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Journalism and public discourse

Navigating complexity

Martin Conboy and Scott A. Eldridge II

10.1 Introduction: the tension between journalism's normative and commercial interests

Modern democratic societies have come to depend on some form of foundational assumptions about the involvement of the public in political decision-making. This inscribing of a public, defined as wider than the legislative and judicial bodies themselves, into journalism was key to both the legitimation of democratic processes and as a conduit to knowledge of the decision-making processes themselves. Journalism has over time increasingly claimed to be a core contribution to both those processes. It informed the public and it involved the public. In addition, it developed arguments to sustain its own commercial survival as a surveyor of the activities of the powerful and the privileged in society. Moreover, journalism has always had a strong incentive to address a public, not least because of its ever-present economic imperative to make money by constructing and maintaining audiences. This strong commercial basis has meant that journalism would survive only by identifying a variety of social groupings as a public and in articulating the specifics of those groupings in their language or discourse.

Although dissemination of information for general consumption goes back to the time of the Romans at least, it was only when this form of communication met political activity that a genuinely public discourse started to emerge. By public discourse, we are talking here about a way of communicating that inscribes a public within its language and assumes an audience that recognizes both itself and the potential for this association to generate social and political involvement/change. The English Civil War in the seventeenth century saw periodicity, or the regular presentation of news in a particular way, shape public discourse for the first time in any sustained fashion; and this was followed by the interconnected American and French revolutions which both depended upon a discourse of public involvement for their success. However, the enlightenment of a public did not correspond to the levels of literacy necessary for all to participate in this public discourse, nor has an idea of the public and journalism's relationship with that public been either static or agreed-upon.

While journalism has long presented a public-facing discourse that defines its role as an intermediary between the public and the powerful, informing the former and challenging the

latter, the nuances of this role have been varied. The way journalism has positioned itself as integral to the public's ability to carry out civic activity, for instance, has been less settled. As journalism's commercial demands clash with its normative and idealized role perception, the tension between these dimensions of journalism and diverse concepts of the public has become embedded in journalism's public discourse. These dynamics have driven research into understanding both dimensions in an increasingly contested media environment, as the following sections will describe.

10.2 Definitions: journalism and public discourse

To better situate the ideological-theoretical focus of much work that explores the public discourse of journalism we need to define our terms more closely. The word 'discourse' is a complex one. For our purposes, it draws on two interrelating traditions of conceptual enquiry. The first is drawn from linguistics proper and is an approach to language that expands beyond a concentration on the level of words and sentences to encompass much broader connections to society, culture, and political worlds. The second, perhaps extending this, draws on the work of philosopher Michel Foucault who pioneered approaches to language as a means of exploring how it encompassed structures of power and knowledge. In the spirit of these approaches, therefore, our approach to public discourse is both an exploration of how the public is defined as well as how it embodies certain assumptions of the power wielded by those who claim to speak on its behalf or indeed those who constitute such a public. That public has been constructed simultaneously as an audience for news and as a market for advertisers. This has been the case even within non-commercial enterprises as they, too, must compete for audience share within an environment shaped by commercial forces.

Journalism's claims have often rested on broad and noble-sounding commitments to service of the public. These have historically included the idea of the press as a Fourth Estate, a common discourse across the nineteenth century, the watchdog function largely borrowed from the American tradition of aggression and access on behalf of the public; and more recently in the era of broadcast journalism, the ethic of a public service. Socio-historical perspectives are an essential grounding for the understanding of public discourse. The first explicit discussions of the interrelationship of journalism with the construction of a public come with what has become known as the Lippmann/Dewey debate in the US. Walter Lippmann (1922) expressed the view that society had become too complex for the general public to be adequately informed through conventional journalism and suggested that a specialist group of political communicators should be entrusted with providing summaries designed for public consumption. John Dewey (1927) provided a swift response to this position, arguing that journalists should be central to extending public interest in public affairs and that journalism should aspire to creating a better-educated citizen. These views were complemented by work that placed journalism at the center of the geographical construction of literal communities (Park 1925), highlighting the role of newspapers in the symbolic construction of urban space and their constituent public.

Extending discussions of the creation of literal communities of news consumption, Habermas (1989) produced an influential account of a specifically English genesis of the idea of a public sphere; and although this was not linguistic in orientation it has provided an overarching conceptualization for considering the ideals and pragmatics of our news media and their publics. Habermas linked the rise of the bourgeoisie explicitly to its ability

to negotiate a 'public sphere' located between the interests of itself as a social class and the interests of the state. As an extension to this theory, Eagleton (1984) provides an illuminating commentary on how this public sphere came to represent the emergent aesthetic and cultural tastes of a new political class which occluded that upon which its identity depended for its existence: private property. Habermas' work has enabled critics to identify that the power implications embedded with the relationship between journalism and the public have meant that there has been no straightforward trajectory to mass involvement in democratic participation through journalism, but rather a constant renegotiation of the relationships within dominant social forces at particular times.

For example, newspapers began by assuming that their readership was reasonably homogeneous and it was this unifying vision that gave rise to the power of a middle-class public from the beginning of the eighteenth century across parts of Western Europe. Nevertheless, the homogeneous world that these early papers projected was a bourgeois and male domain that excluded both women (Fraser 1990; MacDowell 1998) and the laboring classes (Harris and Lee 1978). Over time and under political and market pressures from both social audiences and business interests it developed a broader range of language, topic, and approach for specifically targeted readerships which came to include most every social grouping. Nevertheless, as journalism has continued to develop and has expanded into new media spaces, the Habermasian legacy has persisted as a construct for understanding both journalism and the public, and scholarship into its formulations in new discursive spaces has underpinned discussions of journalism. Language and discourse within journalism have therefore evolved over time to conform to the demands of this variety, as we will show.

A fertile departure point for considering the public discourse of a specific form of journalism is the popular tabloid newspaper. Here we see an indisputably successful articulation of news/market with its own distinctive brand of language as a key part of its commercial success with newspaper readers. As an example form of public discourse, it provides an interesting departure from the role of 'respectable' and responsible journalism. Work by Conboy (2002, 2006) arguably opened up perspectives on the language of the tabloids as having a long gestation in constructing a plausible version of public discourse on a wide range of topics. The political economy of the tabloid press has often meant that this discourse tends to be reactionary in nature but it does not diminish its importance within constrictions of our understanding of public communication. Other authors have contributed to extending this view of the tabloids on a global scale with particular stress on the construction of the narratives and the vocabulary of their approach (e.g., Bird (1992) on the US supermarket tabloids and Langer (1998), who incorporates television news into discussion of tabloid values as they have emerged in Australia). Sparks and Tulloch (2000) have extended this potential to explore a more global spectrum of tabloid activities. Wasserman (2011) considers the tabloid in South Africa, whereas from an Australian perspective Harrington (2008) reconsiders tabloid publics.

In these discussions, the public orientation of tabloids as 'popular' is placed in contrast to an 'elite' or quality press, a positioning that has further implications for exploring the construction of the public within journalistic discourse. In focusing on binary distinctions between the quality and the popular, the divide between a vision of journalism as an idealized 'Fourth Estate' working 'in the public interest' and one of journalism as a commercial enterprise serving up what is 'of interest to the public' is made stark. This scholarship challenges conceptions of both journalism and the public in a way that has shaped the public discourse emerging from journalism. Viewing journalism as polarized along these dimensions relegates public discourses to either those of an information-driven

or a market-driven logic. Inasmuch as these prisms segment journalism and the popular along discursive lines – elite vs. popular news discourses, for instance – such views of journalism and the public are often viewed as overly simplified. Deuze (2005) argues that such binary distinctions carry significant flaws from an ideological perspective, and the work of Connell (1998) finds increasing homogeneity between popular and elite journalism discourses. Both suggest there is less utility in approaching either as discrete media types or discrete forms of discourse, and advocate the merits of addressing journalistic media for their various dimensions of popular and elite journalism and discourse.

This homogeneity has been the focus of heated debate between scholars in the U.S. and Europe, where it is addressed as a rising level of ‘infotainment.’ As a description of journalism’s public discourse, ‘infotainment’ describes journalism’s public focus as leaning heavily on a market logic, as simplifying journalism’s discourse with the viewer or reader through soundbites and simplistic discussions of high politics, and as a convergence of the soft news of the popular with the hard news of the elite. In this latter dynamic, journalism’s construction of its public returns to one that envisages a public-as-consumer. While this has long been a facet of journalism’s commercial imperative, as noted in the introduction, in the framework of infotainment or tabloidization it has come to be identified as a crass commercialization of journalism’s public service ideal. As a trend it has been identified as a decline in journalism’s engagement with its public responsibility, particularly within commercial television news in the United States (Postman 1985). ‘Infotainment’ associates such popularization of news with the softening of civic and political information, for instance, as a ‘dumbing down’ of news in a public interest necessary for civic activity and as emblematic of a crisis of public participation and communication (Blumler and Gurevitch 1995).

While critics have identified the rise of what they would call infotainment or others as ‘tabloidization’ as reflective of an increasingly commercialized view of the public – the public as consumers – scholars from cultural studies, including Dahlgren (1997) in Sweden, and those from political communications, including Brants (1998) out of the Netherlands, have welcomed this as a stimulation of an otherwise absent public discourse. In their arguments, the more popular and entertaining discourse of ‘infotainment’ and the journalism of ‘soft news’ carries with it the potential for a reinvigorated discursive interaction between journalism and the public that had previously been lacking, a reinvigorated public sphere.

Across these perspectives, however, the construction of a public and the positioning of journalism vis-à-vis its relationship with that public continue to be at the forefront of scholarship and underpin the contested nature of these dynamics. Whether suiting its commercial needs or its normative ideal-typical roles, journalism has alternately positioned itself in relation to a public-as-consumer while at other times heralding its ‘Fourth Estate’ role in an intermediary role for a public-as-citizen. As discussions of language, journalism, and public discourse develop across disciplines and research agendas, these conflicting ‘publics’ continue to provide research foci.

10.3 Disciplinary perspectives: historical perspectives on the structuring of journalism’s publics

As we have briefly demonstrated, journalism has long been considered one of the main shapers of public knowledge. As such it has a central role in democratic debate and more broadly provides a shared social experience (see Wehling, this volume, Chapter 8; and Peterson, this volume, Chapter 9). The Habermasian legacy has ensured that journalism

has to be measured against normative expectations of its contribution to a ‘public sphere.’ Beyond this, another socially informed history, Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ (1986) prompted awareness of the extent to which newspapers in particular create a public that coheres around a nationalized identification. Matheson (2000) looked specifically at the changing shape and impact of the language of news reports in the late nineteenth-century press in Britain to explain how a specific newspaper discourse begins to shape public understanding of the contribution of journalism as a distinct text type. Hampton (2004) developed approaches to journalism as a public discourse with specific regard for its educational function across a century (1850–1950) when, he argues, the public role of journalism shifted under commercial pressures from being one in which the public were educated to one in which they were exploited as a commercial proposition and represented in terms of their social and demographic appeal.

For centuries it had been accepted that journalism has been a vital conduit for democratic engagement. There had, however, been little concrete justification for these claims. Once analysis of the substance and patterning of media language began to be introduced, certain of the long-held claims for the public functions of journalism came under more sustained scrutiny (Hampton 2010). Such analysis has played an important role in both challenging some assumptions about journalism’s Enlightenment credentials as well as pointing the way to the possibility of more equitable modes of representation while, at the same time, increasing appreciation of the pressures and institutional constraints under which journalism is produced. We could say that linguistic criticism of journalism contributes to the democratic ideals of the host’s communicative discourse.

Approaches to language as a sociologically rooted and therefore profoundly political set of discourses from the 1960s combined with academic centers beginning to take seriously the media products which had hitherto been considered mundane and therefore beneath aesthetic or academic consideration, such as popular television and newspapers. This institutional confluence of interest engendered a media-turn in linguistic approaches. The most prominent of these was the research conducted by Smith and his team of researchers on the previously neglected area of the language of the contemporary popular press in 1975. Hall, who contributed a far-sighted Introduction to this book (Hall 1975), aligned with researchers at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies to provide many of the theoretical and methodological approaches to the interrelationship of the language of the news media and social class that were to inform many later studies. Drawing extensively on continental theory, especially the semiotics of Barthes (1974), the Centre encouraged the study of the language of the media as a key site for social reproduction (Hall 1978). Scholars at the University of East Anglia, prompted by work on sociolinguistics by Trudgill, started to apply many of his insights into close readings of newspapers. The stage was set for linguistics to move out of the laboratory where it had resided in the post-war years, concentrating on the scientific consideration of language in isolation from other social and political contexts, and into explorations of the vibrant and publicly oriented language of news media. By the early 1990s the fruits of these sorts of explorations had begun to be published in very accessible form meaning that the radical re-readings of newspapers and media in general were available beyond those with formalized linguistics training. This was the point at which the popularizing work by Fowler (1991) was first published. Fowler’s work emerged from an engaged school of English that did not consider the language of newspapers to be beneath its dignity threshold. This research prompted more studies that began to examine the language of newspapers more systematically in relation to their embedded ideological

and cultural assumptions. Fairclough's work (e.g., 1995) brought important extensions to the political and ideological implications of this work at Lancaster from the mid-1990s. The core linguistic debates and issues from these investigations include Wodak's work on national identity and racism and Cameron's work from 1995 on the ideologies of house style on newspapers; demystifying and politicizing news routines and styles was characteristic of this period of scholarly activity.

From a slightly different perspective but echoing the disdain often displayed for serious scholarship directed toward media products, it took some time for serious study of the language of newspapers to emerge from more literary approaches. Early studies of English newspapers such as Frank's (1961) were key to prompting later, more systematic analyses of the literary qualities of the variety of early newspaper genres. The 1990s were also the years when research into the corpus of English-language newspapers began and generated a range of work that could systematically begin to explore the articulation of public concerns, pragmatics of communication, and reporting styles over time and within specific time-frames. From 1993 Fries began the compilation of the ZEN corpus in Zurich (see Fries and Schneider 2000). Jucker and others have extended the public face of this work (see, e.g., Jucker 2005), including the establishment with Taavitsainen of the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* which has been influential in providing a forum for much of the work enabled by the corpus. Work flowing from the Zurich center includes Landert's recent work on conversationalization (2014), which explores how journalism is increasingly incorporating the discourses of everyday conversation into its patterns of communication and, most importantly, drawing conclusions about what this means for the public domain. A Rostock corpus was established from 1996 by Ungerer and developed by Schneider and later Bös. Historically specific work with implications for the shaping of our contemporary political institutions and more broadly popular culture and political engagement, drawing upon linguistic insights, has been produced by scholars of literature including Raymond (1996, 1999) and Brownlees (2014), as well as scholars examining language change, public engagement, and ideology (e.g., Cotter 1999c, 2003; Vandebussche 2008; Horner 2011).

These historical perspectives on the structuring of journalism's publics have flowed into and further enriched understandings of the mechanics and patterns of contemporary news media language, notably in concerns on democracy and public aspects of journalism. Richardson (2004) has explored the relationship of the language of broadsheet (elite) newspapers and their role in exacerbating Islamophobia, and Santa Ana (2002) has examined dehumanizing metaphors in news stories about immigrants and their role in promulgating xenophobia. Such studies have had political impact in informing social reports commissioned in the U.K. and U.S. on how the language of journalism can negatively frame understanding of large numbers of the population. Outside the U.K., political disengagement, multilingualism, the definitional crossroads of journalism have all been explored in the output of the news media through linguistic tools. In terms of political participation there have been studies of the readability of newspapers, news media markets, and social class, combined with studies of representations of outsiders embedded in journalistic cliché and routine. The edited volume of Johnson and Ensslin (2007) has led the way in this regard, particularly chapters by Milani, Horner, Jaffe, and Jaworski, and work has been produced on the specific representation in the news media of language policy regarding multilingualism by Kelly-Holmes and Milani (2013) as well as Cotter (1999a, 1999c) and Horner (2007).

10.4 Current contributions: positioning journalistic identity and articulating its boundaries

Emerging scholarship on the relationship between journalism and the public has focused on exploring the discursive representations of journalism and understanding how it relates to a public. In the past few decades, building on the frameworks of discourse and textual analysis developed in the late twentieth century, studies have sought to understand journalism's public-facing discourses both within an elite–popular binary as well as addressing the fractures generated by the profusion of elite and popular distinctions that Connell (1998) identifies. Rather than abandoning the more socially radical Critical Discourse Studies agenda of Teun Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Theo van Leeuwen, or the linguistic analysis of journalism by Fowler and Bell, the methodologies and frameworks developed in the 1990s are now being utilized to explore the power dynamics specific to new media and change. Prominent scholars in the field, such as Richardson (2008), have argued for an expanded agenda that can study the changes of new media through language analysis, and in response to that call, discourse and language analysis is seeing a resurgence in studies of new media. Meanwhile Carvalho (2008) has developed frameworks for synchronic and diachronic approaches that have informed nuanced analyses.

Research agendas of critical discourse and critical linguistics, a particular vein of scholarship into the language of journalism, have also been adapted for methodological approaches that are increasingly familiar within journalism studies. As analytical tools, these have been employed to explore journalism's role in defining societal relationships between the public and the powerful, and approaches to language analysis within journalism have focused on how journalistic texts represent their own sense of belonging within society. Scholars have used such tools to address the public crisis that journalism has faced following scandals derived from 'tabloidization' and the negative associations with paparazzi (Berkowitz 2000; Bishop 1999), and employed similar approaches when confronting plagiarism or poor journalistic practice (Cecil 2002). Much of this work, including work of the authors of this chapter, engages with the dimensions of change for their socio-historical implications, assessing how journalism is repositioning its societal place within an elite–popular dynamic. These tools have enabled scholars to analyze news texts for the discursive, socio-historical, and normative positioning of journalism and the public.

A key aspect of such research into journalism's public discourses looks at discussions of journalism and its ideals as boundary-building discourses "meant to be seen" (Bishop 1999: 91). In this vein, journalism's public discourses are analyzed for how they reconstruct journalism's sense of its own responsibilities to a public and its place within a public sphere following numerous high-profile lapses in ethical and professional standards, articulating a view of journalism in a service role for the public and as an intermediary within a Habermasian construct. Bishop (1999) and Berkowitz (2000) separately explore how language about the public role of journalism emerged in reaction to the reputational damage inflicted by paparazzi and tabloid sensationalism following the death of Princess Diana in 1997, both locating a clear and public-facing discursive reconstruction of journalism's ideal types in reaction to the negative backlash faced.

Elsewhere, Aldridge (1998) has looked at public discourse as a myth-making exercise, one that offers homage to normative ideals, while reestablishing the reputation of journalism in the wake of a series of blows to its credibility. Such work into discursive boundary building has led to an energized research agenda that has explored the discursive representation of journalism as developed in relation to the public, and the role of public-facing news texts as

discourses to repair public perception and amplify an adherence to ‘public interest.’ Bishop (2004) revisits arguments of the ‘popular’ when encroaching on journalism’s ownership of its intermediary role, as when celebrities interview politicians.

Further work is being done to unpack the public projection of journalism’s own identity and its relationship with the public through research on contemporary and historical concepts of journalism’s role perceptions. Often embedded in news discourse, such analysis addresses the way journalism positions its public role within news texts as an overt and public discourse of journalistic identity. These reflect a perception of an ideal-type of journalism through discourses that work in a public interest, rise above scandal, and resolve contradictions of journalistic ideals while rebuffing interloping new media actors (Coddington 2013; Conboy and Eldridge 2014; Eldridge 2013, 2014). Analyzing news texts as a conduit for public discourse on journalistic identity and its boundaries, this work builds on the foundation established by scholars in fields of sociolinguistics and critical linguistics, and their methodological approaches have infused research into the role of journalism as it has faced crisis and change. In Conboy and Eldridge (2014), socio-historic frameworks of journalism are approached through language analysis to understand the discursive positioning of journalism as providing a civic function. Researching this idealized construct of a ‘Fourth Estate’ and journalism’s public imperative, contemporary work has revolved around locating such discourses within the historical dimensions of journalism’s self-perceived roles (Broersma and Steel 2015).

Notable scholarship by Carlson (2014) and Coddington (2012) in the U.S. looks at editorial language and how journalism is positioning itself in relation to the public through analysis of the reflexive discourses of public editors and those found in editorial and reader columns. At the same time, language analysis addressing public discourses outside overt discussions of journalism’s ideals has been developed, and analysis of journalistic identity and belonging in analysis of more covert public discourses reacting to WikiLeaks has focused on public discourses as constructing a journalistic identity around idealized roles and the normative ideals of journalism (Eldridge 2013, 2014; Eldridge and Steel 2016). Both Carlson (2013) and Eldridge (2013, 2014) have used such approaches to explore the metadiscourse of journalism, discourses where two publics, both journalism-as-public and the wider public of society, are addressed. Carlson (2014) builds on the discursive reconstruction of ‘deviance’ to interrogate representations of journalism’s normative ideals in the face of crisis, whereas Eldridge (2013, 2014) has focused on Bell’s (1991) construct of the journalist-as-public and its repositioning in the face of new actors and new media challenges.

In work that bridges the traditional and the new, such as that of de Maeyer and Le Cam (2014), language and public discourse serve as avenues to investigate the ‘material traces’ of journalism as it moves online, and the role discourse plays in reconstructing concepts of change and permanence within journalism. Scholars exploring new dimensions of mediated discourse online have used discourse analysis to map the transitions of language, the work of Wodak and of Carvalho consistently being utilized to explore such new dimensions. Refinements of analytical frameworks and tools have opened new perspectives for such work, exploring the use not only of reactions to new media actors but the invigoration of normative ideals in the face of their emergence. With the public’s constituent members becoming increasingly prominent within journalistic content, as ‘citizen witnesses’ (Allan 2013) and participants in news-making, the intermediary role of journalism within the idealized public sphere has blurred. With distinctions between journalism as intermediary and public as recipient of information harder to locate in terms of journalistic content and practice, research on the public-facing discourses of journalistic texts has focused on how

traditionally journalistic actors have reasserted their Habermasian ideal and positioned their work in relation to that public (Cotter 2010), and the way language informs the construction and understanding of the public (Perrin 2013).

Such contributions to understanding public discourses of journalism focus on its idealized and normative dimensions, the same that underpin discussions of a ‘Fourth Estate’ and Habermas’ public sphere. They also return scholarly discussions to analysis of journalism’s public discourses as a means of journalism delineating between seemingly low-brow, sensational, and commercialized content of the popular, and the estimable and idealized public interest focus of the quality press. Confronted with a public backlash around a shift toward sensationalism, public discourses distance the work of the ‘quality’ press acting in the public interest from the tabloidized content, re-casting the ‘popular’ as public interest. These discourses serve to construct a public-interest dimension and allow the audience to understand the way journalists construct their role in democratic society. Spoken, or unspoken, the focus of these discourses has always served two ends, the first being repairing or disassociating ‘good’ from ‘bad’ journalism, the second reconfirming the public interest journalism claims to serve and therefore the public it has constructed as recipients of that service.

Across this work, journalistic language is approached for how it interweaves a discussion of public, public interest, and responsibility within ostensibly news-focused information flow, underpinning the public understanding of what journalism is, and what it is not. Building on the critical linguistics and critical discourse research agendas established in the latter half of the twentieth century, work done in the late 1990s into the twenty-first century has focused on how journalism has sought to maintain that public–press axis. In doing so, new understandings of language and its role in preserving the intermediary role within the public sphere have emerged that identify the overt, and sometimes covert, processes of discursive construction of a public which journalism serves. While approaches have been varied – focusing on journalism’s professional and public roles, its identity, and its forms of communication – the role of language in constructing a public in relation to journalism has proven to be a strong vein of research, and has underpinned many approaches to understanding journalism in states of crisis and change.

10.5 Critical issues and topics: news production and self-reflection

Beyond critical explorations of how journalism’s language creates publics and delivers them to distinct demographic and advertising constituencies, research has also illuminated how the actual processes of news production and journalistic practice have materially shaped public knowledge. Leitner’s research on radio in Australia (1984) also draws on close observations of the influence of the newsroom environment on the production of particular texts in specific national contexts. More critical engagements contest certain assumptions that structure the self-knowledge of the participants in the media environment; for example, Cameron (1996) on the structural ideologies of house style within newspapers; Fasold et al. (1990) on gender differences in the language policies in the newsroom of the *Washington Post*; and Cotter (2010) on the decision-making processes by editors determining what leads and goes on the front page. Combining insights from a career in journalism with her expertise as a linguist, Cotter (2010) provides an integrated account of the processes that combine to produce the language of journalism and its orientation toward a public, focusing more recently on language and social justice issues with respect to the AP Stylebook (Cotter 2014). Drawing together strands of ethnographic observation and a range of interconnecting linguistic approaches, Perrin (2013) provides an impressive overview of many of the

processes of the journalistic production of text as a contribution to our understanding of how the public is generated and informed in a variety of national and international settings.

Similarly, Bell's "audience design" framework (1991), an account of the variations one finds across media outlets, had the additional attribute of being written by a linguist with a background in broadcast journalism. Although newspapers and online media sources are an easier target for analysis than the more ephemeral broadcast media, seminal work has been produced by Montgomery (2007) on the language of broadcast news. Multi-modal analysis is increasing in its relevance and scope, particularly in the work of Bednareck and Caple (2012) which combines textual and image analysis to great effect (see Caple, this volume, Chapter 14).

A final tendency of critique informed from within the practices of the news media is for the news media themselves to be involved in commenting on their own language. The Readers' Editor on the *Guardian* is an example of this, debating language policy of the newspaper with concerned readers; for example, whether the paper should be using as many expletives as it does or how the paper should refer to political groups in a fast-moving news environment. In more informal settings, on a more *ad hoc* basis, it is interesting to read accounts in the news media of their own use of language on particular issues such as gender or 'race'; columnists reflecting in terms that are not that far removed from the work of critical linguists themselves. The best example of a long-term campaign on linguistic issues in the newspaper is the coverage of 'political correctness' (Johnson and Suhr 2003). To this tradition we might add the pedagogic intent, providing a background in media literacy for active and engaged readerships in accounts of the interactions of reader and text, building on the early work of Fowler (1991) which stresses the civic potential of contestation of the established patterns through education and informed reading (cf. Richardson 2007 and Conboy 2007).

10.6 Future directions: new media as an arena for public discourse

Specific work on the language of new media is emerging and adding a vital new aspect to how we understand the connections between public discourse and journalism amid change. As with early scholarship on public discourse and journalism, the driving concepts of public, discourse, and journalism have demanded considerable reconfiguration. Built on a networked infrastructure, and offering a more accessible space for individuals to communicate with publics, new media invited challenges to journalism as a discrete space of public discourse. Adding to the existing tumult over understandings of a public, new media have challenged the space that journalism had succeeded in securing for itself as a perceived intermediary of the public.

In the tradition of the Habermasian public sphere, scholars have already begun looking to new media for a reestablished arena for public discourse, a dynamic that has drawn into its discussions the role of journalism and, indeed, its necessity in performing this function. Early optimism for online media and its potential as a 'digital public sphere' were imbued with a cyber-utopianism that envisaged a networked, egalitarian space where the power dynamics of Habermas' bourgeoisie might be less emphatic. Online, references to the 'Twittersphere' and 'Blogosphere' allude to a persistence of the public sphere, and in the work of those such as Papacharissi (2004) and Bruns (2008), the Habermasian legacy and its merits are interrogated. Viewing discursive spaces online as a place of public participation, Papacharissi has checked the optimism of such an egalitarian view, developing analytical frameworks to measure online discussion for civility, participation, and democratic potential.

Scholarly communities have also sought to develop such discussions further, particularly by assessing the role of the public as either recipient or participant in public discourses with journalism, a feature of the ongoing linguistic anthropological work of Cotter (1999b, 2014)

and Peterson (2003, 2015). While some scholars have begun to address the public in this discussion, including Allan (2013) and Boczkowski and Michelstein (2013), audience work focusing on news and journalism is still gaining traction and driving the agenda of research projects and academic conferences globally.

10.7 Conclusion: journalism's blurring relationship with the public sphere

Essential to current and emerging work on journalism and public discourse are the questions that have driven the discussion within this chapter and volume: understanding what constitutes 'the public' and journalism's relationship to the public. Developing these dynamics further, research continues to explore how this is changing as both journalism and the public are confronted with new spaces of discourse and new means of communication online. Such changes have compelled scholars to revisit the normative underpinnings laid out by Habermas and adopted in the invocation of an idealized 'Fourth Estate' (Hampton 2010), that came to define the way journalism perceived its publics and journalistic discourse, and whether that is a role confined to journalism anymore, or whether we need to discuss such a role as being fulfilled across a network (Benkler 2011). Such discussions have developed out of the critical evaluation of optimistic views of 'Web 2.0' that embraced its potential for enabling a democratic public sphere. While embedded in the capitalist framework from which the Internet developed, scholars have looked to online spaces as public spaces and for the potential of what Papacharissi (2002) and others have called a 'virtual public sphere.' Approaching the more open nature of online discourse for the enticing potential of realizing the Habermasian legacy continues to resonate in discussions of journalism and the public online (Dahlgren 2005; Zamith and Lewis 2014).

Many of these debates about the role of language in shaping the public discourse of journalism assume certain central normative functions of journalism and assert, sometimes only implicitly, that journalism retains a special relationship to important aspects of Habermas' public sphere. Changes in the deployment of technologies to disseminate information to a wider public, together with challenges to the primacy of journalism as the only credible vehicle for such communication, mean that these normative roles are being severely compromised. Such challenges resonate not only in defining journalism or in journalism defining a public, but also with blurring distinctions between public and journalist, as citizens are increasingly able to engage in a journalistic discourse that reverses the dominant intermediary role envisaged by Habermas.

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