Review

Given the role of the media in the modern world, it is hardly surprising that media discourses and practices have enjoyed so much attention from scholars in various disciplines. In linguistics, media discourse in general and news discourse in particular have been the focus of much intensive research over the past 25 years. Some of the early classic studies, such as van Dijk (1988), Fowler (1991) and Bell (1991) laid ground for the development of the discipline along cognitive, critical and ethnographic dimensions and they still inspire some of the more recent contributions in the field (e.g., Richardson 2007; Cotter 2010).

Bednarek and Caple's book represents a most welcome addition to the literature on media/news discourse in that it develops some of the central theoretical constructs relevant for the study of media texts (such as news values) and offers a comprehensive analytical framework for the analysis of multimodal media texts in print and online newspapers. This is no doubt the result of the authors' interdisciplinary cooperation: while Monika Bednarek is a linguist who is methodologically grounded in the social semiotic traditions of Halliday's systemic functional grammar, as evidenced in her work in appraisal theory and linguistic pragmatics (cf. Bednarek 2010), Helen Caple is a media communication and journalism scholar with experience in practical photojournalism (cf. Caple 2013). It is this – I would not hesitate to say fortunate – synergy of approaches that allows the authors to present a convincing case for a complex and systematic analysis of verbal and visual data in English-language news. In that sense, the book marks the gradual shift from the 1990s text-based paradigm to the explicitly multimodal approach (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2001; van Leeuwen 2005) that appears to be more appropriate for addressing the changing mediascape in the last decade (cf. Knox 2009; Machin and Mayr 2012).

The book is organized into nine chapters that are logically sequenced, gradually revealing and systematically arguing the authors' novel approach to news discourse. While the first five chapters build up the necessary background, the next two chapters present the authors' multidimensional analysis of verbal and visual components of news stories. The final two chapters are case studies illustrating how the theory can be meaningfully applied.

The introductory chapter sets the basic context and outlines relevant theoretical approaches. While the authors approach the topic from their personal research backgrounds in social semiotics and corpus-assisted discourse analysis, they do not align themselves with any of the several analytical perspectives they describe in the introduction. Instead, they opt for an 'inclusive' approach, combining various linguistically oriented traditions with several concepts from journalism studies (such as news values and newsworthiness). This is a most welcome attitude since an inclusive approach that draws on various perspectives can, arguably, do better justice to the rich complexity of data we find in the news media than restraining oneself to the necessarily limiting confines of a single approach.

Chapter 2 outlines the institutional context of news production. It sets the communicative context by specifying the various producer and audience roles involved. The distinction is made between target and real audiences and the role of newspaper content in defining the expected audiences. The discussion of the socio-historical context locates the roots of modern journalism in the 19th century, as well as notes the changes in the media brought about by the advent of radio and television in the 1920s and 1950s. Commenting on the recent shift to digital content, the authors note some of the challenges associated with the new media and platforms, which have changed the ways in which the individual recipients of media messages can collaborate with the traditional news producers and share information with each other. This is important with respect to the two-way flow between news discourse and context, which reveals the authors' social constructivist perspective (37).

Chapter 3, the core part of the book, is devoted to the major concept that permeates all news discourse, namely news values. These mental categories, or internalized assumptions held by people, make specific events newsworthy. After reviewing the existing literature on news values, Bednarek and Caple argue that news values are not inherently present in events. Instead, the values are discursively constructed, both through language and image. Hence, there is the need for a combined multimodal approach to reveal how events are mediated in linguistic and visual ways and how they are made newsworthy by news producers for their audiences. The authors devote substantial space to mapping and exemplifying the possible linguistic realizations of the individual news values, and then proceed to do the same with images. The construal of news values in discourse is aptly illustrated with lots of individual examples that demonstrate the close interplay between the two modes.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of language in the news, dealing with the characteristic lexical and syntactic features, the use of numbers, and the articulation of evidentiality/intertextuality. It also describes the structure of the news story and sums up the typical features of 'headlinese', since headlines are structural features of news that – on account of their typically functioning as textual summaries – condense news value and construe newsworthiness in a rather limited space. The general characteristics of print news discourse also apply, albeit in somewhat modified ways, for online, radio and TV news.

Chapter 5, entitled 'Images in the news', is conceived as a counterpart to the previous chapter. Noting the historical shift from text-based to image-dominated journalism, the authors elaborate on the communicative functions of news images. Six functions of images are identified: illustration, evidence, sensation, icon, evaluation, and aesthetic. Arguably, some other functions might be added, particularly in order to address critically the myth of the objective photography (cf. Taylor 2005). Thus, for instance, a possible function might include image as manipulation or deception. But, even without a category of its own, this function could be subsumed and discussed within some of the other functions proposed by the authors, e.g. image as aesthetic (to account for cases when an image undergoes technical editing in order to conform better to the requirements of balance and composition), image as evidence (where false evidence is fabricated by means of altering an image), or image as icon (where a modified image comes to be used with the intention of swaying public opinion or serving other propagandist goals). The strong point of the chapter is undoubtedly the articulation of the subtle inter-semiotic relationship between text and image (using Meinhof's 1994 categories of overlap, displacement, and dichotomy), and the convincing documentation of the image/caption, image/headline and image/body text relations.

Chapters 6 and 7 elaborate the authors' multidimensional approach to news texts. First, the concept of evaluation is traced in all its parameters and its linguistic realizations. Then, image composition is discussed, leading the authors to postulate a "balance framework" that can be used to describe "a complete visual unit of information" (163–4). This gives the analyst the possibility – and the conceptual tools – of describing elements contained in photographs in a systematic way. However, it is rightly pointed out that while many unbalanced (or "ugly") images are found in newspapers (173), they may actually have a stronger emotional appear than aesthetically well-composed images.

Finally, chapters 8 and 9 exemplify the multimodal analysis of news texts in two case studies. The first of these (Chapter 8) involves the stand-alone news story, i.e. a type of news item in which

the image has a dominant position (the alternative name is "image-nuclear news story"; 182). The combined quantitative and qualitative analysis reveals a preference for isolating and centred compositional configuration of images and, as far as iterating images are concerned, the preponderance of serializing and matching relations. The analysis of the language shows that not much explicit attitudinal evaluation, which is interpreted as the result of the journalist drive for objectivity. The findings also show similarities between hard news and soft news in that both types of news play with the meanings in headlines and captions – cf. for instance, the frequent use of allusion. In the second case study (Chapter 9), the analytical framework is applied to online news and video news summaries posted on news websites. The authors compare and contrast two versions of a news story in ABC and BBC video summaries, noting how they construct the appearance of objectivity on the one hand and manage to articulate evaluations through various voices. It is shown that the way the footage is composed can create the impression of urgency, and thus boost the perceived news value of the story.

Written in a very lucid style, the book is suitable for scholars as well as students. It is praiseworthy that each chapter concludes with a list of the most important readings in the field, followed with brief descriptive comments. This is a minor thing but students will certainly find it very useful because it points them directly to the relevant literature if they wish to find out more. Also, the book includes a sample essay (a student assignment) in Appendix 2. It is accompanied with the authors' detailed notes and recommendations in the margins. Once again, this very practical feature illustrates the authors' concern for the audience, hoping to maximize their benefit from the book.

All in all, while the title of this book is quite brief and unassuming, its simplicity disguises a well-structured, modern account of news texts found in print and online media. Although the book is primarily addressed to researchers in media, journalism and communication studies, the grounding of the analysis in the discipline of linguistics will make this book crucial to all linguistically-oriented students of discourse analysis. Regardless of that, the methodology that Bednarek and Caple apply in their analysis of news texts is convincing – in that sense, the book could be used as a manual by all students in the social sciences and humanities because it provides them with tools to process information coming from diverse sources in the increasingly mediatized modern world. The authors' explicit multimodal approach also complements well other recent books that address media and news discourse, be it from a more critical (Machin and Mayr 2012), textual (Busá 2013) or journalistic (Smith and Higgins 2013) perspective. The book also shows that multimodal news discourse analysis has carved its distinctive niche alongside both the conversation analysis of spoken news broadcast media (Tolson 2006; Montgomery 2007; Lorenzo-Dus 2008; Thornborrow 2015) and the pragmatics of print and online news (Landert 2014; Chovanec 2014).

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