compile the affect valence distribution into positive and negative emotion valences.



TABLE 24 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IL 8.4.2013). Äiti syyttää: Pula henkilökunnasta vei vauvani hengen. Sairaala kiistää. (Mother accuses: Lack of personnel at hospital took my baby's life. The hospital denies)

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
ALERT	(2)		CONFIDENT (1)
		DISTRESSED	(1)
	2		1

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

TABLE 25 NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS (IL 8.4.2013). Äiti syyttää: Pula henkilökunnasta vei vauvani hengen. Sairaala kiistää. (Mother accuses: Lack of personnel at hospital took my baby's life. The hospital denies)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
DISTRESSED	(1)	IRRITABLE	(1)
FRIGHTENED	(1)		ATTENTIVE (1)
IRRITABLE	(4)	IRRITABLE	(2),
		UPSET	(1) CHEERFUL (1)
NERVOUS	(1)	DISTRESSED	(1)
SAD	(1)	SAD	(1)
	8		6
			2

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

This heading could be expected to evoke negative emotions. The positive emotions had to do with the confidence the participant still had in Finnish hospitals and the sympathy felt towards the mother and baby. The participant who expressed cheerfulness could be expressing some form of irony.

*IS selvitti! Varo Tallinnan matkalla! Nämä ovat suomalaisten vaaran paikat (Ilta-Sanomat investigated: Beware when in Tallinn! These are the dangerous places for Finns.)*

Table 26 illustrates the distribution into negative and positive affect valences.

TABLE 26 AFFECT VALENCE. (IS 15.4.2013). IS selvitti! Varo Tallinnan matkalla! Nämä ovat suomalaisten vaaran paikat. (Ilta-Sanomat investigated: Beware when in Tallinn! These are the dangerous places for Finns.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
FRIGHTENED	3
IRRITABLE	2
	5
POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
ALERT	2
CALM	2
INTERESTED	1
	5

Table 27 shows the distribution of emotion valence into negative and positive.

TABLE 27 EMOTION VALENCE. (IS 15.4.2013). IS selvitti! Varo Tallinnan matkalla! Nämä ovat suomalaisten vaaran paikat. (Ilta-Sanomat investigated: Beware when in Tallinn! These are the dangerous places for Finns.)

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
FRIGHTENED	3	
IRRITABLE	2	
ALERT		2
CALM (2)	1	1
INTERESTED		1
	6	4

The first participant said that this was an irritable headline, completely useless. These safety issues should be so clear to everyone and no one could really specify what was dangerous and to whom. Every town had its dangerous locations. And everyone (Finn) was drunk in Tallinn anyway so the whole city was dangerous from that point of view (negative affect and emotion valence: irritable). The second participant experienced first fear (negative affect valence). The headline made her think of Estonian men that for her represented danger. She had had a friend be raped in Tallinn. She acknowledged the effect of alcohol and its impact on blurring common sense, but said that she was distressed about incidents that happened in Tallinn and would herself avoid nightlife there (negative emotion valence: distress).

The third participant got interested about the headline and said that she would read the article (positive affect and emotion valence). The fourth said that this was irritable because it sounded exaggerating and probably evoked fear in many. It was an inquiry done by Ilta-Sanomat and the participant thought that their inquiries had no real value. Probably the places mentioned in it were those that should be avoided in any town, dark alleys for example, and especially when drunk. She was irritated about the fact that Tallinn was in the headline,

why not any other town? She concluded that if there was nothing more important to put on headlines, things must be well in this country (negative affect and emotion valence: irritable).

The next participant first got frightened (negative affect valence) about the headline and said that she would not go to Tallinn anymore. She found it very concrete and distressing (negative emotion valence: distress).

The sixth and seventh participants got alert about the heading (positive emotion valence). The first said that she needed to read more because she frequently visited Tallinn. The latter commented that one knew well what could happen in Tallinn, but it might be interesting to see what were the dangerous spots mentioned in the headline. But she added that this would have no impact on her next trip to Tallinn (positive emotion valence: interested).

The following participant said that she had visited Tallinn only once and was quite calm about the topic (positive affect valence: calm). But then she started thinking of Finns and alcohol and the issues made her hostile. She accused Finns of being careless, drinking far too much and getting robbed because of that. She also said that Finns were taken advantage of and that they brought much liquor from Tallinn to Finland (negative emotion valence: hostile). The ninth interviewee commented that he had never had any problems in Tallinn and thought that if one remained sober, there would be no problems (positive affect and emotion valence: calm).

The last participant said that she did not feel at all like going to Tallinn, it was a dangerous place and made her frightened (negative affect valence). She was distressed about the possibility that criminality would cross over to Finland as well (negative emotion valence).

The following tables 28 and 29 compile the affect valence distribution into positive and negative emotion valences.

TABLE 28 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IS 15.4.2013). IS selvitti! Varo Tallinnan matkalla! Nämä ovat suomalaisten vaaran paikat. (Ilta-Sanomat investigated: Beware when in Tallinn! These are the dangerous places for Finns.)

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
ALERT	(2)		INTERESTED (2)
CALM	(2)	HOSTILE (1)	CALM (1)
INTERESTED	(1)		INTERESTED (1)
	5	1	4

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

TABLE 29 NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IS 15.4.2013). IS selvitti! Varo Tallinnan matkalla! Nämä ovat suomalaisten vaaran paikat. (Ilta-Sanomat investigated: Beware when in Tallinn! These are the dangerous places for Finns.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
FRIGHTENED	(3)	DISTRESSED	(3)
IRRITABLE	(2)	IRRITABLE	(2)
5		5	

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

This heading was offering information about something that could be experienced negative. It arose as much negative as positive affect and the emotion distribution stayed almost the same.

*Nykänen Ollin valmentajaksi. Korkki pysyy kiinni. Tähtäin Sotshissa. (Nykänen to be coach for Olli. The cork will stay closed. Heading for Sotshi.)*

Table 30 illustrates the distribution into negative and positive affect valences.

TABLE 30 AFFECT VALENCE. (IS 27.3.2013). Nykänen Ollin valmentajaksi. Korkki pysyy kiinni. Tähtäin Sotshissa. (Nykänen to be coach for Olli. The cork will stay closed. Heading for Sotshi.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
DISTRESSED	1
IRRITABLE	2
SAD	1
SCORNFUL	1
5	
POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
ATTENTIVE	2
CALM	1
CHEERFUL	2
5	

Table 31 depicts the distribution of emotion valence into negative and positive.

TABLE 31 EMOTION VALENCE. (IS 27.3.2013). Nykänen Ollin valmentajaksi. Korkki pysyy kiinni. Tähtäin Sotshissa. (Nykänen to be coach for Olli. The cork will stay closed. Heading for Sotshi.)

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
DISTRESSED	1	
IRRITABLE	2	
SAD	1	
SCORNFUL	1	
ATTENTIVE	1	1
CALM		1
CHEERFUL	2	
	8	2

The first participant laughed about the headline, but maintained that it evoked no feelings at all. In the tables her answer has been categorized as scornful (negative affect and emotion valence). The second participant also laughed first (positive affect valence: cheerful). She said that she knew both characters, but did not really follow sports. She was aware of the problems both had had with alcohol, or the publicity around them at least, and acknowledged the irony in the headline. But she was irritated, because could not really understand what was intended by the headline (negative emotion valence).

The third participant said that the headline was not really interesting and she remained calm about it (positive affect and emotion valence). The fourth participant said that the headline was cheerful (positive affect valence), but if someone wanted to concentrate into practicing sports at the Olympic level, there should be no discussion about alcohol and she found the headline irritable (negative emotion valence). The following participant first said that she really hoped that the cork stayed close at her neighbour's house too. She was distressed and said that alcohol was a big problem in Finland and Nykänen was hooked to it no matter what (negative affect and emotion valence).

The next participant felt very attentive (positive affect valence). She said that Matti was Matti, a touching character and she was sad about his problems in life and thought that probably there was some neurological problem behind it all and she wished him well (negative emotion valence: sad). The seventh participant stated that someone was making money with Matti Nykänen and found this irritating. She assessed that probably Matti was making money out of this as well. She was irritated about the fact that since both men were in a public profession, their doings were followed more closely (negative affect and emotion valence: irritable).

The next participant felt really sad on behalf of Matti. She said that one of her friends had known Matti in school and back then the psychic problems of children had not been treated. She felt that things might have turned out differently had there been help available (negative affect and emotion valence: sad).

The ninth participant was attentive. She said that these men were sensitive guys (acknowledging that this image was based solely on media coverage), and needed to be shaken a bit (positive affect and emotion valence: attentive). The

last participant stated that the cork would most certainly not stay closed (negative affect valence: irritable). This would take more than a coach and advised the athletes to join an AA club. After all, alcoholism was a sickness and it would take more than small changes to recover from it (negative emotion valence: disgusted).

The following tables 32 and 33 compile the affect valence distribution into positive and negative emotion valences.

TABLE 32 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IS 27.3.2013). Nykänen Ollin valmentajaksi. Korkki pysyy kiinni. Tähtäin Sotshissa. (Nykänen to be coach for Olli. The cork will stay closed. Heading for Sotshi.)

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE			
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE		
ATTENTIVE	(2)	SAD	(1)	ATTENTIVE	(1)
CALM	(1)			CALM	(1)
CHEERFUL	(2)	IRRITABLE	(2)		
	5		3		2

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

TABLE 33 NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IS 27.3.2013). Nykänen Ollin valmentajaksi. Korkki pysyy kiinni. Tähtäin Sotshissa. (Nykänen to be coach for Olli. The cork will stay closed. Heading for Sotshi.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE			
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE		
DISTRESSED	(1)	DISTRESSED	(1)		
IRRITABLE	(2)	IRRITABLE	(1),		
		DISGUSTED	(1)		
SAD	(1)	SAD	(1)		
SCORNFUL	(1)	SCORNFUL	(1)		
	5		5		

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

More than half of the participants whose first reaction to the heading was positive, experienced negative emotions. Celebrities will always evoke some form of "ready" feelings since they have been in media previously already and most likely left some emotion. This is not always acknowledged, as was the case of the person first laughing at the heading and then maintaining that it evoked no feelings.

*Näin Kela pompottaa suomalaisia: paperit hukkuvat, päätökset viiپیوät, opiskelijat ahdingossa. Näin Kela vastaa. (This is how Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland) bounces Finns: papers get lost, decisions linger, students in distress. This is how Kela answers.)*

Table 34 illustrates the distribution into negative and positive affect valences.

TABLE 34 AFFECT VALENCE. (IS 21.3.2013). Näin Kela pompottaa suomalaisia: paperit hukkuvat, päätökset viipyvät, opiskelijat ahdingossa. Näin Kela vastaa. (This is how Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland) bounces Finns: papers get lost, decisions linger, students in distress. This is how Kela answers.)

<b>NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE</b>	
IRRITABLE	5
	5
<b>POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE</b>	
ALERT	2
ATTENTIVE	1
CALM	2
	5

Table 35 depicts the distribution of emotion valence into negative and positive

TABLE 35 EMOTION VALENCE. (IS 21.3.2013). Näin Kela pompottaa suomalaisia: paperit hukkuvat, päätökset viipyvät, opiskelijat ahdingossa. Näin Kela vastaa. (This is how Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland) bounces Finns: papers get lost, decisions linger, students in distress. This is how Kela answers.)

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
IRRITABLE	5	
ALERT	1	1
ATTENTIVE		1
CALM	1	1
	7	3

The first participant said that she entirely agreed with the headline (positive affect valence: alert) and she was upset (negative emotion valence) that Kela did such things. The second participant said the headline was not of the kind she was interested in (positive affect valence: calm). She stated not being really interested in societal matters. Then she felt guilty about her lack of interest (negative emotion valence) saying that probably she needed to be. She commented that this headline gave a negative impression of Kela and hoped that Kela would not lose her papers too. The third participant got alert (positive affect valence) about the heading and said that she entirely agreed with. She had had negative experiences of handling matters with Kela and it got her upset (negative emotion valence). The fourth stated that the headline was irritable because it was so exaggerating. It only gave one part of the reality, and only some people's reality. Still it sounded very general giving the allusion that everything Kela did was bad. She wanted to point out that it was not the people working at Kela who were to blame, but it was the Parliament who had passed the laws that the staff at Kela was applying (negative affect and emotion valence: irritable).

The following participant said that the heading sounded like exaggeration. She had always received good service in Kela and did not believe the heading and found it irritable (negative affect and emotion valence: irritable). The sixth interviewee said that this was familiar stuff and very plausible (positive affect valence: attentive). Kela is a somewhat tricky institution; you just had to learn to play with it (positive emotion affect: alert). The seventh participant first felt irritated (negative affect valence) because she said that Kela also provided good service and this heading did not do justice to the staff at Kela. But she acknowledged that there were people who did not receive what they had applied for from Kela. But this was due to the law not some purposeful intention of Kela workers. This made her sad (negative emotion valence).

The following participant was sure that Kela did mistreat some customers and this caused him to be irritated (negative affect valence). But he stated that people also tried to abuse Kela and said he knew how some people found loopholes in the laws and regulations. This was in his opinion irritating (negative emotion valence).

The ninth participant said that it was not right that the staff at Kela got all the bad feedback because it was not their fault since they did what laws and regulations instructed. This made her irritable (negative affect valence). She was sure that there was shortage of staff at Kela too. She got disgusted when she started talking about the students today that were asking for more and more money. She said that in the old days people had survived without any social benefits and it was not right to ask for more when you already had many kind of support (negative emotion valence: disgusted). The last participant said that she had not heard of any bad things about Kela and thought that the ones mentioned in the tabloid must be occasional incidents (positive affect and emotion valence: calm).

The following tables 36 and 37 compile the affect valence distribution into positive and negative emotion valences.

TABLE 36 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IS 21.3.2013). Näin Kela pompottaa suomalaisia: paperit hukkuvat, päätökset viipyvät, opiskelijat ahdingossa. Näin Kela vastaa. (This is how Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland) bounces Finns: papers get lost, decisions linger, students in distress. This is how Kela answers.)

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE			
		NEGATIVE		POSITIVE	
ALERT	(2)	UPSET	(2)		
ATTENTIVE	(1)			ALERT	(1)
CALM	(2)	GUILTY	(1)	CALM	(1)
	5		3		2

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.



TABLE 37 NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IS 21.3.2013). Näin Kela pompottaa suomalaisia: paperit hukkuvat, päätökset viipyvät, opiskelijat ahdingossa. Näin Kela vastaa. (This is how Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland) bounces Finns: papers get lost, decisions linger, students in distress. This is how Kela answers.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE	EMOTION VALENCE	
	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
IRRITABLE (5)	IRRITABLE (3), SAD (1), DISGUSTED (1)	
5	5	

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

More than half of the affects that were positive turned into negative emotion valences. Many participants showed understanding towards the staff at Kela since they were applying laws and regulations passed by others. But many viewed this in a negative way and the heading could be seen as designed in order to affirm those emotions.

#### 4.5.4 Interviews C - Results and Discussion

*7-vuotiaiden uskomaton urotyö. KAKSOSPOJAT PELASTIVAT PALAVAN ÄIDIN. Syttyi tuleen keittiössä. (7-year olds' incredible heroic deed. THE TWIN BOYS SAVED THEIR BURNING MOTHER. Caught fire in the kitchen.)*

Table 38 illustrates the distribution into negative and positive affect valences.

TABLE 38 AFFECT VALENCE. (IL 18.04.2013). 7-vuotiaiden uskomaton urotyö. KAKSOSPOJAT PELASTIVAT PALAVAN ÄIDIN. Syttyi tuleen keittiössä. (7-year olds' incredible heroic deed. THE TWIN BOYS SAVED THEIR BURNING MOTHER. Caught fire in the kitchen.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
AFRAID	2
IRRITABLE	2
	4
POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
EXCITED	1
HAPPY	2
INSPIRED	2
PROUD	1
	6

Table 39 shows the distribution of emotion valence into negative and positive.

TABLE 39 EMOTION VALENCE (IL 18.04.2013). 7-vuotiaiden uskomaton urotyö. KAKSOSPOJAT PELASTIVAT PALAVAN ÄIDIN. Syttyi tuleen keittiössä. (7-year olds' incredible heroic deed. THE TWIN BOYS SAVED THEIR BURNING MOTHER. Caught fire in the kitchen.)

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
AFRAID	1	1
EXCITED	1	
HAPPY		2
INSPIRED	1	1
IRRITABLE	2	
PROUD		1
	5	5

The first participant said that afraid (negative affect valence) was the first word that came into her mind. But then she felt proud about what the boys had done and interested in knowing more about the story (positive emotion valence: proud).

The participant who was first excited about the event (positive affect valence), then experienced doubts about the possibility of someone being on flames in the kitchen and decided this had to be another of those irritable exaggerations (negative emotion valence: irritable).

The following participant was very suspicious about the truth behind this headline and considered it irritable (negative affect and emotion valence).

The fourth participant thought that it was inspiring (positive affect valence) that someone was saved, but this sounded too much like exaggeration and was irritable (negative emotion valence).

The next participant was inspired (positive affect valence) about the headline and interested in reading the story (positive emotion valence).

The following participant said that she was irritated because she was certain this was not the truth about the matter and thought that headlines like this only bring forward negative feelings (negative affect and emotion valence).

The following participant first said that fear and alarm (negative affect valence) were the first words that came into her mind. Then she said that she could picture the boys saving an unconscious mother and was very distressed (negative emotion valence).

The next participant said that this made part of the "feel good" stories that regularly appeared on tabloid headlines intended to compensate for the negative majority. She was happy about it (positive affect and emotion valence).

The following participant stated that she was proud (positive affect valence) of the young boys and wanted to know more (positive emotion valence: interested).

The last participant commented that the boys were resourceful and it made her happy (positive affect and emotion valence).

The following tables 40 and 41 compile the affect valence distribution into positive and negative emotions.

TABLE 40 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS (IL 18.04.2013). 7-vuotiaiden uskomaton urotyö. KAKSOSPOJAT PELASTIVAT PALAVAN ÄIDIN. Syttyi tuleen keittiössä. (7-year olds' incredible heroic deed. THE TWIN BOYS SAVED THEIR BURNING MOTHER. Caught fire in the kitchen.)

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
EXCITED	(1)	IRRITABLE (1)	
HAPPY	(2)		HAPPY (2)
INSPIRED	(2)	IRRITABLE (1)	INTERESTED (1)
PROUD	(1)		INTERESTED (1)
	6	2	4

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

TABLE 41 NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS (IL 18.04.2013). 7-vuotiaiden uskomaton urotyö. KAKSOSPOJAT PELASTIVAT PALAVAN ÄIDIN. Syttyi tuleen keittiössä. (7-year olds' incredible heroic deed. THE TWIN BOYS SAVED THEIR BURNING MOTHER. Caught fire in the kitchen.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
AFRAID	(2)	DISTRESSED (1)	INTERESTED (1)
IRRITABLE	(2)	IRRITABLE (2)	
	4	3	1

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

This heading was a positive "survival story" with children as heroes so it should have evoked positive feelings. This is what happened in many cases, but many were irritated about the exaggeration aspect they felt in it and this resulted into the heading being experienced as negative.

*Tytär löysi äitinsä 33 vuoden jälkeen. KOSKETTAVA KOHTAAMINEN. IL paikalla. (Daughter found her mother after 33 years. TOUCHING REUNION. IL at site)*

Table 42 illustrates the distribution into negative and positive affect valences.

TABLE 42 AFFECT VALENCE. (IL 13.04.2013). Tytär löysi äitinsä 33 vuoden jälkeen. KOSKETTAVA KOHTAAMINEN. IL paikalla. (Daughter found her mother after 33 years. TOUCHING REUNION. IL at site)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
IRRITABLE	1
	1
POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
ATTENTIVE	4
HAPPY	3
JOYFUL	2
	9

Table 43 depicts the distribution of emotion valence into negative and positive.

TABLE 43 EMOTION VALENCE (IL 13.04.2013). Tytär löysi äitinsä 33 vuoden jälkeen. KOSKETTAVA KOHTAAMINEN. IL paikalla. (Daughter found her mother after 33 years. TOUCHING REUNION. IL at site)

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
ATTENTIVE		4
HAPPY		3
IRRITABLE	1	
JOYFUL	1	1
	2	8

The first participant commented that 33 years is a very long time and she was happy (positive affect valence) that mother and daughter were now reunited and was interested in finding more about the matter (positive emotion valence).

The second and third participants answered that they were very attentive (positive affect valence) about the case and the first was very happy (positive emotion valence) about the reunion and the latter very interested (positive emotion valence) in reading what had kept them apart for 33 years.

The fourth and fifth commented that they were happy (positive affect valence) about the reunion, but not that interested in knowing more.

The sixth said that she was attentive about the matter (positive affect valence), but that it did not really evoke any feelings; she remained calm about it (positive emotion valence).

The following participant said that she was joyful (positive affect valence) about the reunion, but at the same time sad and a bit confused (negative emotion valence) since it made her think of adoption, old age and solitude.

The next participant thought that if the situation had been authentic, there would have been no tabloid journalist present. This made him feel irritable even though he acknowledged that this was supposedly one of the tabloids' "feel good" stories (negative affect and emotion valence: irritable).

The ninth was very attentive (positive affect valence) about the case. She was joyful about good things happening in the world (positive emotion valence).

The last participant was happy and inspired about the fact that two people had found each other (positive affect and emotion valence).

The following tables 44 and 45 compile the affect valence distribution into positive and negative emotion valence.

TABLE 44 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IL 13.04.2013). Tytär löysi äitinsä 33 vuoden jälkeen. KOSKETTAVA KOHTAAMINEN. IL paikalla. (Daughter found her mother after 33 years. TOUCHING REUNION. IL at site)

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
ATTENTIVE	(4)		HAPPY (1), INTERESTED (1), CALM (1), JOYFUL (1)
HAPPY	(3)		HAPPY (2), INSPIRED (1)
JOYFUL	(2)	SAD (1)	INTERESTED (1)
	9	1	8

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses

TABLE 45 NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IL 13.04.2013). Tytär löysi äitinsä 33 vuoden jälkeen. KOSKETTAVA KOHTAAMINEN. IL paikalla. (Daughter found her mother after 33 years. TOUCHING REUNION. IL at site)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
IRRITABLE	(1)	IRRITABLE (1)	
	1		1

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

This heading was experienced most positive of all headings. Just one participant was irritated about the presence of media at the reunion. The heading made one participant think of sad things after first being joyful about the reunion.

*Suomen mitalitili auki. Hopea-Ennin HUIKEA SANKARITARINA (The Finnish medal account opened! THE FASCINATING HEROIC STORY of silver Enni)*

Table 46 illustrates the distribution into negative and positive affect valences.

TABLE 46 AFFECT VALENCE. (IL 10.2.2014). Suomen mitalitili auki. Hopea-Ennin HUIKEA SANKARITARINA. (The Finnish medal account opened! THE FASCINATING HEROIC STORY of silver Enni.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
IRRITABLE	2
	2
POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
CHEERFUL	2
DELIGHTED	2
ENTHUSIASTIC	1
EXCITED	1
HAPPY	1
PROUD	1
	8

Table 47 shows the distribution of emotion valence into negative and positive.

TABLE 47 EMOTION VALENCE. (IL 10.2.2014). Suomen mitalitili auki. Hopea-Ennin HUIKEA SANKARITARINA. (The Finnish medal account opened! THE FASCINATING HEROIC STORY of silver Enni.)

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
CHEERFUL		2
DELIGHTED		2
ENTHUSIASTIC	1	
EXCITED		1
HAPPY		1
IRRITABLE	2	
PROUD		1
	3	7

The first participant felt proud about Enni's silver medal (positive affect valence). She was cheerful (positive emotion valence) about the medal because of patriotism, but also a bit sceptic about the wording "incredible heroic story".

The second participant was delighted of the medal (positive affect valence). She confessed to being a big Enni fan and was proud of her achievement (positive emotion valence). But also expressed some doubts about the use of words "incredible heroic story".

The third was irritated about the personality adoration of the headline and was of the opinion that heroes were only connected to war stories (negative affect and emotion valence).

Another participant was enthusiastic about Enni's silver medal and achievement (positive affect valence), but irritated about the headline making it into a heroic story (negative emotion valence).

The fourth participant said that all Finnish victories are cheerful and made her happy and brought about "Hooray for Finland" feelings (positive affect and emotion valence).

The next participant was very irritated about the headline's need to address Enni's childhood and look for reasons for victory there. She admitted that it was nice that Enni won the silver medal, but this digging into the childhood made it all look negative (negative affect and emotion valence).

Another stated that this cheerful and made her happy, thinking about Lapland, snow, and the northern hills (positive affect and emotion valence). The eighth participant also felt delighted (positive affect valence) about the achievement and interested in (positive emotion valence) how people were able to achieve great things in their lives. She pointed out that she still would not buy the tabloid.

The ninth participant was happy and she felt proud of being Finnish (positive affect and emotion valence). The last participant was excited about the silver medal and proud of Enni and Finland.

The following tables 48 and 49 compile the affect valence distribution into positive and negative emotion valence.

TABLE 48 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IL 10.2.2014). Suomen mitalitili auki. Hopea-Ennin HUIKEA SANKARITARINA. (The Finnish medal account opened! THE FASCINATING HEROIC STORY of silver Enni.)

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
CHEERFUL	(2)		HAPPY (2)
DELIGHTED	(2)		PROUD (1), INTERESTED (1)
ENTHUSIASTIC	(1)	IRRITABLE (1)	
EXCITED	(1)		PROUD (1)
HAPPY	(1)		PROUD (1)
PROUD	(1)		CHEERFUL (1)
	8	1	7

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

TABLE 49 NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IL 10.2.2014). Suomen mitalitili auki. Hopea-Ennin HUIKEA SANKARITARINA. (The Finnish medal account opened! THE FASCINATING HEROIC STORY of silver Enni.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
IRRITABLE	(2)	IRRITABLE (2)	
	2		2

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

This heading was expected to raise positive emotions. It did evoke feelings of patriotism and happiness for the athlete's success. But it also caused irritation because of the wording "heroic" and allusion to childhood as the explanation to success.

*Pienessä maalaiskylässä kasvaneet. Niskasten IHMEPERHE. Kulta-livo. Hopea-Kerttu. Muoti-Katri. Äiti: Menestys on lasten omasta asenteesta kiinni. (Brought up in a small rural village. The Niskanen MIRACLE FAMILY. Gold livo. Silver Kerttu. Fashion Katri. Mother: The success results from the children's own attitude.)*

Table 50 illustrates the distribution of affect valence into negative and positive.

TABLE 50 AFFECT VALENCE. (IL 22.-23.2.2014). Pienessä maalaiskylässä kasvaneet. Niskasten IHMEPERHE. Kulta-livo. Hopea-Kerttu. Muoti-Katri. Äiti: Menestys on lasten omasta asenteesta kiinni. (Brought up in a small rural village. The Niskanen MIRACLE FAMILY. Gold livo. Silver Kerttu. Fashion Katri. Mother: The success results from the children's own attitude.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
IRRITABLE	4
NERVOUS	1
	5
POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE	
CALM	1
DELIGHTED	1
JOYFUL	1
PROUD	2
	5

Table 51 depicts the distribution of emotion valence into negative and positive.

TABLE 51 EMOTION VALENCE. (IL 22.-23.2.2014). Pienessä maalaiskylässä kasvaneet. Niskasten IHMEPERHE. Kulta-livo. Hopea-Kerttu. Muoti-Katri. Äiti: Menestys on lasten omasta asenteesta kiinni. (Brought up in a small rural village. The Niskanen MIRACLE FAMILY. Gold livo. Silver Kerttu. Fashion Katri. Mother: The success results from the children's own attitude.)

EMOTION VALENCE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
CALM		1
DELIGHTED		1
IRRITABLE	3	1
JOYFUL	1	
NERVOUS	1	
PROUD		2
	5	5

The first participant stated that she felt proud, was patriotic and happy: "Way to go Finland!" (positive affect and emotion valence). The second was delighted about their achievements and inspired in thinking that they must have had a very encouraging family and supportive parents (positive affect and emotion valence).

The third participant was irritated (negative affect valence) that the headline was looking for a sensation in a family that was not any more wonderful than any other family (negative emotion valence: disgusted).



The fourth participant said that the headline exaggerated a lot and this was irritable (negative affect and emotion valence). The fifth stated that she would read the article, but was calm (positive affect valence) about the matter, experiencing in her own words "just a bit of joyful feeling for Finland" (positive emotion valence). The following participant first experienced nervousness about the headline (negative affect valence). She said that it filled her with pressure to achieve something in life. She felt it was upsetting that if one member of a family accomplishes something "big" in life, others were compelled to do so as well. She found this very upsetting (negative emotion valence).

The seventh participant said that this headline was just looking for publicity and was irritable (negative affect and emotion valence).

The next participant was first irritated (negative affect valence) by the headline, because it felt exaggerated and somehow "fake". But she concluded that it was a "feel good" story and was joyful about the family members' success (positive emotion valence). The ninth participant said that she was proud (positive affect valence) of the Niskanen family achievements and inspired about the family support that must be behind (positive emotion valence).

The last participant was joyful (positive affect valence) about the success of the family members, but expressed distress about the ways this could have been achieved and thought about the possible use of illegal methods (negative emotion valence).

The following tables 52 and 53 compile the affect valence distribution into positive and negative emotion valence.

TABLE 52 POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IL 22.-23.2.2014). Pienessä maalaiskylässä kasvaaneet. Niskasten IHMEPERHE. Kultta-Iivo. Hopea-Kerttu. Muoti-Katri. Äiti: Menestys on lasten omasta asenteesta kiinni. (Brought up in a small rural village. The Niskanen MIRACLE FAMILY. Gold Iivo. Silver Kerttu. Fashion Katri. Mother: The success results from the children's own attitude.)

POSITIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE	
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
CALM	(1)		JOYFUL (1)
DELIGHTED	(1)		INSPIRED (1)
JOYFUL	(1)	DISTRESSED (1)	
PROUD	(2)		HAPPY (1), INSPIRED (1)
	5	1	4

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

TABLE 53 NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE DISTRIBUTION INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. (IL 22.-23.2.2014) Pienessä maalaiskylässä kasva-neet. Niskasten IHMEPERHE. Kulta-livo. Hopea-Kerttu. Muoti-Katri. Äiti: Menestys on lasten omasta asenteesta kiinni. (Brought up in a small rural vil-lage. The Niskanen MIRACLE FAMILY. Gold livo. Silver Kerttu. Fashion Katri. Mother: The success results from the children´s own attitude.)

NEGATIVE AFFECT VALENCE		EMOTION VALENCE		
		NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	
IRRITABLE	(4)	DISGUSTED	(1),	JOYFUL (1)
		IRRITABLE	(2)	
NERVOUS	(1)	UPSET	(1)	
	5		4	1

The number of each affect/emotion is shown in parentheses.

This heading raised positive emotions, but more negative ones than could be expected based on the general alleged positivity of the heading. The negative ones resulted from making one family more special than others. It also brought about feelings of need to perform well that were experienced as upsetting.

#### 4.5.5 Study Five – General Discussion and Conclusions

Emotions are continuous processes and they may change when appraisals change. Same events can cause different appraisals when new or previously not remembered or imagined things occur or come into mind. Participants, who first were interested in a certain heading, felt sadness after giving the issue more consideration (cognition after the conscious recognition of an emotion). Elster (1999) labels this kind of emotion as meta-emotion. With regard to tabloid headlines it is possible that the conscious recognition of the headline as source of emotion, may also result in its consideration as exaggeration. As Scherer (2003) states, one of the most important components of emotion is subjective experience or feeling. The continuity of emotions with possible and very likely changes renders the classification of emotion very complex as well pointed out by Colombetti (2005). This complexity is the challenge faced when analysing the effect of tabloid headlines. The general attitude towards them is two folded. On one hand participants were eager to state that news posted on headlines were exaggerations and looked for sensations. On the other hand, topics that participants found agreeable and true to their own understanding were not seen as exaggerations after all and were classified as true without questioning the fact that they were from tabloid headlines that the participant had just described as exaggerating.

There are two levels of emotion elicitation with regard to tabloid headlines affecting the appraisal processes. The first level is the source of information (tabloid headline). This also includes the words, wording, colours, font, and possible pictures used. Tabloid headlines seem to bear a strong negative exaggeration stigma on them. Even positive headlines were accused of exaggeration. Feeling rules may be one important factor contributing to this assessment. Since there could well be an unwritten rule that tabloid headlines are exaggerations,

the interviewee could be drawn to demonstrate that she was aware of this fact. "If a great many people think in a particular way, they must know something that we do not" (Kuran 1995, 163). The headlines were accused of various negative things. They were said to be looking for sensation, lacking trust and even posting false information. At the same time, they were widely read and thanked for presenting entertaining news and handling issues "with a personal touch". They were often compared to Helsingin Sanomat. While Helsingin Sanomat was given more credibility, it was accused of being boring. The fact that the digital version of Helsingin Sanomat limited its free access to five articles was also criticized in comparison to the tabloids presenting no limitations. News consumers tend to be fairly brand loyal (Arpan & Peterson 2008).

The second level of emotion elicitation is the message itself. This is the most subjective and personal level and stimulated by one's personality, own life circumstances and history, but also by the collective representations. The appraisal resulting from the reading of the tabloid and interpretation of the topic handled will always be difficult to assess without at least some knowledge of the person in question and her culture. But while being difficult, some general conclusions can be drawn.

Attention should first be drawn to the fact that many of the emotions elicited by headlines were negative, also of those headings that could be classified as positive. There have been various studies about the effect of emotions and there is wide consensus about the fact that emotions do affect well-being and capability of functioning, but researches do not entirely agree on when are emotions beneficial and when are they harmful (Juujärvi & Nummenmaa 2004). For studies about the harmfulness of negative emotions, see for example Oldham (2010) and for positive emotions increasing the possibility that people will feel good in the future see for example Fredrickson and Joiner (2002).

When Lazarus (2003) argues the emotion valence problem, he mentions anger as one of the emotions that is usually classified as having a negative valence when it is actually often experienced as positive. Lazarus states as example feelings of anger resulting in a person standing up for herself. The headline of the accusing mother (Mother accuses: Lack of personnel at hospital took my baby's life) could certainly result in a person standing up for her rights at the company that faces lay-offs. While acknowledging the truth of this statement there are many plausible causes of action before the possibility to stand up for one's own rights presents itself (snappish comment to the child accompanying the person reading the headline at a grocery store, irritation towards the "too slow" cashier, etc.) and it would be too simple not to consider their effects on the person experiencing the emotions and their possible bandwagon effects. When studying emotions, there is need to consider various possibilities. This leads to the direct versus indirect effects of the headlines. The snappish or irritating remarks discussed above are examples of the indirect effects.

Fear in its various characterizing forms (nervous, distressed, scared, hostile) is a powerful emotion and needs to be discussed in more detail. It was present in all the affect and/or emotion valences evoked by the headlines except

for the following two: "Tytär löysi äitinsä 33 vuoden jälkeen. KOSKETTAVA KOHTAAMINEN. Iltalehti paikalla - Daughter found her mother after 33 years. TOUCHING REUNION. Iltalehti at site" and "Suomen mitalitili auki! Hopea-Ennin HUIKEA SANKARITARINA - The Finnish medal account opened! The FASCINATING HEROIC STORY of silver Enni". Even the headline about the Niskanen miracle family evoked distress in the form of thoughts about potential doping. Koskela (2009) argues that the sense of community is complex. The enhancing of it can lead to the paradoxes of safety (shutting out, differentiation, and the securing/defending of one's own interests), but the lack of it to feelings of insecurity.

Fear is in itself rational, but also agonizing and weakening (Kahneman 2012). Williams and Dickinson have studied the fear of crime and their article *Fear of Crime: Read All About It* (1993) discusses the findings. They write that the fear of crime has been identified as a problem in itself. It can be argued that in order to constructively fight the threat of crime, a certain amount of fear is needed, but a negative counter reaction or insane fear can lead to fear becoming a social problem (Moore & Trojanovic 1988).

The headline of Iltalehti from 12.09.2013 announced as its main ing: "Research: stress at work will destroy health. The threat of getting sacked increases coronary diseases." There has been numerous news on notices and lay offs in the media. At the same time there are official working groups set up trying to figure a way out of the depression. Participants were eager to assess tabloid headlines as exaggerations, but when the heading was one they agreed with, the notion of exaggeration no longer seemed to be valid. When questioned about this conflict, the participants answered that of course not all that was posted on tabloid headlines were lies or exaggerations. If the society portrayed to its citizens contains constant images of negative issues, is there relevance in fighting the depression with no attention to what kind of information is conveyed? What are the collective representations that get enhanced?

Participants were worried that other people might interpret headlines as truthful while they remained media critical as stated by the third person effect (TPE). Many of the interviewees were certain that other people were affected by tabloid headlines while they themselves were able to remain media critical. Perloff (2002) claims that the TPE hypothesis has two parts: the perceptual and the behavioral. The first one asserts that people think that communication influences others more than oneself and the second that one will take action in order to prevent the predicted effects the media has on others. The interviewees were disgusted about the negative news posted on headlines and worried about their effects on children for example. These predicted effects had led a mother to prevent her children from reading a headline in the supermarket. She had also instructed her children to always ask her if they read a headline that needed clarification. Whether the headline will have an effect, and what kind of effect, does not matter since it is the beliefs of the effect that lead to action. A communication leads to action not because of the effect it has on those seeing it, but because of the belief that it will have an impact (Davison 1983).

According to the studies made by Pronin, Lin and Ross (2002) the knowledge that bias affect human judgment and evaluation and the perception of this effect on other people's decision making processes does not render immune from similar kind of biases and the lack of perceiving their influence on one's own judgment. Gilowich and Williams have in their article "Do People Really Believe They Are above Average?" (2008) studied if people truly believe that they are above average or is it just a question of mere hopes or overly optimistic self-assessment. Their results support the conclusion that people truly believe that they are better than average, though with an optimism that is flexible and sensitive to the existing circumstances (Gilowich & Williams 2008).

Drake (2014) argues in relation to using a search engine in the net that while people claim that they know if an information is valid or not, they seldom bother to verify the source of the information. Stanovich and West (2008) have discussed thinking biases in seven different studies and state that biases do not correlate with cognitive abilities. This is one explanation to the fact that people do read the tabloids, but accuse them of exaggeration while stating that they knew when the heading exaggerated. In order to retain internal and external credibility, a person cannot at the same time accuse one heading of exaggeration and entirely agree with another. When questioned where the notion of exaggeration came from participants answered that when reading the actual article, its content differed much from what the headline implied. This was almost always given as justification. Also those participants who did not acknowledge reading the actual tabloid often offered this same justification. A few participants stated that the exaggeration could be deducted from the verbalization of the heading. According to the National Media Study (KMT kokonaistavoittavuus 2013) Iltalehti and Ilta-Sanomat had the largest overall reach. This discrepancy between lack of credibility and large attractiveness could have an impact on participants' comments about the tabloid headlines and account for the strong agreement participants had with headings that they viewed as true even though their general opinion about the tabloid was mistrusting.

The remark one participant made about the possibility of the exaggeration notion being something people are taught to believe is interesting and forms part of the feelings rules and collective representations. Participants found it important to remark about the exaggeration aspect (that is what one is supposed to think about tabloid headlines), but could not really justify their answers when they willingly agreed with the heading thus contradicting their own statements of headline exaggeration.

The fact that tabloid headlines were seen as marketing products probably has an impact on the exaggeration aspect and might be the issue behind the thought that people are "taught" to believe tabloid headlines exaggerate. According to the media trust study carried out by Business Consultancy Viestintätoimisto Pohjoisranta Oy (2011) only one quarter of Finns find advertisements trustworthy sources of information (Viestintätoimisto Pohjoisranta Oy 2011).

Ilta-Sanomat stated in its answer to The Ethical Committee of Advertising (2005) that tabloid headlines were independent journalistic products (Mainonnan eettinen neuvosto 2005) and did not agree with the notion that they were advertisements. Many of the participants of this study pointed out the fact that because tabloid headlines were advertisements, they used exaggerations. This general opinion seems to suggest that if not made for advertising, tabloid headlines are still viewed as such. Kilpi (2007) assesses in his book celebrating the 75 years anniversary of Ilta-Sanomat that marketing issues used to be kept far from the making of the headline, but that today the impact of topics on sales are analysed more closely.

Tabloids were accused of giving one-sided views to their stories even if the heading seemed to imply that the article contained opposing views also (Mother accuses: Lack of staff at hospital took my baby's life. **Hospital denies.**) This opinion could be understood as forming part of the stereotype of tabloid headlines, its collective representation. One participant wondered whether the image she had of Finns being depressive and using a lot of alcohol, was something that was imposed upon by media, or was it really an accurate description of Finns? This falls under the cultivation theory and agenda setting model processes and is an interesting question of the images that are created by media and then put forward by interpersonal discussion.

The fact that celebrities appeared so often in tabloid headlines was regarded as irritable. At the same time there are more and more reality shows (Big Brother, Suomen surkein kuski (Finland's worst driver), Voice of Finland, Talent, Suuret setelit (Big Bucks), etc.) being shown on television giving practically everybody the possibility to at least apply to be a celebrity. Participants also assessed that in today's world everyone wanted to be a celebrity. One interviewee said that it is quite depressing that the one who wins Big Brother is a super celebrity. This seems to demonstrate another discrepancy. The popularity of reality shows and grown number of "wanna be celebrities" is not in line with the disgust or sense of usefulness participants told they felt towards celebrities in tabloid headlines, if disgust is not seen as an emotion that people are especially looking for. It could be attributed to the fact that there exists a feeling rule that in order to be a "real" celebrity, you should really have accomplished something. The way to fame may be thought of as being too easy, at least if accomplished by someone else. But there is also the possible explanation that since "every guy" can be a celebrity, feelings of envy may play a role in the disapproval of the so-called useless celebrities. The fact that tabloids posted entertaining news was viewed positively and since tabloids are so widely read and use celebrities much the discrepancy between what is said and what is actually done could be attributed to feeling rules. Also, the feelings of disgust evoked by celebrities could actually be felt as positive emotions because of the entertaining value they bring. They offer a possibility to loath someone else and sustain a better feeling of worth on one's own life, even if that life is not always felt as the best or most interesting one.

According to the disposition theory (Raney 2004) the enjoyment of media content increases when highly liked characters experience positive outcomes and when highly disliked characters experience negative outcomes. This is illustrated in the use of celebrities and the narratives or introduction to narratives constructed for or by them in the headlines. These stories can be shared with others and used to live more varied lives than otherwise would be possible. It is important to note that the perceptions of “good” (heroes) and “bad” (villains) may depend on the individual (Oliver 2000). Feelings of disgust may be feelings that people are likely willing to share with others and thus cause emotionally rewarding experiences. Emotionally charged events produce a need to disclose to other people (Nabi, Jiyeon, & Prestin 2011). A common target of disgust could produce a sense of solidarity. Wakefield and Kashima (2008) argue that emotion-eliciting messages are not only likely to directly influence the individual, but also indirectly, by encouraging discussion about the message. Participants noted that it was important to read tabloids since they were the source of public discussion. Feelings of national identity were evoked by the headlines discussing the medals won by Finnish athletes.

The former Olympic level athlete, Matti Nykänen, was the only “real” celebrity included in this study. The successful Finnish athletes of the Sotshi games have some celebrity connotation, but have not yet acquired a “real” celebrity status. The headline about Matti Nykänen evoked both positive and negative affect valences and emotions. He was referred to as being a character with a touching life history. The headline combined alcohol and Nykänen, who has been on headlines much because of alcohol. This combination could be one to guide, so to say, the emotions evoked since alcohol is a challenging topic in Finland and various societal problems are attributed to its excessive use. Still, Nykänen was also seen in a positive way and others were accused of taking advantage of Matti.

The notion of tabloid headlines being useless is an interesting one because it incorporates the idea that someone assumes the judging of what is useful and what is not. Some participants regarded topics about weather as useless “spring will come anyway, no point in discussing it on tabloid headlines”. Others deemed that weather was an important issue and even vital to farmers for example.

Many participants stated that tabloid headlines had an effect on emotions, at least momentarily. Since emotions are subjective experiences, this leaves room for the interpretation done by the one who experiences the emotion and the researcher analysing the interviews. This is why the PANAS-X scale was adopted to describe the emotion valences. In real life, tabloid headlines are seen in various circumstances and their effect may be very different depending on the mood the person reading them is in, her life experiences, her attitudes toward celebrities, etc. Hochschild (2003) compares the understanding of emotions to modern linguistics that evaluate language in a social context. Emotion is a language that is best understood with relation to its environment, its social context.

## 4.6 Study Six - Expert Interviews

Because fear was present in so many of the valences evoked in Study Five, it was necessary to investigate if those fears could be detected in everyday life on a more general level.

### Participants and Procedure

Ten police officers from the police departments of Helsinki, Western Uusimaa, Eastern Uusimaa, and central Finland were interviewed in order to discuss tabloid headlines and their possible effects as seen by the police. The officers are employed in different areas of the police which offers them diverse perspectives into their profession. The interviews took place in spring and fall 2014.

### Data Analysis

The analyzing of the interviews was made based on content analysis. The target of the study was to find out if tabloid headlines have impacts on the work of police officers and the following presents the results in the form of discussing the main comments made by the participants.

#### 4.6.1 Study Six - Expert Interviews - Results

Participants argued that what they found problematic in headlines was the fact that they made very rare issues seem possible or even likely to happen. The headings were written in the way that the issues discussed appeared possible to happen to just anyone. But, if analyzed more closely, alcohol or drug abuse for example were playing an important role in the course of the tragic events. They were not, in fact, issues that happened to just anybody even though the headings seemed to imply in that direction.

The police officers who did more field work commented that people came to ask them about the issues posted in the headlines and wanted to know if they were accurate. One participant gave as example the news about an intruder who had penetrated houses in order to commit robbery. People had actively approached the police officer to learn more about that particular case based on what they had read on the headline. The police officer stated that especially issues that happened in the neighbourhood arose attention. He said that middle aged and older people seemed to follow the headlines because they were the ones asking about the issues posted in them. They wanted to know for example if it was still safe to walk in a certain area or could the police not do something about an issue. Younger people appeared to get their information more from the social media or internet based sources in general. He said that also young people approached the police to discuss issues, but even if this happened in front of a kiosk with headlines in sight, the issues young people wanted to talk



about were not directly related to the headlines. But, with older people the impact of the headlines could be noticed.

One participant mentioned that every day people jumped behind the wheel of the car and commenced their journey to work without being the least afraid of all the tired, mobile texting, or drug abusing people that were potentially also behind wheels. Each week someone gets killed in a traffic accident, but people were not afraid of that. People were more afraid of getting killed by a murderer at their home if a murder that took place in someone's home was published in the media.

One participant gave as example the beginning of the school year in fall and headlines about pedophiles. If the headline mentioned for example a certain coloured truck in relation to a possible pedophilia case, there would be people informing the police about similar kinds of trucks. In one actual case, a truck in a schoolyard had caused great concern because the driver had been talking with children. It had turned out that the truck had been there for days because the driver had been executing renovations at the school and had been talking with children during his lunch break. Police needed to put out fires at schools and in parent-teacher meetings and this called for more resources.

The police was concerned when the general public was informed of an incident that only affected a few people, but as a consequence of media coverage caused ill-founded loss of feelings of security for great many people. One participant mentioned as example a homicide that had recently taken place in Espoo. One of the tabloids had published news entitled something in the style of: The Death Zone Has a Gloomy Reputation. The article was based on a different story and had nothing to do with the homicide that had taken place. But the title had been changed in order to fit the current incident and situation. As indirect consequence this kind of news could in addition to the feelings of fear caused to local residents also lead to the loss of value in the properties in this neighbourhood.

One participant discussed the aggravation of one incident that had taken place in the Big Brother (BB) house in spring 2014. Based on what had happened in the BB house and the resulting media coverage, people could be wondering whether the BB house was free of penal responsibility and the police officer had written in twitter what the incident would lead to in real life. A tabloid had made news that the police condemned the person's behavior in BB house. The reader could have interpreted the heading as the police judging the situation in a strait-laced manner even if that had not been the case. The police officer had written an update in his work profile after which the heading had been altered.

Another participant mentioned that the cutting of funds of the police that has been on the news lately had led to an increase in the feelings of insecurity in citizens. The police had received feedback that it was useless to call the police since it would take so much time before they got to the place of crime.

The participants agreed that headlines were a complicated issue for the police. They agreed that it was very important to get information from the pub-

lic since this information could lead to the capturing of a real criminal. But the fear that was put forward by the headlines could lead to many false calls and cause great concern for parents with school children for example. The police were of course grateful for the visibility and valuable help that it got via the tabloids. In the case of the heading about dogs being killed for eating poisoned meatballs (Figures 3, 4, and 5), the heading would make dog owners aware of the threat and give them better possibility to react.

One participant discussed a case that took place in the aftermath of the school murders that disrupted Finnish society in 2007 and 2008. The tabloids made a story about a pupil who had in the school refectory during lunch break asked for more fish sticks that he was supposed to get. The incident had escalated so that the police had been called at scene (Ilta-Sanomat 14.01.2009). The following week he had pointed a gun shaped lighter at a fellow pupil and someone had mistaken it for a real gun. Police had been alerted because of the alleged gun (Iltalehti 28.01.2009). These kinds of incidents have received a lot of media coverage and strengthened people's ideas that there were terrible things happening in Finnish schools all the time and people were more prone to react to all suspicious looking issues. Statistically there had been no dramatic leap in school violence (Pelkonen 2011).

Participants argued that in issues that were relatively small, the wording of a headline for example, could lead to big effects and cause fear in people who were not directly concerned and guilt and marking in people who were, i.e. the relatives of the ones mentioned in the headlines. The participants discussed the responsibility of the media concerning the aggravation of the tensions between certain persons or groups: not everybody understood the tabloids' blasting way of writing. This could lead to the confrontation of people and issues. Even small disagreements could be turned into major issues with the use of appropriate adjectives. People would read only the headings and draw conclusions based on them without knowledge of the actual incident. Participants referred to issues in headlines that dealt with cases that they had personally been involved in as police officers. They commented that the headlines generally made the issues appear more frightening than what had been the actual reality of them and this had an effect on the feelings of security of people.

The police is bound to professional secrecy and has therefore little possibility to express different points of view in media and this fact tends to lead to the exploitation of one-sidedness and the aggravation of issues. Headlines that discussed the police and their work of course had impact inside the police and affected the participants on a more personal level.

#### **4.6.2 Study Six - Expert Interviews - Discussion and Conclusions**

When people approached police officers in the street and asked about a particular headline, its impact was clearly detectable. But, it was difficult to draw any direct conclusions about the effect of tabloid headlines on a more general level, because there were no official data gathered to base the observations of the par-

ticipants on. The police officers agreed that headlines had effects, but because of other forms of media available to the public, it was difficult to find any direct causal relationships. They were most concerned about the fear, or aggravation causing effects that headings had and their direct and indirect consequences.

Heiskanen (2002) discusses the 1997 shooting of the police officers in the centre of Helsinki. The incident had been the main news in media for several days. The interviews for the 1997 victim study (uhritutkimus) had taken place at the same time. The news coverage of the crime resulted in a few percentage units' increase in the fear of violence felt by women in the metropolitan area. In a couple of weeks the level of fear was reduced to the same as before the crime had taken place. Heiskanen (2002) concludes that the results could be interpreted as the media having an impact on the enhancement of fear if news dealing with violent crime were continuously as main topics.

A local newspaper Salon Seudun Sanomat discussed in its article "Salon päivystys on ruuhkautunut kesäpotilaista" (25.07.2014) the piling up that summer holidays caused at local emergency duty. The nurse who was interviewed suspected that the fear of tick bites and the potential borriolis infection led people to come to emergency easier than normally. The feeling of being safe is generally based on the experience that one can oneself control and regulate one's own life (Toskala 1997). Headings about ticks (Figures 8 and 9) in the tabloids may as indirect consequence lead to the piling up of the emergency duty in areas with a high density of summer populations. A similar kind of increase in the resources needed by the police was detectable in the aftermath of the school shootings. More resources were needed because people interpreted various stimuli as suspicious or frightening and called for the attention of the police. Fear inducing headings need not be of violent nature in order to have a fear inducing impact.



FIGURE 8 The Cover of Ilta-Sanomat 24.07.2014.  
 NO VACCINE AVAILABLE. The NEW FATAL TICK  
 DISEASE spreads in holiday resorts.  
 Picture by Sini Setälä.



FIGURE 9 Headline of Ilta-Sanomat 22.04.2013  
 Darude's wife and son fell ill. THE TICK BITE  
 MADE LIFE SEEM LIKE A NIGHTMARE.  
 Picture by Sini Setälä

Fear has many indirect consequences in society. It often leads people to look for solutions to reduce fear. According to Altheide and Schneider (2013) this is an important social problem. They discuss Americans that today have a comparative advantage in terms of diseases, accidents, nutrition, medical care, and life expectancy, but who perceive themselves to be at great risk and expressed clear fears about this. This has led to the acquiring of diverse means of safety such as firearms and their use in situations of conflict (Heiskanen 2002).

Fear as emotion was found in many of the answers given in the category of topic related negative emotions in Studies One and Five. According to studies of the news media in several countries (Altheide & Schneider 2013) fear is a major news frame within which numerous reports are produced. It is important to understand that what matters in fear is not its calculated realistic risk but its reality to the person affected (Koskela 2009), in this case the reader of the headline. Things that are apprehended as real will become real because of their consequences (Koskela 2009). After the horrifying 9/11 terrorist attack that took place in the United States in 2001, many people decided not to fly, but took the car instead. The statistics from that time show an increase in the death caused by traffic accidents (Taleb 2010). Taleb calls them the silent victims of 9/11. Toskala (1997) discusses the fears that limit the lives of people. He says that they are not based on imminent and real danger, but on the threatening inter-

pretations that a person has given to things and phenomena. This was also reflected in the answers of the police officers.

Koskela (2009) discusses the "overproviding parents" and argues that the issue has melted into the culture of fear. Even if one were to agree that a child's development would be enhanced by allowing him to take risks and confront difficulties to a certain extent, the cultivation of fear (the possibilities of the worst case scenarios) may lead to not allowing one's own child to take any risks (Koskela 2009). This, in turn, may lead to the narrowing of the child's living space and the inducing of the element of fear in everyday life. Research shows that children often experience anxiety and distress while watching mass media presentations and that these feelings, in varying intensities, often linger after exposure (Cantor 2002). The reactions of parents in issues that children have been able to read from the tabloids, may have an impact on the children's own conduct and feelings of safety (ticks, pedophiles, outings in the nature). The fact that journalist interviewed pupils and students affected by the Jokela and Kauhajoki school shootings seemed to increase the risk of trauma-induced symptoms and the intense following of the media coverage of the incidents seemed to correlate with mental symptoms in respondents who had been in the proximity of the events (Haravuori, Suomalainen, Turunen, Berg, Murtonen, & Marttunen 2012). Even if statistically school shootings and other dramatic incidents are rare, they have impacts on the people directly concerned and may alter their lives. But, in addition, they lead to the increase of indirect feelings of fear in those not directly concerned that statistically speaking should have no base for such kind of emotions. These emotions may in turn lead to choices that alter their lives (i.e. the ones who died in "unnecessary" car accidents after 9/11).

Heiskanen (2002) discusses the impact of violence in media, movies, and news on the behaviour of people. He argues that socialization usually secures that the model of violent behaviour will not be transmitted on the average citizen, but fear and feelings of insecurity may increase. Berkowitz and Heimer Rogers (1986) argue that since mass media reaches wide audiences, even small probabilities become significant in practicality. Koskela (2009) discusses safety and states that the possible "side effects" and unintentional consequences of enhancing safety transform its pursuit problematic. He calls them the paradoxes of safety. Fear is easily transformed into hatred and nurtures indifference towards other people. The police officers were worried about the aggravation of tensions between people and groups because of aggravated headings. Konijn and ten Holt (2011) refer to negative emotions, such as fear, as having attention-narrowing effects that lead people to become less open minded, less accepting of dissenting opinions, and less accepting of out-group members.

Pyszczynski, Solomon and Greenberg (2003) state that when accepting the view that culturally constructed beliefs about reality serve a fundamentally death-denying function, the consequence is that the mere existence of people with alternative conceptions of reality is psychologically problematic. If people accept the potential validity of other beliefs on the conceptions of reality, it

leads to the possibility that one's own beliefs are not true. The condemnation of other ways of living may be the result of fear.

Police officers commented that not everybody understood the blasting way in which tabloids write. The meaning of words may not be unambiguous in all situations and for all individuals.

One issue that needs to be discussed in relation to fear inducing headlines is the desensitization effect. If violent news are in the media constantly this may lead to desensitization to violence. This, in turn, may result in people getting used to violence, considering it as normal and having less empathy towards its consequences (Mustonen 2001). If news about war and its atrocities are on the news constantly, the news will lose their power to affect. Desensitization will result in the loss of sensibility to experience emotional reactions. Nabi, So, and Prestin (2011) state that media desensitization research suggests that repeated exposure to messages that typically evoke an emotionally based physiological response lose their capacity to do so.

## 5 TABLOID HEADLINES IN MIND

The world surrounding human beings is complicated and full of stimuli; some of them will pass unnoticed while others will gain more attention. The interpretation takes place in the mind of the interpreter and the meaning derived may be very individual. The following will first discuss the assessing of tabloid headlines. Then, conclusions from the studies will be drawn and the defining of good and bad are examined. The chapter concludes with an overview of the consequences of tabloid headlines.

### 5.1 Assessing Tabloid Headlines

Tabloid headlines differ from other (mass) media because of their availability. As one participant pointed out "there is no escaping them". Of course, it is possible to wilfully make the decision not to read them, but it could be argued that in urban areas especially, and in all areas that have a kiosk, grocery store, or gas station, never catching at least a glimpse of the headings of tabloid headlines may prove to be very difficult. Although the reading of headlines is an active process, it may be undertaken almost automatically, with no deliberate intention of reading a certain headline, but because the headline was there to meet the eye.

Most participants acknowledged to reading the headlines and some stated that it was important to read them in order to know what topics were under current discussion. Tabloid headlines can be seen as advertisements of the actual tabloids, but at the same time they are journalistic products. Even if people view advertisements with suspicion, tabloid headlines discuss real life actual issues. They may use aggravated language, exaggerations, or one-sidedness, but the underlying issue is based on reality.

Many participants claimed that headlines posted false or distorted information. Yet, it would be wrong to assess that the things published on headlines were intentional lies. The Council for Mass Media in Finland has published guidelines for journalists. "These guidelines concern all journalistic work. They



have been drafted specifically for the purpose of self-regulation. The guidelines are not intended to be used as grounds for criminal liability or damages” ([http://www.jsn.fi/en/guidelines\\_for\\_journalists/](http://www.jsn.fi/en/guidelines_for_journalists/)).

They state among other things that: (8) The journalist must aim to provide truthful information, (11) The public must be able to distinguish facts from opinions and fictitious material, and (13) A news item may be published on the basis of limited information. Even if these were not binding guidelines, it would be difficult to think that newspapers with such wide audiences as the tabloids have, would intentionally render themselves susceptible to law suits or public disgrace resulting from the publishing of faulty news. Even if exaggerations were used, points of view carefully selected, and issues left out so as to implicate connections, the bottom line of truthfulness remains. This was also demonstrated by the positive answers participants gave to issues that they agreed with resulting in the disappearance of the notion of exaggeration.

At this point, it is useful to remark that although people see advertisements as nonreliable and offering one-sided information, when people are looking for something to fulfill a need, an advertisement may lead to purchasing even though the advertisement itself could be judged as exaggerating. Especially when one is looking to satisfy a need which fulfillment has not proven to be easy (lose weight, prevent loss of hair, etc.) and one could be said to be ready to try anything. This suggests that even if because of their function as advertisements the headlines were viewed with suspicion, even advertisements that serve no other function than the marketing of a certain product have effects.

Even though participants assessed tabloid headlines as exaggerating, the ones they agreed with no longer held this notion and suggested there was no need to look for more information since the issue was one to agree with. Participants of the interviews in Study Five stated that Helsingin Sanomat had changed its news reporting style in the direction of the tabloids. Even if Helsingin Sanomat was “accused” of resembling tabloids more, it was still used as comparison when participants wanted to highlight the difference between tabloids and “trustworthy” newspapers. Participants may not be happy with the developments made in Helsingin Sanomat, but they still considered it as a trustworthy source of information. According to the results of Study Three, Helsingin Sanomat was not assessed as a more reliable source of information although it was referred to as being trustworthier than the tabloids. These discrepancies could illustrate that the statement of Helsingin Sanomat being trustworthier is a feeling rule, a collective representation. This feeling rule was mentioned as justification, but held no real value when there was no need to (publicly) compare the tabloids with other sources of information.

Tabloid headlines as such evoked answers that illustrated the negativity and exaggerating aspect related to tabloid headlines. The exaggeration was strongly connected with the idea of tabloid headlines as such, not necessarily to the actual content of them. Stets and Carter (2012) write that people use shared symbols and definitions derived from culture to judge to which degree moral meanings are contained in situations. The claim of the exaggerating nature of

tabloids is very persistent. It may well be that participants of tabloid research feel the need to state this judgment because it forms part of the shared definitions, collective representations, of Finnish culture (feeling rule). It also served as an easy explanation when participants needed to justify their answers. Since tabloids were assessed as exaggerating and even providing false information, admitting that they had an influence might be considered as socially undesirable. There seems to exist a feeling rule in the Finnish society stating that tabloids are not to be trusted and that they portray trivialities.

It was argued earlier that people tend to view tabloid headlines as advertisements and this could explain the fact that they are viewed as exaggerations. This does not, however, explain the fact why the tabloids in general were not found to be trustworthy sources of information. One of the interviewees commented that maybe the notion of the exaggerating tabloids was something that Finns were taught to believe, thus forming a collective representation. Maybe the fact that headlines are so available and seen as advertisements explains why the notion of the exaggerating “yellow press” is so strongly connected with the Finnish tabloids. But since they are read (KMT Lukija helmikuu 2014 tiedote) so much, there could be at least three possible explanations to the stated lack of trust:

First, either the people who read them trust themselves to be media critical and assume that even if news posted in the tabloids were false, they would not be affected by them. They could consider themselves using the tabloids mainly for entertainment purposes. The participants mentioned this notion of tabloids posting more personally written news as positive. But, it is important to note that people still assume that others may be affected by what is on the headlines. This reflects the projection of intimidating issues. Second, the notion of exaggeration is just a feeling rule that has very little actual foundation in reality, but is used to express general feelings toward tabloid headlines. Both explanations may be true to some extent and they lead to the same consequence. Tabloid headlines (and tabloids) are read even if accused of exaggerating. Third, the exaggerating aspect of headlines may be used as defence mechanisms. Issues that are brought up in headlines may seem too frightening to be true and presenting too much threat to be considered real. They may also present too much chaos for the more preferred undisturbed continuity of life. This is in line with the explanations of the Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg 2003) and Becker’s (1998) studies on disrupted lives. Judging tabloid headlines to be exaggerations diminishes the possibility of something similar happening to oneself. Tabloid headlines bring about things that may be scary and chaotic. The claim of the exaggerating tabloid headlines may be a form of fighting fear and chaos.

This leads to the discussion of self-referent emotions. If death poses a threat, why do people enjoy watching entertainment where death is very much present? Or, why do people stop on the street to watch an accident’s victims if their intention is not to help them? One explanation is the self-referency of those emotions. How likely is it that the incident could happen to oneself or can one stand apart and enjoy the feeling of being safe and obtain from the incident what is to be re-

rieved: e.g. pleasure, orientation, information in order to avoid similar events happening to oneself in the future. The fear induced by tabloid headlines may serve these same purposes. Finding out that bad things, even worse things, happen to other people (also) can make one's own miss happenings seem less severe or be seen in proportion. A tabloid headline publishing the death of a child may result in seeing one's own reactions to some small irritating aspect of own child's behaviour seem far less important. After all, the child is alive and well. This may result in feelings of relief and even happiness and contentment in ordinary issues. But it is vital to distinguish the fear that serves a positive personal outcome from the fear that actually evokes negative emotions.

Although a person reading a tabloid headline may be in a situation where thoughts about death are salient (e.g. cafeteria of a cancer hospital), it can be argued that this is usually not the case. Headlines are read in everyday situations where the thoughts of everyday issues (e.g. which groceries to buy in order to cook dinner for the family) are more likely to occupy the mind. Pyszczynski, Solomon and Greenberg (2003) argue that mortality salience effects occur when people are in an experiential "frame of mind" meaning fundamentally nonrational and process information without relying on closely monitored logical analysis. The headlines offer highly accessible reminders of death, but because of the short time in which they are read or the distraction (paying at the cashier) that outside events may produce, it can be argued that they do not necessarily enter conscious awareness or produce logical analysis of the topic. In the interviews, participants were worried about the poisoned meatballs and suspected whether any kind of food was safe anymore.

In Study Five, the heading about the mother claiming the lack of hospital staff resulting in the death of her baby, one interviewee found the heading cheerful since it proved that there would be much more nonsense to come if one read the paper further. Humour may be used as defence also to mask the more anxiety causing emotions that the death of a baby resulting from a Finnish hospital might induce.

Donohew, Finn, and Christ (1988) write about an interesting experiment where two different ways of writing about the same tragic event were presented to participants. One was written in a narrative style and the other in a traditional inverted-pyramid newspaper style (most important news first and the following in order of diminishing importance). It was expected that the narrative would evoke more unpleasant responses than the blandly presented story. But the opposite resulted true. The researchers offer as one interpretation of the finding that regardless of the content, stories that generate more arousal are considered more pleasurable. This relates well to the participants' accounts that tabloids offered the news in a more interesting way and were thanked for this.

Tabloid headlines offer pathways for constructing narratives. These narratives may serve to enrich people's lives. They may be used in the quest for adventure. Tabloid headlines open doors for peeping into the life of other people. They enable comparison, criticism, disapproval, envy, happiness, sadness, amusement, novelty, glory; all the scale of emotions that have strong effects on people. Head-

lines could from a certain perspective be characterized as fairy tales that bind to reality: "Salatut elämät (a Finnish TV series) in newspaper format" as stated by one of the interviewees. The fairy-taled nature can be derived from especially those headings that portray celebrities. Although based on reality, the amount of actual information obtained from them is limited and leaves much room for imagination. One of the participants acknowledged that her opinion on celebrities was based entirely on their public image, mainly headlines. Celebrities were not used much in the studies of this research, because they were thought to arise emotions as such already independent of the actual heading distorting the information obtained. But the trait of evoking emotions, be it from the sole mentioning of the name of a celebrity or some issue linked to her or him, is an important effect of headlines. In the case of celebrities it may contribute to the important aspect they have as role models, vicarious heroes, and failures (even if you are famous, you can still fail). People who feel uneasy, sad, even depressed may find comfort in reading about the stupidities committed by celebrities: "At least I am better than that one even though she/he is famous."

Or, celebrities can be looked upon, admired, and copied. They can be the targets of daydreams. Headlines can offer "just tales", bringing emotional entertainment in everyday life. Celebrities offer mental voyages. They serve as means of coping. Petty, Priester and Briñol (2002) discuss the impact of media on attitude change and note that even apparently simple variables such as how likeable a source is or what mood a person is in can produce persuasion by very different processes in different situations. The context will always matter. Participants stated that the image they have of celebrities for example, was largely based on what the media, especially tabloid headlines, wrote about them. And while they acknowledged their exaggerating nature, they were still amused about "how stupid can some celebrity be". It may sound trivial to discuss the impact celebrities have on people. But it becomes less trivial if people base their opinion or action to celebrity likings, dislikings, or doings because of the availability bias (e.g. mastectomy). Errors in processing can be understood without recourse to motivational constructs (Taylor 1982) if ideas are available in tabloid headlines for example. In Study Five, one of the interviewees commented her disliking of a celebrity, but acknowledging that this was entirely based on media coverage, especially tabloid headlines. She commented that she would not even buy a newspaper posting this kind of news. Celebrities doing silly things may evoke feelings of superiority in the readers. This may be needed as a positive booster of self esteem if one's own life was seen as less interesting, or maybe even less valuable than the one of the celebrity.

But, it remains important to note that (even) celebrities are real people and although the things published about them in headlines may serve the function of modern fairy tales, the emotions felt by the people who are the celebrities are probably very different. And celebrities have relatives and friends, and the headlines may cause very different emotions in them.

Kuran (1997) challenges Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance and argues that the change in a person's beliefs results through a social process.

Depending on how public discourse treats two issues, the individual is apt to do the same because there is no possibility for her to explore all the possible connections. This, according to Kuran is a possible explanation why contradictory beliefs may exist in a person's mind, while the person is able to remove inconsistencies. Headlines contribute to the categorizing of things, the forming of typologies. Participants claimed that headlines offered one-sided views on things. If certain points of view are published more often than others, their availability may affect general opinion and create categories of issues that are seen as interrelated.

Participants claimed that issues used in headlines were trivial. Weather for example was mentioned as a trivial subject. From a certain point of view, the collective representations of celebrities could be claimed to be trivial, but weather could hardly be deemed so because of the powerful consequences storms, drought, etc. may have. Yet, it was mentioned as one. This implicates the subjectivity of matters even if a collective consensus existed on a more general level.

## 5.2 Drawing Conclusions from the Studies

It could be concluded from Study One that participants stated viewing tabloids with great suspicion as to their veracity. The impact of negative emotions related to the fact that the heading originated from a headline was strong. Emotions related to the topic itself were also very much present in the answers. Study One suggested that emotions related to headlines were an important factor in the study of the interpretation of tabloid headlines. The fact that headings that could be categorized as positive evoked also negative emotions is an interesting issue that needed further elaboration.

Study Two tested the hypothesis that the attitude towards tabloid headlines affected the assessed truthfulness of the heading. The results suggested that tabloid headlines were a factor in the assessment of the veracity of a heading, but not to the same extent that could be deducted from the answers in Study One. The results implicated the content of the heading as an important factor. Many participants in the studies stated that Helsingin Sanomat was a trustworthy source of information when it came to comparing different newspapers. This same result was obtained in the Media Study (Median uutisoinnin luotettavuus. Kunnallisalan kehittämissäätiö) carried out in the beginning of 2014.

Study Three explored the veracity of this statement. The results did not support the conclusion that when the source of the origin of a heading was known, Helsingin Sanomat was assessed as trustworthier than the tabloid. It is important to note that when analyzing the results, there is a need to consider whether participants really paid attention to what was the origin of the heading. But, stating it more clearly than was done could have led to the activation of the

attitudes, beliefs, and other mental contents that affect the labeling of a newspaper. This would draw the attention of participants too much to the comparison of the newspapers and thus affect the interpretation process. It could be concluded from Study Three that the content of the heading was more important in the evaluation of the truthfulness than its source.

Study Four analysed the effect of a headline as such by examining how much tabloid headlines affected the stories people wrote. The information contained in headlines affected the stories participants wrote. It can be argued that the instructions given for the stories pinpointed to the use of the information from the headlines. That is a correct assessment. The issue indeed lies in whether the information contained in the headlines touches a right set of mind at the right time. This will determine the size of the impact. Over 30% of the participants used the headline in their stories. The studies suggest that headlines affect people and have resulting effects. In real life, it is very difficult to predict to what extent a headline will have an effect on behaviour without better knowledge about the individual and the situation she is in or just going to be in (set of mind). But, if effects can be detected in controlled studies, there is no reason to doubt that there would not be effects in circumstances that are less controlled and people are less vigilant about their behaviour.

Taken the frequency of the publishing of tabloid headlines into consideration, many headlines probably have no considerable individual effect on those reading them except for the contributing to the creation of a general atmosphere (see for example Blood & Phillips 1995 for the influence of headline recession news on consumer sentiment). This is true if the headlines do not touch self-referent emotions or an issue that is immediately, or in suitable time frame, activated following the reading of the headline. But, a general atmosphere can have individual implications and lead to a halt in consumption, for example, even for people with means to consume. This, in turn, could contribute to the creation or sustainment of a recessive spiral in economy.

Study Five dealt with the issue that is probably most relevant in the study of the interpretation of headlines: their impact on emotions. This leads to the discussion of which emotions are positive and which negative and what is their impact on human well-being. Because of the subjective nature of emotions, no definite generalizations can and should be drawn. One interesting discovery was the fact that even headlines that could be categorized as positive evoked negative emotions. This comes down to the question of individual interpretation and what are the mental contents of the mind that the headlines affect. People were also worried about the effect that headlines have on other people. This can and does affect their behaviour.

Since negative emotions were very much present in Study Five, especially fear, expert interviews (Study Six) were conducted to see whether this impact could be detected on a larger scale in society. It was difficult to draw any direct conclusions on the effects of tabloid headlines since so many other stimuli enter into play. The police officers interviewed were worried about the aggravation

of issues that the choice of words in tabloid headlines could lead to and the labeling of issues, people, or areas based on things posted on headlines.

### 5.3 Defining Good and Bad

Lazarus writes in his article *Does The Positive Psychology Movement Have Legs* (2003) that the bad is part of life and needed in order to appreciate the good. He continues in discussing the concept of relational meaning and appraising of the personal significance of what is happening in an emotional encounter for a person's well-being. Lazarus's article is a well-defined criticism to the positive psychology movement (see Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Tabloid headlines offer narratives and possibilities for the evaluation of "good" and "bad". The positive psychology movement has done an important task in presenting also positive aspects as those that need to be studied as well as the negative ones. Tabloid headlines concentrate largely on the negative. This could affect the overall view on life and things taking place in society and the world as a whole in the form a different kind of biases. The biases can result from some aspect being on the headline in a certain way and others not getting any publicity at all. Headlines will orient people to think in certain ways and see issues as interconnected. They will present certain people and issues under certain lights and contribute to the building of the collective consciousness, the collective representations.

It is important to discuss at this point how can the line between what is really experienced as negative and what could "objectively" be characterized as negative, but is experienced as positive by an individual, be drawn. The defining of positive and negative is not easy. Same events trigger entirely different emotions in different individuals. People get gratifying emotions from different issues. If tabloid headlines are read on daily basis, they are incorporated in human needs and gratifications (McGuire 1974).

Categorizing anything "good" or "bad" as such is difficult. "Neither the good nor the evil outcome is automatic or preordained. The decision rests with man" (Fromm 1975, 250). Negative feelings do not necessarily lead to negative consequences. Zillmann and Bryant (1986) state that it remained unclear why people were drawn, and repeatedly drawn, to watching tragic events. "Showing war's irrationality and horror is of no effect on him (the modern man). The horrors make the fascination" William James (1882/1910, 163). Kilpi (2007) noted that highest peaks in the sales of *Ilta-Sanomat* seemed to be related with a sudden and fast fall from the heights to the depths. But, he continued that death, crime and discrepancies as topics were not enough to raise the sales of the tabloid. The clue seemed to be in where and to whom the incident happened. Basing on the self-referent emotions, the issue may rest on whether the sadness or tragedy is directed towards the individual herself or others. As painful as admitting envy as one important reason behind behaviour is, it could be one of

the underlying motives. The feeling of being safe, relieved, while others are hurt could be one explanation although it does not strike as a nice one since it involves the suffering of others as a source of pleasure. Self-referent emotions are most likely to directly influence an individual's behaviour (Dunlop, Wakefield & Kashima 2008).

Causes of the affect do not need to be conscious, but as Tan (2008, 45) argues "once emotional programs are running, we are subject to their control of our perceptions, activities, motivations, and feelings." The news about celebrities were often judged to be trivial information. This could be at least partially explained by the frustration (envy) that may accompany vicarious gratification.

It could be argued that creating a false positive environment is not what reality is about. But, as stated previously, emotions are contagious. Positive emotions bring about positive states of being and result in happier people. The question then becomes which is better or worse, the possible loss of objectivity or the positive emotions felt? Real objectivity is hard to find in real life, because all perceptions are the perceptions of someone and already affected by her interpretations and worldview. Hochschild (2003) argues that in aiming to find objectivity, feelings need to be taken into account as clues. Feelings are subjective. One could raise the question whether the search for real objectivity is needed if the fact of allowing for seeing the world true rosier lenses presents no real danger to anyone. After all, also the colour, or shade, of the lenses is debatable. The individual reality needs to be close enough to the shared reality in order to enable good enough functioning in a society. Postman (1987) writes that a psychiatrist noted that all people construct castles in the air, but there might be problems if people tried to live in them. A shared reality may be closer to truth than an objective reality. Objective reality requires a more precise definition of all things included, shared reality may be achieved by a more loosely defined common agreement. Merleau-Ponty (2002) argues that when perspectives blend, perceptions confirm each other and a meaning emerges, rationality can be said to exist.

## 5.4 Discussing Consequences

Neisser (1976) discusses the fundamentality of freedom of choice and access to valid information and the threat to freedom in contemporary society. This threat is according to him posed by various kinds of middlemen and media that control access to information. According to Neisser, the danger of being systematically misinformed is very real. Since the 1970's the world has obtained a distinctively larger amount of middlemen and media, but also more possibilities for practically anyone to "google" the net in search for different sources of information. But, human beings tend to be cognitively lazy. People either do not have the time, do not want to put the effort into, or are just plain lazy to look for further information. Pieces of information are easily accessible in tab-



loid headlines. Because of the information obtained from the headlines, people may not look for alternative ways of depicting issues if they are not deemed important enough. If the information from the tabloid headlines is in accordance with a person's own beliefs and attitudes, the need to look for alternatives is rendered even more futile even if the basis of the beliefs or attitudes was not accurate (Ecker, Lewandowsky, Fenton & Martin 2014). Even if the issue that appeared on the headline may be interpreted as exaggerating or up to giving false information, the human mind is constructed in the way that it still may be affected by the things posted on the headlines.

In picture 10, the main headline states "Tragedy at the schoolyard. SMALL BOY DIED. Was strangled in a rope. Many people, nobody noticed." While the heading is most probably an accurate description of the incident, it also comes out at the exact time when the new school year begins in August. The fact that the place of the tragedy, the schoolyard, is mentioned in the headline could cause anxiety in parents whose children have just started or gone back to school and no longer under the all seeing eyes of their parents. The headline offers the readers the issues they can think of, sets the agenda, and cultivates the notion that school surroundings can be dangerous places. And, school is the place where practically all children spend a great deal of time.



FIGURE 10 Iltalehti Headline 11.08.2014  
 "Tragedy at the schoolyard. SMALL BOY DIED. Was strangled in a rope.  
 Many people, nobody noticed."  
 Picture by Sini Setälä

#### 5.4.1 The Impact of Negativity

Media produces images about an unsafe society. The publishing of crimes and fear producing issues may lead to various consequences. Crimes that are discussed in media even if serving the public's right to know may lead to the glorification of crime in the society that is today very prone to seeking publicity and people trying to become celebrities. Koskela (2009) argues that this is illustrated by the incompetence to understand the wish to show and be seen that is characteristic of some crimes. Coleman (2004) discusses the copycat effect that may follow the media coverage of crimes.

It would be far too simplistic to draw direct causalities about the effect of negative tabloid headlines on physical and psychological health. But based on the fact that negativity is used in headlines so much makes them form part of the negative stimuli that affect human well-being. The anxiety and fear induced in individuals may be accumulated on collective level. "In the presence of multiple equilibria, an occurrence of no intrinsic significance may have a dramatic impact on the course of public opinion. Specifically, it may determine which of two or more bandwagons get pushed into motion" (Kuran 1997, 74).

The implications of negative headlines if they do not touch self-referent emotions to a greater extent, lie much in the general atmosphere elicited by them as one of the multiple stimuli affecting individuals. Stress is a condition of the mind and pressure of daily life cause stress burden (McEwen 2011). Konijn and ten Holt (2011) discuss fear and aggression with regard to media exposure and the role of negatively valenced emotions. Television or video games exposure is very different from tabloid headline exposure. But if negatively valenced emotions may induce the viewer to process media messages as real life events at least partially (memory may later process them as something that really happened), could the same process be plausible also in tabloid headline events that are viewed as negative? Events posted on headlines are real life events, but they were viewed very exaggerating which diminished their reliability. Headlines may be written in aggravating ways that are prone to misunderstandings. They may be interpreted as exaggerations, but their impact on memory in the retrieval phase may be just as real as an event that took place in one's own life. As argued earlier, the difference between actual and pseudo memories is possibly very little.

Memory does not always function in a "rational" way, bringing actual things that really happened into mind. With regard to tabloid headlines and assuming that the claim for exaggeration is accurate, when things are retrieved from memory, they may have lost the source of origin -label. The exaggeration label that was placed on the issue when read from a tabloid headline, may have faded away or lost impact and the issue may at the time of retrieval rank among the memories that are easiest brought into mind and no longer hold the exaggeration stigma. Many participants claimed tabloid headlines to be false or at least misleading. Even if issues in memory were still to hold the misinformation label, they could all the same be retrieved from memory first and no scanning

for authenticity used. The accumulation of negative things into the mind making them form part of the informational contents of the mental representations can lead to harmful consequences. If people start worrying about work (IS 29.9.2014: "Stress at work is dangerous for the heart. Look out for these symptoms. Big research."), start fearing the economic situation and its implications at own work place (IL 12.09.2013: "Research: stress at work will destroy health. The threat of getting sacked increases coronary diseases."), and start pondering salaries as one more impicator of premature death (IS 4.-5.5.2013: "Shocking investigation. A person with small income will have no time to enjoy pension.") where will the forces that lead to economic recovery be taken from?

Participants were worried about other people being affected by tabloid headlines while they themselves claimed to be able to remain media critical. "By assuming the self is invulnerable to communication effects while others are naively susceptible, individuals preserve a positive sense of self and reaffirm their belief that they are superior to others" (Perloff 2002, 493-494). The third person effect assumes that media has effects on other people. Some governments act according to this belief and restrict their citizens' access to media. The knowledge of this in countries that have no similar media censure, may lead to increased beliefs in the issues taken up by media since others feel it important to limit their open access: If such important restrictive measures are implied, there must be some truth in the power of media. This can form part of the collective representations.

According to the study of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children in Finland (Tuononen 2007) parents were worried about the effects tabloid headlines had on their children and wanted more media education for children. They asked for more knowledge about the effects of media and demanded common rules and responsibility for those adults involved in media and acting with children. Rozendaal, Lapierre, Van Reijmersdal, and Buijzen (2011) argue that advertising literacy that is being taught to children is not effective in reducing children's susceptibility to advertising effects. They state that because contemporary advertising has an affect-based nature, children process it primarily under conditions of low elaboration and are unlikely to use their knowledge of advertising as critical defence.

#### 5.4.2 The Positive Sides

Having discussed the negative consequences tabloid headlines may lead to, it is very important to stress the entertaining, everyday-forgetting purpose, and positively experienced emotion eliciting that they produce. They can be used in order to find a scapegoat for one's personal sufferings:

IL: 21.3.2013: "**Näin Kela pompottaa suomalaisia.**" (This is how Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland) bounces Finns).

The bad things that have happened to oneself need not to be exceptions, but have happened to others as well. This can lead to the more positive reappraisal of one's own condition:

IL 22.3.2013: **“Lapsiperheen isän tarina. Pelasin vaimoni rahat.”** (The story of a father of children. I gambled my wife’s money).

Other people surviving similar circumstances can offer hope:

IS 23.-24.3.2013: **“Väärinymmärretty. Ystävät: Kimi on rehti ja puhdas.”** (Misunderstood. Friends: Kimi is honest and pure)

As argued earlier mood affects people and leads to interpreting subsequent events according to the mood states. But, tabloid headlines and stories published by tabloids can be used to alter mood states if needed altering. This could be one explanation to why tabloids are read even if not assessed as trustworthy sources of information. Participants of interviews stated that they liked tabloids because they gave their stories a personal touch and were not dull. The desire to experience emotions is widely considered to be a key motivation for media use, especially for the use of media entertainment (Bartsch, Mangold, Viehoff, & Vorderer 2006).

The consumption of entertainment may be highly adaptive (Zillmann & Bryant 1986). The use of celebrities, the posting of positive news, and negative news that produce emotions that are experienced as positive are important in producing gratifying experiences that enhance human well-being. Celebrities and real heroes provide possibilities for vicarious gratification. Headlines contribute to the building of life-narratives either vicariously on the level of imagination or as incentives that leads to action (I will work harder, join the talent competition, etc.). They form part of the culturally agreed forms of entertainment, jointly accepted codes of conduct. Tabloids may be used to improve one’s affective state.

### 5.4.3 Where All This Leads To

The information in the headline is always written by someone, a human being that has the same possibilities and holds the same constraints that all people do. But news in headlines are viewed by so many that they may have considerable and even long lasting effects on those reading them. The first impressions that stay in the mind may be hard to alter afterwards. All the meanings that can be derived from headlines are not and cannot be results of the wilfull intentions of the makers of the headlines. In addition to the individual level of interpretation which always holds subjective sense, there are encoded meanings in the language used (conventional uses of language in certain discourses) and points of view that rise only after careful study and may have been very far from the intended meaning of the writer (see for example Varteva 1997).

Mandler (1984) argues that there is ample evidence that people do not use their explicit knowledge implicitly in understanding. Tabloid headlines offer issues in relation to other issues. If they are not processed with more analysis, they may be seen as connected only because of their simultaneous appearance on the headline. This does not eliminate the fact that even after serious processing, the issues could be seen as connected. The issues published on tabloid headlines can be very accurate. This research makes no claim in favour or

against their veracity. But, tabloid headlines may be aggravations, publish information that may emphasize a certain point of view, and either wilfully or due to lack of space may leave some information out. But the information obtained from tabloid headlines can still be incorporated into a person's knowledge structures and form part of her beliefs and attitudes. These beliefs and attitudes may be hard to change even if they were based on weak or partial evidence. Because of this perseverance, the interpretation of the information obtained from tabloid headlines may be problematic if it touches an issue that is in some way harmful to the person reading the headlines.

Mary Rice writes in her article "Breast cancer in the media - friend or enemy" (2003) that there is a commonly held belief among scientists that tabloid papers are more likely to make mistakes than broadsheets when publishing about scientific research. She argues that it would be in scientists' interest to try to understand the media and use it to their advantage. Järvi (2014) discusses the publishing of health related issues in media. There are various producers of health related information. Järvi argues that for them controlling publicity may be challenging, but needed.

People experience the world through indirect encounters that are mediated by headlines, for example. Nisbett, Borgida, Crandall, and Reed (1985) discuss the increase in the waiting lists at cancer detection clinics that followed the mastectomies performed on Mrs Ford and Mrs Rockerfeller. The actress Angelina Jolie went through a preventive double mastectomy recently and this issue received a lot of media coverage (Figure 11). Kraft Goin (2014) discusses its impact on other women who have a high genetic risk of breast cancer to consider similar operations. This will increase the necessity for clinicians to be prepared to answer questions regarding the issue and the feelings of fear the news coverage will possibly raise. It is not only the ones concerned directly with the issues discussed in the media that are affected, but also even the infrastructure related to the issue in questions (e.g. cancer detection clinics).



FIGURE 11 Ilta-Sanomat 15.05.2013.  
 "Angelina Jolie had her breasts removed. Read the film star's emotional account. This is how to find out if you have the gene of breast cancer."  
 Picture by Sini Setälä

Zillmann and Bryant (1986) note that in efforts at projecting a favorable image of themselves, consumers may distort their answers. Participants may not openly want to express the entertaining factor that tabloid headlines cause. In the studies participants did thank the tabloids for posting entertaining news in a personal manner. Criticizing tabloid headlines offers one way of being meaningful contributors in a culture. The entertainment may be achieved by negative headlines since they offer a path for critic of either the issue itself or the fact that it is on tabloid headlines. Maybe one key to the understanding of the negativity directed towards the trivial side of the tabloids, the entertainment that was seen as meaningless and rubbish, is the protestant work ethic in relation to the negative cult. Entertainment is not seen as valuable and worth mentioning. The almost intuitive condemnation of the triviality is seen as a moral thing to say. It can also be seen as the right thing to do as a ritual act that binds the community.

It is important to note that while media influences people, media is not especially looking to publish things that are of no interest to people. The interest of people shapes media. Tabloid headlines would not publish news on tragic events if that was not something people wanted to read about.

Free communication is important, not only because it maintains democracy, but also because it enables an open culture (Stanley 2000). This research does not take any standing for or against tabloid headlines. They have effects in the

elicitation of negative emotions that may lead to harmful consequences. The fact that they tend to concentrate on the negative may be harmful because of e.g. emotional contagion. For this reason, it could be argued that for the good of the society as a whole especially when trying to recover from economic depression, the publishing of positive news could have better effects than concentrating on the negative. But, it needs to be remembered that people can be suspicious by nature and posting mainly only good news might not have the intended effect. Tabloid headlines currently also serve coping measures and other means of promoting well-being. Negative news may contribute to this process i.e. other peoples' sufferings may render own misfortunes less severe.

## 6 INTERPRETATION OF TABLOID HEADLINES

The final chapter of this thesis presents a framework for the interpretation of tabloid headlines. First, its foundations are discussed. Then, the framework is depicted and the mental representations illustrated. The chapter concludes the thesis with emphasis on a multidisciplinary perspective on the study of tabloid headlines and similar phenomena. Ideas for further study are discussed.

### 6.1 Introduction to the Framework

Social constructions form the basis for the reality offered by tabloid headlines. But, the meanings extracted from them are individual depending on the life history of the person reading them; they have a personal meaning. The framework of an individual's mental constructions is the net in which the words used in tabloid headlines that are based on collective meanings will be interpreted and gain personal meanings. Various interpretations may be collective because of the shared cultural ground, but individual experiences and unique incidents affect the final meanings and the value that are placed on and extracted from them.

Narratives enrich perception and the narratives evoked by tabloid headlines may lead to mental voyages, thoughts going back to incidents, people; they elicit hopes, fears, and dreams and transform the headings into personalized stories. Tabloid headlines employ the myths and characters in fairy tales that derive from the collective consciousness. Since negativity was so much used in the headlines, fear in its various forms was very much present in the participants' answers. The stories evoked may be intimidating and the future seen as threatening because of the possibilities of war or a fast spreading disease, for example:



- IL 20.08.2014: **“MILLOIN EBOLA ISKEE SUOMEEN? Maailmalla kymmeniä tartuntoja päivittäin.”** When will ebola strike Finland? There are tens of infections in the world every day.
- IL 27.08.2014: **“Suomi varautuu EBOLAAN. Täällä on hoitovalmius.”** Finland gets prepared for Ebola. Readiness for treatment can be found from here.
- IS 15.09.2014: **“Putinin ex-neuvonantaja: UKRAINAN SOTAA SUUNNITELTIIN 11 VUOTTA. Ruokahalu vain kasvaa.”** Putin’s ex adviser: THE WAR IN UKRAINE WAS PLANNED FOR 11 YEARS. Appetite is only growing.
- IL 21.08.2014: **“Uusi asiantuntijaportti: SUOMI ON UHKA VENÄJÄLLE. Suomi on vihollinen vaikkei ole Natossa.”** New expert report reveals: FINLAND IS A THREAT TO RUSSIA. Finland is an enemy even if not a member of Nato.

This induces an element of chaos into the continuity of everyday life.

The self-referency of emotions is an important factor in the determination of the meaning of the heading. The cognitive and emotional contents of appraisal processes guide reactions in the interpretation of tabloid headlines. Emotions will be elicited, but their strength and impact will depend on the meanings given to the issues. Some headlines probably do not elicit much and they will barely be noticed when passing by on the street or queuing at the cashier. If there is no personal meaning, the impact will most likely remain small. But, a heading about national success in sports or cancer research, for example, may contribute to the identity construction both on individual or collective level.

What needs to be emphasized is that there is no objective way for a writer of headlines to determine what kind of personal meanings may be elicited by headings. Personality features and selective perception will guide attention. Tabloid headlines form part of the concrete collective representations of culture and feeling rules enter into their assessment processes. Feeling rules may be used when (publicly) expressing an opinion on headlines in general or a heading in particular. They can also help in making frightening, confusing, or chaotic headings seem less real.

## 6.2 Interpretation of Tabloid Headlines - Framework

The framework for the interpretation of tabloid headlines is illustrated in figure 12.

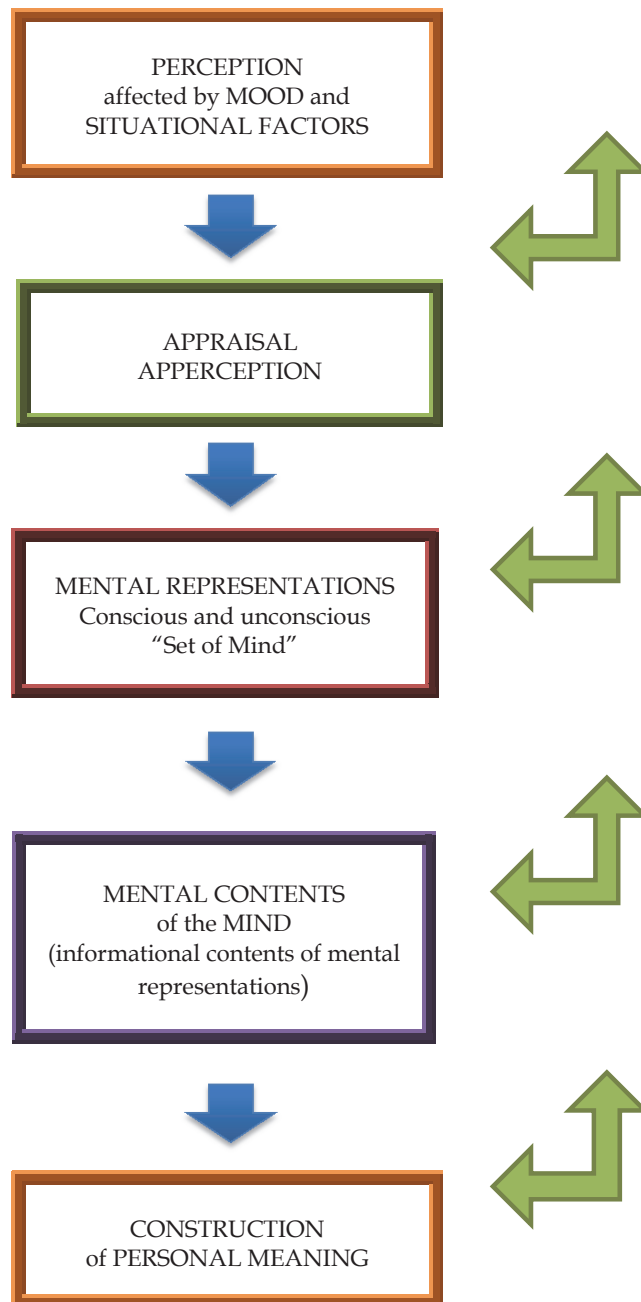


FIGURE 12 Interpretation Process of Tabloid Headlines. The process commences with the perception of the stimulus (tabloid headline). The perception is affected by mood and situational factors. Appraisal is one of the processes of apperception. These construct the mental representations. The mental contents of the mind are the informational contents of mental representations. These will lead to the forming of the personal meaning. The arrows represent the information going both ways and affecting the processes.

The analysis of the studies in this research combined with the theoretical basis led to the construction of this framework. The basic underlying principles of this process are the same that can be detected in all interpretation processes. The basic functioning processes of the human mind are the same. But, tabloid headlines are there for everyone to read. One does not need to especially look for the information in them. They are for everybody to see and even if one does not want to read the tabloid headline, it may strike the eye, because it is located there where it meets the eye. It meets the eye in many possible circumstances and its impact will differ depending on those circumstances and the mood the individual is in, and whether it touches the right set of mind.

The interpretation process commences with perception that is affected by mood and circumstances. Situational factors will bring the external elements to the interpretation process, e.g.: where is the individual, who is she with, are there other people around, where is she coming from, where is she going to, what is happening in the situation at hand. There are various stimuli affecting the situation. Mood was argued to have an effect on the interpretation and it needs to be combined with the situational components. These contribute to the building of the state of mind that the individual is in.

The blue (downward leading) arrows in figure 12 represent the building of the interpretation process. Information is gathered throughout the process and as illustrated by the green (upward leading) arrows, the information goes both ways and affects the following interpretations. The word information in this context implies all related activity that has an effect.

Language and culture build the frames for the understanding of the world and collective representations are learned. But information is gathered from many contexts outside the frames of one's personal surroundings when growing up, living as adult, and maturing. Googling the net, travelling, meeting people, working among other things all pile up the amount of information gathered and form the life history of an individual. The mental contents of the mind are formed by the information contained in the mental representations. They are e.g. beliefs, mental models, perceptions, memories, ideas, schemas, thoughts (Saariluoma 2012). They may be conscious or unconscious.

The following four elements need to be highlighted with regard to the appraisal processes of tabloid headlines: attitude towards the medium (the claimed exaggerating nature of tabloid headlines), attitude towards the message itself (memories, beliefs), feeling rules (social appraisal), and self-referent emotions. Self-referent emotions will determine whether an emotion will be interpreted as harmful or beneficial or maybe of very little affect, whether it has entertaining value or offers other kind of gratification, or if it creates negatively appraised emotions.

If headlines are not deemed valuable and are seen as exaggerating and posting mainly false information, one cannot consciously admit to being affected by what is published on the headline. This would cause too much discrepancy in the mind or be seen as socially undesirable. But, as demonstrated by the studies, when a person agreed with the issue on the headline, the exaggeration

aspect related to the content disappeared. This suggests that the information in headlines as such is not really interpreted as exaggerating, but that the judgment is content dependent. This implies that although partly interpreted as advertisements, and thus allowing for the headlines the possibility to use aggravated or exaggerating language, the information in the headlines is processed as containing real life information. This is why they have effects on the mind. The issue of agreeing or disagreeing with the content or deeming it of very little importance will lead to consequences accordingly and will depend on many intervening factors.

In order to further condense the interpretation process of tabloid headlines and define their effects, the informational contents of the mental representations of tabloid headlines, the mental contents of the mind, are divided on three interconnecting levels:

1. Orientation,
2. Collective Representations, and
3. Personality Building.

The following describes them more closely.

1. Orientation – What has happened in the world and does it concern me as individual? This level incorporates the categorization, typology and causality forming that headlines contribute to. It helps in making sense of the world and assessing threats and unpleasant emotions. It deals with the informational value offered by headlines and its incorporation into the existing mental contents of the mind (mental framework) or making alterations in these if necessary.
2. Collective Representations – How is sociality maintained? The fairy-taled collective nature resides on this level. It also includes the celebrities brought up by the society, group identities, and the issues for current discussions.
3. Personality Building - What psychological voyages are undertaken? The various forms of conscious and unconscious coping can be found here. It includes identity construction (celebrities or heroes), hope, reassuring, reality escaping, and emotions that serve positive purposes.

Although for the sake of illustration these mental representations are described on three levels, they are strongly interconnected and issues in headlines may have effects on various levels.

The following presents examples of the models of mental representations elicited by tabloid headlines. They are based on the content analysis of the studies in this research:

- Too good to be true

This concept highlights the model that news that seem too positive, cannot be accurate. The headings about the Niskanen miracle family and New weapon against cancer elicited this kind of mental models.

- Don't shine too bright

This illustrates the category of celebrities (either who just acquired this status or who have been there for a while) who are envied. The fascinating heroic story of Silver Emmi is a good example of this category. The story about her childhood elicited negative emotions. This seems to imply that people are allowed to succeed, but it needs to be through hard work. A good childhood in this sense serves a too good basis for success, so to say.

- Institutions are to blame

This model illustrates the viewpoint of the common people versus institutions where the sympathy is on the side of the individual. The heading about Kela is an example of this category. Also the heading about Only the third doctor diagnosing cancer is in this category as well as the heading about Troublemakers ruining teaching when sympathy lies on the side of those who were claimed to ruin teaching.

- You can trust Finnish

This model is somewhat contradictory to the previous one in relation to the trust shown towards Finnish institutions. Even if claimed to be bureaucratic and losing the individual, they were still trusted and especially the staff working in them (Kela, hospitals, schools) was appreciated (the individual). Finnish research was deemed to be of high quality (Weapon against cancer). The trust Finns have for their institutions does seem to be somewhat shattering because of the lay offs and cutting of resources. Also the recent unfolding of the fake doctors has at least temporarily affected the trust towards the medical institution. This category also includes the community spirit, the building of collectivism brought up by headings (The Finnish Medal Account Opened).

- Fairy-taled nature of life

The heading about the daughter finding her mother after 33 years falls in this category. So-called miracles do happen and bring a touch and hope of magic into everyday life.

- Heroic tales

The heading Twin boys saved their burning mother serves as example in this category. It incorporates the happening of something truly heroic, a brave act that inspires admiration.

- I can touch that celebrity

This model shows the positive emotions elicited by celebrities because of what they bring to the life of the so-called common people. This may be entertainment in the form of amusement, but it may also be feelings of superiority brought by the stupidities headlines have reported taking place in the life of the celebrity. These may bring forward feelings of sympathy that loosen the effect that envy might otherwise induce. The reactions to the heading about Matti Nykänen elicited the model in this category.

- I want to be like you

This model includes the reverence and positive envy that people have, often towards celebrities. They bring gratification to life and serve as role models and provide means of coping. The silver medal of Emmi could be an example of the heading in this category.

- I know better

This statement shows the publicly expressed feelings of superiority felt towards the issues on headlines. The heading about what to beware of in Tallinn evoked some comments on the self-evidency of the tabloid investigation. This belief about being better than average may be used as a defence mechanism also when one does not want to agree with the issue on the headline. This also incorporates the feelings that others may well be affected by the headlines (third person effect).

### 6.3 Conclusions

It is important to understand the diverse effects that tabloid headlines may have since they are so widely available and the impact they have via the appraisal processes. Feeling rules affect the publicly expressed attitude towards headlines. The notion of the exaggerating tabloids most probably has an impact on the whole interpretation process, but its working mechanism is complicated. Since the headlines participants agreed with were not accused of exaggeration, all that is posted on headlines cannot be exaggerating even though this was the general opinion. The information obtained from tabloid headlines is used for orientation purposes, whether it be of a news about a celebrity or the current

situation at the border between Ukraine and Russia. They build and maintain collective (social) representations and serve the creation of social cohesion (community spirit). Different people apply the information in different ways based on their individual interpretation process of tabloid headlines (personality building). Emotions have a vital impact on the interpretation. The appraisal processes (conscious and unconscious) play an important role. The understanding of human behaviour, in this case the interpretation of headlines, needs an analysis of its integrated whole, not only as the sum of its parts.

Tabloid headlines need to be studied from a multidisciplinary perspective. Media influences through the way people think. That is why cognitive science offers suitable tools for the study of tabloid headlines. But, this study needs to incorporate many other sciences that are important in the study of human behaviour: psychology, social psychology, sociology, communication, linguistics, anthropology to mention just a few. Tabloid headlines require first a perception. Mood and situational constraints enter into play. The cognitive and emotional processes of perception are integrated in the form of appraisal processes. Unconscious and conscious models guide the interpretation processes. An apperception, a mental representation is formed. The various phenomena that cannot be perceived enrich the interpretation (future, history, etc.). The value of the interpretation for the individual is based on her needs, interest, and gratifications offered. These are all individual, but may derive from a common cultural background (fairy tales, celebrities, history, and other collective representations). The interpretation leads to the forming of a meaning or meanings on personal level.

The perception and interpretation of various things affect people all the time. The results of this research can be extended to other phenomena of the same origin. Tabloid headlines outline the world and depict society. They form part of the mental representations of the mind and are part of the almost daily intake of information/stimuli of great many people. There is no reason to underestimate their impact under the veil of triviality.

An interesting elaboration for further study is the narratives that are evoked in people with regard to tabloid headings. They open a window on social life: "Culture speaks itself through an individual's story" (Kohler Riessman 1993, 5). The narrative experiments in this research concentrated more on finding if the tabloid headlines presented for the participants had an effect on them. A more detailed study on what kind of an effect it is, what mental representations are activated and how they relate to the collective representations, would be valuable in finding out more about the integration of individual and collective meanings and their place in the human mind.

The power of the mind is a fascinating phenomenon. With relation to the studies of the placebo effect (see for example Moerman 2002 and Benedetti 2009) it would be interesting to study the mental representations elicited in those situations where the placebo effects can be detected e.g. the interaction in the relationship between medical doctors and patients, the organizing of the studies where the placebo pills have healing effects on participants. Emotions most

likely have an important contributing effect. What are the informational contents of the mental representations that rise in those situations and what are the key elements that evoke them?

Postman (1987) makes in his book "Amusing Ourselves to Death" an interesting comparison between two books that write about two intimidating visions of the future: George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1999) and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (2012 Uusi Uljas maailma). He writes that according to Orwell people would face oppression from the outside where as in Huxley's vision people would start loving oppression with the idolizing of technique that would crush their ability to think. Postman continues in stating that Orwell was afraid that truth would be hidden from people and books forbidden, Huxley feared that the truth would be lost in the sea of meaningless matters and nobody would be interested in reading books anymore. Huxley dreaded that the things people get pleasure from would destroy them. Postman (1987) implies that the interpretation of Huxley could be the correct one.

There are claims that because today information is so scattered, people cannot get any overall picture of issues and have no patience to search for information, but use the one that is easily available and acquirable. Maybe teaching the gathering of information from various sources, with patience, is the media literacy that needs to be taught for all ages. New technologies allow people easier access to many things, but easy does not always imply intelligent or even suitable. Easy and fast is a convenient combination for the gathering of information, but acquiring everything fast and easy may diminish the level of patience people have for things that may still require patience. It may also contribute to the cognitive laziness claimed to be typical for humans and lead to the settling for only partial or one-sided information.

The discrepancies between what people say (to others and to themselves) and what they really feel could be extracted from this research. The exaggerating aspect of headlines applied only on general level when tabloids were discussed. Individual headings that were agreed with were not seen as exaggerations. The attitudes towards celebrities were claimed to be negative, and yet the amount of reality TV shows blossoms. The fact that tabloids use celebrities so much suggests that they have marketing value and cannot be considered trivial even if claimed so by participants. Tabloid headlines are an important multifaceted phenomenon which study reveals paradoxes in people's thinking. It offers a way to better understand the individual with personal interpretations and personal meanings in a socially defined world of collective representations.



## YHTEENVETO (FINNISH SUMMARY)

### IHMISMIELI JA ILTAPÄIVÄLEHTIEN LÖÖPIT - TUTKIMUSKEHYS

Suomessa ilmestyy kaksi iltapäivälehteä, Ilta-Sanomat (IS) ja Iltalehti (IL). Yhdessä Helsingin Sanomien kanssa ne kuuluvat kolmen eniten luetun sanomalehden joukkoon (KMT Lukija helmikuu 2014 tiedote). Niiden myyntijulisteet eli lööpit toimivat sekä omina journalistisina tuotteinaan että itse lehden mainoksina. Niitä näkee kioskien ikkunoissa, kauppojen ovissa, kassojen vieressä; ne on usein sijoitettu niin, että ihminen "joutuu" lukemaan lööpin miltei tahtomattaankin, koska se sattuu silmään. Lööpit toimivat ikkunoina ajankohtaisiin tapahtumiin. Lööpeissä uutisen informaatioarvo kilpailee houkuttelevuus-kriteerien kanssa. Niiden välityksellä myös ne, jotka eivät varsinaista tuotetta osta, saavat käsityksiä niissä esillä olevista asioista.

Lööppien lukija osallistuu aktiivisesti lukuprosessiin. Hän tulkitsee lööppejä oman elämänhistoriansa ja -kokemuksiensa kautta, tuo mukaan tilanteeseen suhtautumisensa itse lööppeihin ja poimii informaatiota selektiivisesti. Kari E. Turunen toteaa tunne-elämää käsittelevässä kirjassaan (2003, 13), että mieleemme valokeilaan nousee jatkuvasti merkityksiä, mielikuvia, lauseenpätkiä, lyhyesti: ajatuksia. "Mutta mistä ne tulevat?" Hän kysyy. "Liikutanko minä ajatuksia vai liikuttavatko ajatukset minua?"

Tämä tutkimus kartoittaa vastauksia siihen, mikä on lööppien vaikutus siinä prosessissa, jossa ihminen luo merkityksiä mielensisältöjensä kautta. Mikä vaikuttaa lööppien tulkintaprosessiin? Vastausten pohjaksi rakennetaan käsitteellinen tulkintamalli, jonka perusteella ihminen antaa tulkinnalleen henkilökohtaisen merkityksen. Lööppien emotionaalinen koodaaminen ja se, mikä on lööppien merkitys ihmisille kuuluvat tutkimuksen ydinkohteisiin. Tutkimus antaa yleistettävää tietoa, mutta sillä varauksella, että kaikki ihmiset ovat yksilöitä omine kokemuksineen ja muistoineen, jotka vaikuttavat lööppien henkilökohtaisen merkityksen muodostumiseen. Empiirinen osuus ei pyri tarjoamaan laajasti yleistettäviä kokemuksia, vaan osatutkimukset (studies) demonstroivat ilmiöitä. Ilmiönä lööppien tulkitseminen on erittäin monitieteellinen. Tämä tutkimus kuuluu kognitiotieteen alaan ja hahmottaa ilmiötä monitieteellisesti integroiden.

Tutkimuksen teoriaosuus rakentuu ensimmäisessä vaiheessaan todellisuuden hahmottamisesta. Kielellä ja kulttuurilla on tärkeä merkitys tässä prosessissa. Ihmisen persoona vaikuttaa havaitsemiseen ja tarinoiden (narratiivien) rakentaminen tarjoaa rikastavan välineen lööppien tulkinnassa. Emootiot ovat tärkeässä asemassa, kun merkityksiä arvioidaan. Apperseption kautta ne johtavat mentaalisten representaatioiden rakentumiseen. Tunnesäännöillä, kuolemanpelolla ja epävarmuudella sekä representaatioiden yhteisöllisyydellä on merkittävä vaikutus.

Tutkimuksen empiirinen osuus koostuu kuudesta osiosta, joissa kyselyjen ja haastatteluiden avulla tarkastellaan ilmiön eri muotoja. Nämä osatutkimukset paljastavat ilmiön paradoksaalisuuden. Vaikka lööpit helposti leimataan

liioitteleviksi, sensaatiohakuisen ja jopa virheellisen tiedon levittäjiksi, niiden antamaa informaatiota pidetään totena, jos se vastaa lukijan omia käsityksiä lööpissä esillä olleesta aiheesta. Suurin osa vastaajista ilmoitti lukevansa lööppejä. Osa totesi, että niitä oli tärkeä lukea pysyäkseen ajan tasalla. Vaikka lööpit nähdäänkin mainoksina, ne silti perustuvat todellisiin ilmiöihin. Niiden antama näkökulma saattaa olla yksipuolinen, liioitteleva, kärjistetty tai osittainen, mutta pohjalla on kuitenkin todellinen ilmiö. Ihmiset uskovat olevansa keskimääräistä parempia arvioimaan uutisen luotettavuutta (Gilowich & Williams 2008) ja moni vastaaja oli huolissaan siitä, mitä vaikutuksia liioittelevilla lööpeillä on toisiin ihmisiin, jotka eivät osaa olla yhtä mediakriittisiä (medialukutaitoisia) kuin he itse.

Tutkimusosioista yksi selvisi, että vastaajat suhtautuivat epäilevästi lööppien todenperäisyyteen. Lööpit itsessään herättivät voimakkaita tunteita aiheesta riippumatta ja niihin kohdistuva kielteisyyden tuntui perustuvan paljon nimenomaan siihen, että arvioitava otsikko sijaitsi lööpissä. Tutkimusosio kaksi testasi tätä oletusta. Sen tuloksista voidaan päätellä, että otsikon sijainnilla lööpissä on suuri vaikutus otsikon arvioituun luotettavuuteen, mutta ei samassa määrin kuin mitä tutkimusosion yksi vastauksista oli voitu päätellä. Iltapäivälehtiä verrattiin usein Helsingin Sanomiin, joka mainittiin luotettavana lähteenä.

Tutkimusosio kolme testasi tätä oletusta. Sen tulosten perusteella voidaan todeta, ettei Helsingin Sanomien otsikko todellisuudessa ole vastaajien mielestä luotettavampi tiedonlähde kuin iltapäivälehdien otsikko. Tämän perusteella voitaisiin ajatella, että lööppien julkituotu liioittelevuus perustuu paljolti tunnesääntöön, jonka mukaan lööpit liioittelevat ja tämä näkemys on mielen sisältö, joka aktivoituu tietyissä tilanteissa.

Tutkimusosiossa neljä testattiin lööppien vaikutusta tarinoin, joita vastaajat kirjoittivat lööpeissä käsitellyistä aiheista. Lööpeillä oli vaikutusta näiden tarinoiden sisältöihin.

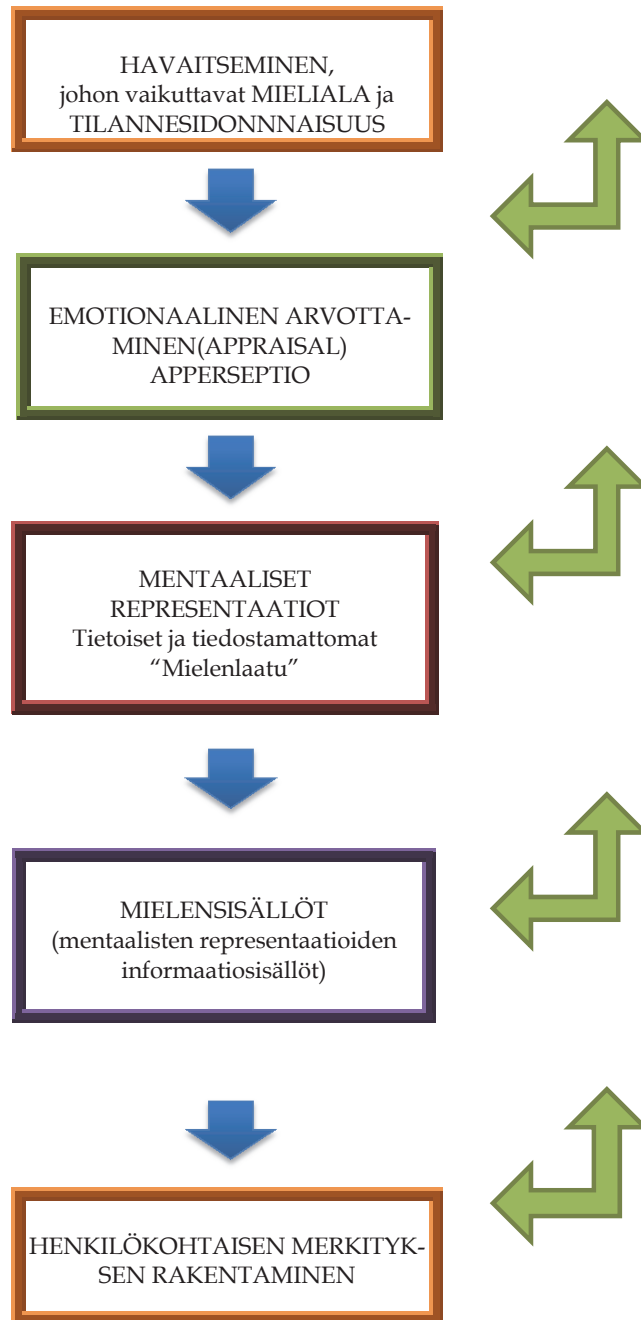
Tutkimusosio viisi analysoi lööppien esille tuomia tunteita. Tunteet ovat erittäin tärkeitä tekijöitä lööppien tulkinnassa. Negatiiviset lööpit herättivät voittopuolisesti negatiivisia tunteita. Mutta myös positiiviseksi luokitellut lööpit aiheuttivat kielteisiä tunteita. Lööppien aiheet ovat voittopuolisesti negatiivisia. Niiden aiheuttamilla kielteisillä tunteilla voi olla negatiivinen vaikutus hyvinvointiin. Tunteiden vaikuttavuuden arvioinnissa on syytä ensin tarkastella sitä, mikä merkitys niillä on ihmiselle itselleen (self-referency). Lööpit tarjoavat aiheita, joissa elämän sattumanvaraisuus ja kuoleman läsnäolo ovat paljon esillä. Pyszczynski, Solomon ja Greenberg (2003) toteavat, että elämän päättymistä koskevat pelot heräävät helposti tilanteissa, joissa informaatiota prosoidaan vähemmän analyttisesti. Lööppejä harvoin tarkastellaan analyttisesti. Niitä kohdataan arkipäivän tilanteissa, joissa mieltä kuormittavat jokapäiväiset asiat. On kuitenkin syytä todeta, että se mikä luo toiselle negatiivisia tunteita, voi toiselle tuoda hyvinkin positiivisia kokemuksia. Jonkin asian luokitteluun kategorisesti hyväksi tai pahaksi on vaikeaa.

On tärkeä huomata, että lööpit aiheuttavat myös positiivisia tunteita. Niiden kautta voi tehdä mentaalisia matkoja tarinoin, samaistua, tirkistellä tai

kritisoida julkisuuden henkilöitä. Lööpit voivat toimia selviytymiskeinoina (coping). Ne tarjoavat vertailukohteita ja mahdollisuuksia huomata, ettei lukija olekaan yksin työttömyyden tai muun lööpissä uutisoidun aiheen kanssa.

Tutkimusosio kuusi koostui asiantuntijahaastatteluista. Poliisit valittiin asiantuntijoiksi, koska he ovat paljon tekemisissä sellaisten asioiden kanssa, jotka herättävät ihmisissä pelkoa. Pelon tunne oli yksi merkittävä osiossa viisi herännyt tunne. Poliisit olivat huolissaan asioiden kärjistymisestä ja turvattomuuden tunteista, joita lööppien sanavalinnat ja aiheiden käsittely saattoivat aiheuttaa. Ihmiset tiedustelivat poliiseilta yksittäisten lööppien otsikoiden todenperäisyyttä. Poliisien oli kuitenkin vaikea ottaa laajemmalti kantaa nimenomaan lööppien merkitykseen, koska niin moni muu asia saattoi olla vaikuttamassa.

Kuviossa 12b esitellään lööppien tulkinnan malli.



KUVIO 12b Iltapäivälehtien lööppien tulkintaprosessi. Prosessi lähtee liikkeelle ärsyksen (lööppi) havaitsemisesta. Havaintoon vaikuttavat mieliala ja tilannetekijät. Emotionaalinen arvottaminen (appraisal) on yksi apperseptiivinen prosessi. Nämä vaikuttavat mielen mentaalisten representaatioiden muodostumiseen. Miелensisällöt ovat mentaalisten representaatioiden tiedollisia sisältöjä. Henkilökohtainen merkitys rakentuu tämän prosessin tuloksena. Nuolet kuvaavat informaation kulkua molempiin suuntiin vaikuttaen koko prosessiin.

Tätä mallia on syytä vielä tiivistää jakamalla mielensisällöt kolmeen tasoon:

1. **Orientoituminen**  
Mitä maailmalla on tapahtunut ja koskettaako tämä minua henkilökohtaisesti? Tälle tasolle kuuluvat luokittelut, typologiat ja syyseuraussuhteiden muodostaminen. Maailmaa jäsennetään orientoitumisen kautta ja uhkia ja epämiellyttäviä tunteita analysoidaan. Lööppien tarjoama informaatio käsitellään ja se muotoutuu osaksi olemassa olevia mielensisältöjä tai tekee niihin muutoksia, jos tarpeellista tai mahdollista.
2. **Kollektiiviset representaatiot**  
Miten sosiaalisuutta ylläpidetään? Tarinat ja sadunomaisuus kuuluvat tälle tasolle. Myös kollektiiviset julkisuuden henkilöt kuuluvat tähän. Samoin ryhmäidentiteetit ja asiat, joista yhteisössä keskustellaan.
3. **Persoonallisuuden rakentuminen.**  
Mitä psykologisia matkoja lööpit mahdollistavat? Tietoiset ja tiedostamattomat selviytymiskeinot (coping) kuuluvat tälle tasolle. Identiteetin rakentuminen (henkilökohtaisemman tason julkisuuden henkilöt ja sankarit), toivo, vakuuttuminen, arjesta pakeneminen ja tunteet, jotka palvelevat positiivisia tarkoituksia.

Tähän jakoon päädyttiin hahmottamisen helpottamiseksi, mutta on tärkeä havaita, että nämä tasot ovat voimakkaasti yhteydessä toisiinsa ja lööpit vaikuttavat usealla eri tasolla yhtä aikaa.

Seuraavassa on esimerkkejä niistä mentaalisten representaatioiden malleista, joita voitiin rakentaa tutkimuksen perusteella:

- Liian hyvä ollakseen tosi  
Liian hyvä uutinen ei voi olla tosi.
- Älä loista liian kirkkaasti  
Menestyminen sallitaan, mutta se täytyy ansaita työllä.
- Vika löytyy instituutioista  
Ihmisten sympatiat asettuvat usein yksilön puolelle ja instituutioita on helppo syyttää.
- Voit luottaa suomalaiseen  
Suomalaisuuteen ja myös suomalaisiin instituutioihin luotetaan.
- Elämä voi olla sadunomaista  
Ihmeitä tapahtuu ja ne tuovat ripauksen toivoa ja taikaa arkielämään.

- Sankaritarinat  
Todellisia sankareita löytyy edelleen.
- Voin koskettaa tuota julkkista  
Julkisuuden henkilöt herättävät myönteisiä tunteita viihteen muodossa. Ne voivat myös luoda ylemmyyden tunteita "tyhmää" julkkista kohtaan. Oma elämä nähdään parempana kuin julkisuuden henkilön elämä ja tämä parantaa omaa selviytymisen tunnetta.
- Haluan olla kuin sinä  
Julkisuuden henkilöt palvelevat samaistumisen ja mallien löytämisen tarpeita ja toimivat myös selviytymiskeinoina ja päiväunien kohteina.
- Minä tiedän paremmin  
Lööpeissä esitetyt asiat nähdään väärinä ja oma ylemmydentunne korostuu.

Lööppejä on tärkeä tarkastella, koska ne ovat niin laajalti saatavissa. Ne ovat toki vain yksi tekijä maailmassa, joka on täynnä erilaisia ärsykeitä. Mutta lööpit vaihtuvat melkein päivittäin, ne ottavat kantaa ajankohtaisiin asioihin ja tarjoavat tiettyjä näkökulmia niin aiheisiin kuin niissä esiintyviin ihmisiinkin. Ne saattavat ylläpitää jonkin aiheen käsittelyä julkisuudessa ja jättää toisia täysin huomiotta. Lööppien tapa tarkastella jotakin tiettyä asiaa saattaa muodostua mielensisällöksi ja vaikuttaa asenteena ja uskomuksena, jota on vaikea muuttaa, kun se kerran on muodostunut. Sosiaaliset konstruktioit muodostavat sen pohjan, jolle lööppien tarjoama todellisuus rakentuu. Mutta ne merkitykset, joita ihmiset niistä saavat ovat yksilöllisiä ja perustuvat yksilöiden elämänselämään ja -kokemuksiin sekä niille annettuihin henkilökohtaisiin merkityksiin ja niiden arvottamiseen.

Lööppejä täytyy tutkia monitieteellisestä näkökulmasta. Ihmisen kertoman, jopa itselle vakuuttamisen, ja todellisten tunteiden välistä ristiriitaa on syytä tarkastella. Ihmisten ajattelussa on paradokseja ja niistä on hyvä olla tietoinen tutkimuksen tasolla ainakin, jos ne henkilökohtaisella tasolla saattavatkin jäädä tiedostamattomiksi. Lööppien tutkiminen tarjoaa yhden näkökulman ihmisen mielen toiminnan ymmärtämiseen sosiaalisesti määritellyssä kollektiivisten representaatioiden maailmassa. Mentaaliset representaatiot ja niiden informaationvälittämisen olisivat kiinnostava tutkimuskohde myös nk. plasebovaikutusten tutkimuksessa: minkälaiset mielensisällöt aktivoituvat tilanteissa, joissa muutos terveydentilassa parempaan tapahtuu (ilman lääkkeitä) ja mikä on emootioiden merkitys tässä prosessissa?

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## **APPENDIX**

### EXPERT INTERVIEWS (chronologically)

Police Sergeant Nina Pelkonen, Western Uusimaa Police Department

Inspector, Head of Communications Petri Launiainen, Western Uusimaa Police Department

Police Sergeant Marko Forss, Helsinki Net Police

Police Sergeant Nina Juurakko-Vesikko, Head of Communications,  
Central Finland Police Department

Senior Constable Hannu Väänänen, Western Uusimaa Police Department

Sergeant Harri Vihola, Eastern Uusimaa Police Department

Detective Inspector Jyrki Kaipanen, National Bureau of Investigation

Detective Sergeant Tero Tyynelä, Helsinki Police Department

Senior Detective Otto Kurtelius, Helsinki Police Department

Detective Inspector Minna Immonen, Western Uusimaa Police Department