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Telling stories from the newsroom: A linguistic ethnographic account of dramatisation in the broadcast news

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Abstract

Drawing on Linguistic Ethnography, this paper hones in on the on-going production of a news item about an airplane crash in Indonesia broadcasted by the Swiss French-speaking public TV in 2007. It shows how telling a story in the news is a team performance: from the structuring of the narrative to the dramatization of the reported events. The analysis focuses on a preliminary narrative sequence occurring at the beginning of the news item. It details step by step how and on the basis of what criteria media practitioners negotiate their narrative choices and what leads them to adopt one particular dramatization design over another.

Keywords: Narrative practices, Storytelling, News, Dramatization, Linguistic Ethnography.

1. Narrative practices in the broadcast news

This paper aims to give a linguistic ethnographic account of narrative practices in the newsroom through a single case analysis. We describe a particular way of telling stories and what is at stake with this. To this end, we approach both the media product, the news item, and the on-going media production, the news-making process. The paper deals with a set of data collected in 2007 at the French-speaking public TV broadcasting corporation in Switzerland and, in particular, data relating to a news item about an airplane crash in Indonesia. We hone in on the on-going production of the news item and show how telling a story for a broadcast is a *team performance* (Goffman 1959). More precisely, the paper focuses on the collaborative structuring and dramatization of a preliminary narrative sequence occurring at the beginning of the news item[1].

Our approach to storytelling in the news falls into the context of a twofold shift: on the one hand, from *news products* to *news production* in media linguistics (*e.g.* Perrin 2006, 2013; Cotter 2010; Jacobs, Van Hout & Van Praet 2011; Burger & Perrin 2014); on the other hand, from *texts* to *practices* in sociolinguistic and discourse perspectives on narrative (Georgakopoulou 2007; De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2008, 2012). Thinking in terms of *narrative practices* in the *news production process* helps to solve a paradox raised by Montgomery (2005, 2007), showing that textual structure of television news (because it combines text and picture) appears to differ significantly from a common narrative form:

> "[T]elevision news presents actions which are often incomplete and where no identifiable character or protagonist is offered to help structure the subjective identification of the

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[1] Merminod & Burger (*forthcoming*) analyse how this story is selected within an institutional process ensuring its tellability and how the main character of the preliminary narrative sequence is jointly configured, step-by-step, by a cutter and a journalist.

viewer […] television news in its textual particulars quite simply fails to exhibit story-telling characteristics. On the contrary, the core principle of intelligibility in television news reports might be summed up as the convincing deployment of pictures – and, in this respect, narrative is only an occasional discursive resource […]." (Montgomery 2005: 240).

According to Montgomery, television news relies more on pictures than on stories with the result that the text is more a commentary on the images than a narrative in itself (Montgomery 2005: 251-252). Consequently, concerning television news, is it irrelevant to say that "[j]ournalists are professional story-tellers of our age" (Bell 1994: 100)?

This does not seem so from a news production perspective: "in their manipulation of temporal elements, reporters are not stenographers or transcribers; they are storytellers and interpreters" (Cotter 2015: 805). Naturally, the ways of telling a news story vary depending on several factors such as story complexity, journalistic style, available semiotic resources or allocated space/time (Perrin 2011). Likewise, as stated by the small stories research, "it does not make sense to talk about narrative as an undifferentiated whole or one homogeneous genre but as many genres closely associated with routine ways of telling stories in different contexts" (Georgakopoulou 2016: 257-258). Thus, if news texts do not always show a full-fledged narrative structure, it seems nevertheless relevant to study the news *as* or *related to* narrative practices[2].

2. Data and methodology

We briefly present the data and the methodology we use to describe and analyse the complex phenomenon that telling a story from a newsroom is.

2.1 Data

Our paper exploits data collected at the International News of the French-speaking public TV broadcasting in Switzerland by the SSR-SRG Project (Perrin *et al.* 2008; Perrin 2013). The data document the news production and products related to a single event, an airplane crash in 2007 in Indonesia (Burger 2011; Gnach 2013; Perrin 2013; Merminod & Burger *forthcoming*). Our data consist of computer loggings and audio-video recordings, as follows: 2 news items (from the noon and the evening editions); 3 editorial conferences (in the morning); 3 sequences of working sessions involving C.A., the journalist in charge (during the day); 2 computer loggings (in the morning and in the afternoon); 2 interviews with C.A. (a biographical and a retrospective one). Because of its focus on storytelling as a team performance, this paper emphasizes interactional data and only occasionally uses the other sets of data. The news items were broadcast in the TV news Bulletin of the French speaking public channel for the noon and the evening editions.

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[2] Moreover, we must take into account the ability of the audience to build stories from scattered information (*e.g.* Georgakopoulou 2013a) or through serialized events (*e.g.* Revaz & Baroni 2007).

Excerpt 1: the news item (news Bulletin 07.03.2007, 12:45 pm)[3]

Anc1 = anchorman 1; Anc2 = anchorman 2; Off = voice over (C.A., the journalist responsible for the report); Wit = witness (an Indonesian security guard in Yogyakarta).

ANCHORS'PREFACE

Anc1	*We begin with news from another aviation catastrophe this morning in Indonesia.*
Anc2	*It is a Boeing 737 of the national company Garuda that crashed upon landing on the island of Java killing about twenty people. Most of the passengers were Indonesians but a delegation of Australian diplomats and journalists was also on board. Warning: some images might be shocking. They are commentated on by C.A.*

NEWS ITEM

Off	*A few moments after the crash the desperate escape, far from the Boeing, for one of the survivors. This passenger is not yet safe but his camera is on. No fewer than one hundred and twelve passengers, amongst the one hundred and thirty-three transported by the Indonesian company Garuda, survived and six out of seven members of the crew. But many are injured. The statement of a security officer at the airport in Yogyakarta:*
Wit	*I heard two explosions and I pulled four people out of the airplane, safe and sound. About thirty passengers were already outside and they, too, were all alive.*
Off	*Twenty-one people, however, did not manage to get out of the airplane and died, incinerated, trapped by the flames in the front of the airplane. At the moment of the landing the passengers had been warned that the Boeing was going to encounter strong turbulence. It hit the runway at excessive speed. The airplane rebounded on the tarmac twice before crashing violently into a rice field three hundred meters further on and burning up completely*

2.2. A linguistic ethnographic approach to the news

Drawing on Linguistic Ethnography (Rampton *et al.* 2004; Blommaert 2007; Maybin & Tusting 2011; Rampton 2014), we use "analytic tools from linguistics and discourse analysis embedded in an ethnographic epistemology […]. This means that the apparatus of linguistics and discourse analysis are treated as a set of 'sensitising' concepts, and these have to be applied with reflexive understanding of the researcher's own participation in the circulation of power/knowledge. […] [T]he point is that paradigms do not have to be a swallowed whole" (Rampton, Maybin & Roberts 2015: 33-36). Such a perspective is grounded in diverse sets of data "in order to understand the complexity of social events" (Snell, Shaw & Copland 2015: 10).

Even though it seems to be one of the best means to apprehend the complexity – or *thickness* (Geertz 1973), *i.e.* the multi-layered-ness – of the news, "until fairly recently, very few researchers with training in linguistics would have considered venturing into a newsroom to observe journalists going about their daily business of making news" (NT&T 2011: 1843-1844). Potentially, the linguistics of news production combined with newsroom ethnography allows us to consider news stories as embedded in a twofold process. Following Jacobs & Slembrouck (2010), we heuristically mobilise Goffman (1959) and his dramaturgical metaphor distinguishing the *front stage* from the *backstage*. The *front stage* is what is

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[3] All the original data are in French. It should be noted that a first version of the anchors' preface is written by the journalist around noon (11:56 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.), *i.e.* after the writing of the news item (mainly written between 11:07 a.m. and 11:55 a.m.).

accessible to the audience, the media representation. The *backstage* is not public and only reachable by media practitioners: it is where useful material for the representation (*i.e.* the broadcast item) is collected, assembled and gathered round. It is the site where the actors of the representation can have another discourse – partly a reflexive discourse – about the representation. *Seen front stage*, a news story can be approached as a product and a process: a structure representing events by verbal and iconic means that is embedded in a media performance introduced to an audience by an anchorman. *Seen backstage*, a news story is a product in process – *i.e.* an on-going production caught up in a complex network of practices – which is achieved by a team of practitioners from several fields who ultimately speak as one actor, the broadcast.

2.3. A discourse analysis of narrative practices in news production

Perrin (2016) points out four methods in newswriting research: *tracking intertextual chains with version analysis*, *tracking writing processes with progression analysis*, *revealing audience design with variation analysis*, *investigating language policy/policing with metadiscourse analysis*. Our paper lies between the second and fourth categories as it aims to analyse how negotiations between practitioners backstage participate in the creation of the news product. Because practitioners represent, confront and evaluate their own narrative choices during news production[4], they provide the analysts with interesting representations of what is at stake when it comes to telling a story on the broadcast news. For the practitioners, these negotiations are sites of reflexivity in which they can more or less overtly exhibit the way they understand what they do and recount their understanding of what the others do. At the same time informing the 'social meaning' of a specific practice for a given community, these sites of reflexivity inform the analysts about it (Jaworski, Coupland & Galasinski 2004).

A close investigation of these sites of reflexivity requires a detailed discourse analysis. For this purpose, we employ tools from interactional and narrative studies. On the one hand, as in Gravengaard (*e.g.* 2012), we use Conversation Analysis applied to institutional talk (Drew & Heritage 1992; Heritage & Clayman 2010) and Goffman's descriptive apparatus (Goffman 1981) to follow step by step the interactional moves leading to one particular narrative structure. On the other hand, we exploit analytic tools developed by Narratology (Genette 1983; Fludernik 1996; Baroni 2007; Herman 2009) to understand the issues of choosing one particular dramatization design from several possibilities.

3. Narrative practices in the newsroom

Narrative practices are *ways of telling* (Hymes 1996; Georgakopoulou 2007, 2013b)[5] that have *family resemblances* (Wittgenstein 2001 [1953]): they are *semiotic methods*[6] for

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[4] Generally emerging from a negotiation with or a confrontation to the others (Burger & Delaloye 2016), explicit representations can also emerge from a negotiation with oneself (Zampa & Perrin 2016).
[5] "Ways of telling refer to the communicative how: the socioculturally shaped and more or less conventionalized semiotic and in particular verbal choices of a discourse activity" (Georgakopoulou 2013b: 202).
[6] The notion of *method* (Labov & Waletzky 1967) is of prime interest because it implies achieving *tasks*. However, many aspects of the Labovian definition – "a narrative is one method of recapitulating past experience by matching

expressing and organizing human experience through time. How people tell stories, the *tasks* they accomplish to do so, is always context-sensitive (Georgakopoulou 2007). It "is a process that raises different types of action and tasks for different interlocutors and is ultimately shaped online. [Narratives] emerge as a joint venture and as the outcome of negotiation by interlocutors" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 44). From the perspective of the storyteller(s), this method can involve the following tasks: on the one hand, introducing characters and events in the storyworld, representing a series of events, recounting experience, organizing semiotic occurrences; on the other hand, prefacing the telling, evaluating the tellability, managing the telling, closing the activity.

Because of the prefabricated nature of the news item and because of the delayed interaction between the mediators (the tellers) and the audience (the recipients)[7], most of the negotiations that shape the telling are hidden backstage. In another paper (Merminod & Burger *forthcoming*), we show how different tasks, as evaluating the tellability of a story and introducing a character, are a joint venture involving different actors in the newsroom. In the present paper, we analyse the structuring of the telling and the dramatizing of the events. To this end, we work on a narrative sequence placed at the beginning of the news item. It depicts the escape of one passenger after the crash.

Excerpt 2: The escape I (news Bulletin 07.03.2007, 12:45 p.m.)

Over = voice over (C.A.); Back = background sounds.

| 1 | Back | ((heavy breathing)) | < **oh my god** ((said by |
| 2 | | *the person who is both running and filming)) >* | |

| 3 | | *((heavy breathing))* | *((aircraft noises))* |

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a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred" (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 95) – can be debated (see Georgakopoulou 2007 for a extensive discussion about the limitations of such a model).

[7] In most cases, the audience cannot directly and immediately intervene in the media, particularly in the case of news items that are written and recorded before the newscast.

4   Over   < *((background sounds continue)) **a few moments after the crash***

5   ***the desperate escape far from the Boeing***

6   ***of one of the survivors   this passenger is not yet safe***

7   ***but his camera is on* >**

8   Back   *((heavy breathing))*   *((aircraft noises and explosion))*

The narrative sequence stages the experience of a person escaping from the crashed aircraft. It shows how he reacts to the catastrophe. The news item begins in the heat of the moment: the escape is introduced before its cause, the crash. As Cotter observes, "[s]tory structure itself,

the way it is patterned and organised, supports what is considered important" (Cotter 2010: 27). Besides, "[as] Young (1987) argued, emplotting events by taking their ending or their consequences as a beginning allows for the building of a frame of interpretation that connects random events into a unified whole" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 145). Based on these observations, we address the following questions: What leads to structuring the news with a beginning *in medias res*? And what motivates a dramatization design that is mainly grounded in the particular experience of one person rather than several? To answer these questions, we first analyse how media practitioners (a journalist and a cutter) negotiate the structure of this narrative sequence (3.1.) and then how they dramatize it (3.2.).

Prior to that, it is worth mentioning that the journalist responsible for the story (C.A.) sees newswriting for the television as a collaborative achievement. As Perrin observed, "he prefers collaborating with cutters for two reasons: first, 'video editing is a profession in itself', and second, 'I like the feedback, you know it's an exchange which is creative and profitable'. Although some cutters would expect the journalist to come to the cutting room with a completed text, the 'good cutter would not appreciate this'. Instead, they prefer working 'in connection' with the journalist" (Perrin 2013: 72). For C.A., television is thereby different to the written press in which the journalist is somewhat more independent, as he explains in the biographical interview:

> "The television is a much heavier machine. When you work in the written press, you are
> more alone, you are much more independent. In some sense, you depend less on a cutter,
> possibly on a cameraman, yes, on a heavier structure. […] There are also certainly
> fundamental differences when it comes to journalistic work on television and in the
> written press because you write texts. On television, you work with sound, with images.
> This is quite different." (Biographical interview: 0101-0123; our translation).

As we will see, C.A. does not only perceive his work as collaborative but also carries it out as such. For this case, after the topic was assigned to him during one of the morning editorial meetings, C. A retrieved information at his desk, and then met the cutter (D.S.) in the cutting room to produce the news item. It is in the cutting room that most of the work on the story was done in collaboration with the cutter. C.A. and D.S. worked together from approximately 10:55 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.. The parts we analyse occur from 10:57 a.m. to 11:20 a.m..

3.1. Structuring the telling with sounds and images

In this part, we analyse how the journalist and the cutter successively suggest different schematic versions of the news item. As they watch together the video footages provided by news agencies, they consider several ways of structuring the telling. Their work is mostly guided by the images they are watching.

3.1.1. Choosing a beginning

In the first minutes of their collaboration (10:57 a.m.), as they are trying to identify the person who is both filming and running on the images, the cutter provides a first suggestion for a beginning ("You could have started your subject by saying that these are images taken, you

see, by the tourists."). But this suggestion does not seem to fit with the stylistic expectations of the journalist ("Yeah well, pff, amateur images."). A few minutes later (10:59 a.m.), as they decide to start the cutting (l.1-2 and l.7, below), the cutter suggests a second possibility while pointing at the images on one of the displays on his technical desk with a deictic marker (l.6).

Excerpt 3: choosing a beginning I (Cutting room, 10:59-11:00)[8]

C = the cutter; J = the journalist.

```
1   C      we'll have to slowly start cutting after but I think it'll go rather
2          quickly but you'll have to-
3          (2)
4   C      <((looking at the screen)) that's for us>
5          (2)
6   C      that's that's the beginning
7   J      we're going to start-
8          ((heavy breathing coming from the technical desk, during 2 seconds))
```



```
9   J      we can hear the breathing sound of of the guy who's running
10  C      that's maybe better than the other one who's running is not it no but
11         here he stops
```

We observe the emergence of two options of how to begin: either *the person who is running* or *the breathing sound*. The options are both filmed with a point of view perspective, but the first one indicates an action in progress (a person is running and filming) while the second one presents the result of the previous action (a person is breathing heavily while filming the surroundings of the crash in wide shot). While the first one visually emphasizes the intensity of the experience lived by the person, the second one does this phonically. At this point, the cutter and the journalist's opinions converge: the journalist underlines the strength of the *breathing* option by the means of gestures (l.9) and the cutter acknowledges it as a relevant concurrent solution to the *running* option (l.10). Nevertheless, their opinion quickly differs: as the cutter reconsiders the *running* option (l.14, below), the journalist emphasizes the strength of the breathing sound by the means of multimodal resources (l.15-16, below). To this end, the journalist imitates the breathing sound not only 'phonically' (by breathing himself loudly) but also 'corporally' (by placing an open hand on his chest). By doing so for 10 seconds, he embodies a behaviour existing in the video footages and, in this way, emphasizes its significance.

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[8] Due to the large amount of data involved in the analysis of the phenomena and their translation, we adopt a low level of granularity in our transcription.

Excerpt 4: choosing a beginning II (Cutting room, 11:00 a.m.)

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12  ((coming from the technical desk: a heavy breathing followed by "oh
13        my god" uttered by the one who films, approximately 4 seconds))
14 C      the other one who's running that's not bad either huh=
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15 J      =that's str- the sound yeah but the wait the the sound
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```
16        ((imitates the breathing, 10 sec.)) the breathing sound it's loud huh
17 C      I can put it under that's not cheating
18 J      yeah
19        (2.5)
20 C      that's real experience huh
21        (1)
```



```
22 J      this is expressed strongly huh you can let talk
```

After the journalist's insistence on the breathing sound, the cutter suggests mixing the two options (l.17), which is acknowledged by the journalist (l.18). Watching the images, the cutter underlines the authenticity that emerges from the breathing sound (l.20). In a convergent way, the journalist accounts for the strength of the material they are working on (l.22 and, below, l.23) and suggests a way to use it ("you can let talk", l.22)[9]. The cutter refuses it for a technical reason (l.26, below).

[9] Incidentally, during the retrospective interview, the journalist comes back on the significance of the breathing. While he is commenting the computer log where his writing moves are recorded, he says: "I use these dots. It means pauses, to let speak the image. It's what that mean. [...] Here it's mostly a heavy breathing that we see. He is doing 'ha' 'ha' 'ha', the guy who runs" (Retrospective interview: 0413-0421; our translation).

Excerpt 5: choosing a beginning III (Cutting room, 11:00 a.m.)


```
23        then some people leave that's strong
24 C      yeah but it's-
25 J      maybe better than the shaking images
26 C      it's always in wide shot it's going to be difficult to match if you
27        want
28 J      in wide shot
29 C      well you see just simply difficult to cut and all that
30 J      yeah but it's it's shaking a lot huh no
```



```
31 C      no that's not it it's always in large you know you cannot-
32 J      <((speaking about the sound coming from the technical desk)) I think
33        he say a w->
34        ((heavy breathing coming from the technical desk))
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```
35 J      here we hear the ((imitates the breathing))
36 (2)
37 C      we'll find a way ok
```

After the journalist's suggestion (l.22-23), the cutter formats his turn in a counter-argumentative way ("yes but it's", l. 24). Nevertheless, his turn is syntactically and semantically incomplete when the journalist completes it with a comparative construction ("maybe better than the shaking images ", l.25), which supports the suggestion he previously made (l.22-23). At the same time, he points out a technical problem with the *running* option's images. In the following turn, the cutter uses the same syntactical format as in his previous turn to highlight a problem in the *breathing sound* option's images ("it's always in wide shot it's going to be difficult to match", l.26). They both maintain their stance and repeat them (l.30-31) until the journalist comments on a heavy breathing sound coming from the technical desk (l.34). Then, the journalist embodies once again the breathing sound. The cutter moves towards a kind of consensus ("we'll find a way ok ", l.37). We can summarize the negotiation between the two practitioners as follows.

Excerpt 6: Overview of the negotiation (Cutting room, 10:59-11:00)

Time	Cutter	Journalist
10:59	C. signals *the person who is running* as an option of beginning (6)	
10:59		J. points out *the breathing sound* (9)
10:59	C. underlines the interest of the *breathing sound* (10)	
10:59	C. underlines the interest of *the person who is running* (14)	
11:00		J. insists on the strength of *the breathing sound* and embodies it (15-16)
11:00	C. suggests to mix *the breathing sound* with the images of *the person who is running* (17)	
11:00	C. observes the authenticity of *the breathing sound* (20)	
11:00		J. insists on the strength of *the breathing sound option* (21-22)
11:00		J. points out the poor quality of the images of *the person who is running* (25)
11:00	C. explains the technical difficulties related to *the breathing sound option* (26-27, 29)	
11:00		J. points out the poor quality of the images of *the person who is running* (30)
11:00	C. explains the technical difficulties related to the images of *the breathing sound option* (31)	
11:00		J. insists on the strength of *the breathing sound* and embodies it (35)
11:00	C. moves towards a consensus (37)	

The negotiation between the two practitioners shows two sets of arguments which lead to the selection of the images and, thus, to the structuring of the news. On the one hand, there are arguments related to the technical use of the images (their quality and their usability). On the other hand, there are arguments related to the images' expressive strength (their intensity and their authenticity).

More precisely, the second set of arguments concerns the strength with which the images express the experience. As "[n]arrative roots itself in the lived, felt experience of human or human-like agents interacting in an ongoing way with their cohorts and surrounding environment" (Herman 2009: 21), these arguments echo a narrative dimension of images. When the journalist embodies the breathing sound, he underlines this dimension. And, because what is represented is the experience of another (a vicarious experience), "the empathetic identification of the observer with the agent or experiencer who is focused on, directly correlates with the given *perceptual* focalization and with the cognization of what therefore constitutes itself as an incidence" (Fludernick 1996: 75). Actually, the negotiation between the two practitioners is about the best means to project oneself into the experience of

the agent: a visual means (the camera moves) or an audio means (the breathing sound), both signalling the action's intensity.

The mediation of documents impacts the telling[10]: here, the competition between sound and images plays an important part in the way the journalist and the cutter configure the beginning of the news. So, what is at stake is to know if it is better to emphasize a visual that allows us to see what a person is seeing when escaping a crash or to choose a sound that insists on the intensity of the running and the state of the runner. In narratological terms, the negotiation is about how to stage an *intern occularization* and *auricularization* (Jost 1989)[11], that is to say how to manage the way recipient(s) see(s) and hear(s) what the character sees and hears. Thus, for the practitioners, the question is the following: is it better to favour an experience as *an agent in the events* (the one who is escaping) or as *an audience of the event* (the one who is watching the plane burning)? The practitioners could prefer to stage the *agent in the events* because of its ability to signal the intensity of the experience. However, this choice is made more complex because, in the footage where the character has an audience positioning, the heavy breathing indicates the intensity of the experience and provides a form of authenticity.

3.1.2. (Dis-)agreeing about a structure

As we have seen above, the cutter expresses a kind of consensus regarding the significance of the breathing sound. Then immediately, the journalist suggests a complete structure of the news item.

Excerpt 7: Disagreeing about a structure (Cutting room,11:00-11:01)


```
1   J          so we're going to start with something like a scene like this
2              ((J does a large circular movement with his hand))
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3   C          in my opinion we should start with the guy who runs and then we let
4              a few seconds after
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[10] For instance, document mediation allows the cutter and the journalist to have similar rights to tell the story (Merminod & Burger forthcoming).

[11] Following Jost (1989), we define an *intern occularization* as a focus on the visual perceptions situated in a character and an *auricularization* as a focus on the hearing perceptions.

5	J	right and then the plane pohpoh huh the people running away who manage
6		to save themselves the audio of-
7	C	yeah
8	J	of the security of the air- of the security guard of the airport
9	C	that's crazy look at the people
10	J	who says I saw people managing to get out of there

11		and we tell a little bit of the story
12	C	they are completely knockout look how they walk that's crazy
13	J	no but say huh that's something huh
14	C	completely shocked huh

At first, the journalist suggests beginning with a wide shot, as he indicates with a broad arm gesture and a reference to what is currently on the screen ("a scene like this", l.1). The cutter formulates a counterproposal, repeating once again he wishes to begin with the *running* option (l.3-4). While he expresses his stance, he embodies the action of running. He adopts the same strategy as that taken by the journalist to underline the *breathing* option's strength. The journalist acknowledges this (l.5). Afterwards, he continues to draw up a schematic version of the news item (l.5-11). The cutter acknowledges a part of the suggestion (l.7), and then he moves his attention on to the images on one of the technical desk's screens, highlighting the intensity of the experience undergone by the people (l.12). This comment is acknowledged by the journalist (l.13) and then repeated by the cutter (l.14). At that moment, the practitioners have not yet reached an explicit agreement about the news item structure.

We can sum up the journalist's suggestion as follows: a wide angle shot where the catastrophe took place, images of the crashed plane, images of people running away, the audio recording of the airport security guard and finally the recapitulation of the events. Such a structure does not show a linear ordering of the events: the result (the crash) is introduced before the cause (the events that led to the crash). The non-linear order is explained by the fact there are available images of the result[12] but not of the cause.

So, in the journalist's suggestion, the news item already begins in the heat of the moment as in the final product (excerpts 1 and 2). Nevertheless, in comparison with the final product, the beginning in the journalist's suggestion offers a 'contextual' perspective rather than an individual one. The journalist's suggestion sets the scene rather than draws the trajectory of a specific character. The cutter refuses this part of the journalist's suggestion, insisting on his preference for a beginning focused on a specific character (l.3-4).

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[12] Moreover, these images make the story particularly tellable, as stated by the whole editorial board (Merminod & Burger *forthcoming*).

A few moment later (11:02 a.m.), the cutter states there are not so many images to use ("We do not have ten thousand things"), which is acknowledged by the journalist. This leads the cutter to the conclusion they have to start with the images of the man who is running ("We must start with that, yes"). A few moments later (11:03 a.m.), the journalist asks the cutter whether the breathing sound will be present or not in the final assemblage ("We'll hear the breathing or not at all? This 'H'"). Once again, the journalist imitates the breathing sound 'phonically' (by breathing himself loudly) and 'corporally' (by stretching out his neck quickly). The cutter interprets his intervention as a request and offers to integrate the sound with the images of the *running* option ("I can put it on if you want"). Then, they decide to properly begin the cutting (l.1-3, below). This time, they reach an agreement on a schematic version of the general structure.

Excerpt 8: Agreeing about a structure (Cutting room,11:03-11:05)

1	C	so let's get into it
2	J	yes twelve forty-five so we have a minute and twenty seconds available
3	C	well I want to put the first shot pretty long
4	J	<((speaking about the minutes available)) they're pretty tight huh>
5	C	but we'll have understood everything after this so the rest will be uh
6		I pretty much have a first and a last shot and in-between filled with
7		fire and blood you know ((laughing))
8	J	yes the fire there are the first images we had but that were
9		subtitled by the Indonesian television that were very strong I recall
10		then there are shots where we see the airport track
11	C	yes
12	J	this we should not forget to use the people watching
13	C	yes but I really want to begin with the guy who's running
14		well I can always put the breathing over it
15		you know with it the guy who's running and we get the impression
16		this is a passenger who's escaping you know
17	J	yes
18	C	this is the impression he gives I mean immediately after the crash
19	J	yes but yes but after you'll still put the people getting out
20	C	yes yes but I want to leave this like this huh and this frames
21		the smoke here you're in the middle of the event here you see
23		and bam back zoom you're inside
24	J	yes
25	C	for sure it lasts ten seconds but honestly it's strong
26	J	yes yes ok ok but afterwards you- I like I l- I l- it's really strong
27	C	because it's immediately after
28	J	but afterwards we still see the guys coming out
29		because we need to see them
30	C	yes of course well we see the people in the rice field right after
31	J	yeah then lets try like this okay
32	C	you do not seem very
33	J	we'll see we're on at noon we're doing a little experimenting
34		and we'll see about the risks

At first, the cutter signals he knows the shots he wants to use to open and to close the news item (l.4-7). The journalist acknowledges only a part of the cutter's suggestion ("yes the fire", l.8), and then he lists the shots he thinks significant (l.8-12). Amongst the shots he lists, he does not explicitly name the *running person* one. Afterwards, the cutter begins his turn with a counter-argumentative marker and makes explicit his willingness to begin with the running person shot (l.13). He offers once again to integrate the breathing sound to the images of the person who is running (l.14). Then, he explains why he wishes to begin with such a shot (l.15-16, l.18, l.20-23, l.25, l.27): because of the point of view perspective, the images of the person

who is running give a strong impression of a passenger who is escaping immediately after the crash. The journalist partly acknowledges the explanation of the cutter (l.17 and l.24). Nevertheless, he stresses the importance of using images that show a collective experience rather than an individual one ("yes but yes but after you'll still put the people getting out", l.19; " the guys coming out because we need to see them", l.28-29) in the rest of the news item. The cutter concurs with this comment (l.30). Then, the journalist agrees to begin with the *running* option (l.33-34), even if he does not show a complete acceptance of such a choice.

A few moments later (11:05), because of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the journalist, the cutter clarifies his motivations for using this specific shot. In his opinion, these images are no longer those of a specific story of a particular individual but those of the generic story of any passenger escaping from a crash: "It's news […] It's the passenger who escapes and, in the background, you got the plane burning" (11:05 a.m.). By categorizing these images as "news", the cutter places them in a "'cultural storyline' with its own prototypical trajectory" (Jones 2013: 104). In this way, he frames the individual experience as an emblematic one. He defuses the tension between the individual and the collective perspectives raised by the journalist as he displays that the *running* option functions as an account of a type of experience: *escaping*. Despite this explanation, such a beginning does not convince the journalist, especially because it does not fit with his stylistic credo of what the news has to be. However, he accepts it and, while the cutter starts the editing, he begins to round up elements for the writing. In the writing process, as we will see, the journalist exploits the 'script' suggested by the *running* option (*i.e.* the escape of a passenger) to dramatize the reported events.

In short, what are the key elements we can extract from the analysis of these first minutes of production? Images lead the structuring of the news item, and especially the beginning. The criteria for choosing a beginning are technical (usability and quality of the images) but relate also to style (contextual appropriateness) and content (in terms of experience: intensity and authenticity of the account, individual *versus* collective experience, and specific *versus* generic experience; in terms of action: an on-going process *versus* a result).

3.2. Dramatizing the events through the writing

The joint structuring of the video shots contributes to the organisation and the motivation of the telling: on the one hand, by beginning the news item with an individual rather than a group, and, on the other hand, by choosing images that show an on-going action rather than an action's result. This twofold choice impacts not only on what is verbally represented but also on the ways it is represented. This choice orients the teller(s) towards a specific narrative configuration, *i.e.* a particular selection and ordering of the narrated events and actions (Ricoeur 1983). Here, the configuration consists of a non-linear representation of the course of events.

3.2.1. Dramatization in the news product

The narrative begins in the heat of the moment, with a scene that sets an agent between danger and safety (as he runs) and in which there is a high degree of uncertainty (as we do not know – at this precise moment – if he will reach a safe place or not). Moreover, beyond the dramatizing choice of the order of events, the way the character's actions are described can be in itself relatively dramatic, as a close analysis of the textual features shows.

> Excerpt 9: the escape II (news Bulletin 07.03.2007, 12:45 p.m.)
>
> Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing
> *A few moments after the crash the desperate escape, far from the Boeing,*
> de l'un des survivants. Ce passager n'est pas encore à l'abri
> *of one of the survivors. This passenger is not yet safe*
> mais sa caméra est enclenchée.
> *but his camera is on.*

From a grammatical perspective, the *escape sequence* consists of two sentences. The first one is composed by an adverbial phrase of time ("A few moments after the crash") followed by a noun phrase ("the desperate escape of one of the survivors") that is interrupted by an adverbial phrase of place ("far from the Boeing"). The first sentence clarifies the spatiotemporal parameters that are not indicated by the images. It gives the circumstances that help to contextualize the action represented. Because of the absence of a conjugated verb, the noun phrase contributes to an effect of immediacy. It functions as a comment on the images and gives them a narrative frame: it provides to the person who is running a motive (to escape from the danger), an intention (to be safe) and, in qualifying the action, an emotional state (the distress). Hence, the person who is running becomes an agent in a frame and with a purpose. The second sentence with two coordinated clauses gives a high agency to the agent facing the events. The structure "X but Y" dramatizes his action almost as an intrepid act: in using "but", the clause "his camera is on" is presented as involving an opposite conclusion to the one implied by "this passenger is not yet safe". By opposing the two clauses, the text shows an agent who acts in a different way to how he could best solve the problem he is faced with (*i.e. escaping as quickly as possible*).

Such a verbal description injects a dose of uncertainty into the course of the depicted events: this is no longer a person who is filming and running, this is not only a person who is escaping, this is also a person who is acting in such a way as to put his life at the risk. The events, or more accurately the actions, are then dramatized.

3.2.2. Dramatization in the news-writing production

As we said before, the narrative configuration and the dramatization of actions are grounded in the interpretation of the images. The way actions are described is a *crucial* and *complex* matter in the case where a vicarious experience is mostly mediated by the images[13]. This is

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[13] A vicarious experience can be *discourse-mediated* and/or *document-mediated* (Merminod & Burger *forthcoming*).

crucial because "since other states of mind remain inaccessible from the viewpoint of an external observer, agency in and by itself seems to become the prime motor controlling others' activities and actions" (Fludernick 1996: 75). This is also *complex* because there is no previous narrative that already configures the vicarious experience. As an external observer, the teller must construct by himself a relevant narrative framework, *i.e.* the who, what, where, when, how and why. Thus, telling this vicarious experience requires assumptions about the character's reasons for action. To do so, the journalist and the cutter interpret raw material and configure it into a narrative that allows an understanding of what has happened. Even if the journalist is the actual writer, the narrative configuration in its verbal aspect is nonetheless the result of a joint interpretation of both practitioners.

The escape sequence was written by the journalist between 11:09 a.m. and 11:17 a.m. Before the writing itself, the joint interaction already provides descriptions that will then appear in the escape sequence. The descriptions can be proposed either by the journalist or the cutter. For instance, at 11:06 a.m., while they try to identify the person who is running, the journalist describes the scene as "*the desperate escape of a survivor*". Even if the cutter does not go along with this description, the journalist will use it as a keystone of the text. The cutter also participates actively in the formulation of the descriptions: at 11:07 a.m., the journalist asks how to describe the immediacy of the images ("how do we say it so that people can understand*"*), the cutter offers then several formulations ("well you can say taken immediately a few seconds a few moments after the crash") and one of them, the last one, will appear in the final product. Likewise, the event categorizations[14] used to identify the character ("survivor" and "passenger") are the product of a joint construction during the first minutes of the news-making (Merminod & Burger *forthcoming*).

Between 11:09 a.m. and 11:17 a.m., while the cutter works on the images, the journalist writes the *escape sequence*. We can summarize the main writing moves, as follows:

- From 11:09-11:10, a noun phrase ("the desperate escape"), then an adverbial phrase of place ("far from the Boeing"), then a complement of the noun phrase ("of one of the survivors").

  Result: "The desperate escape far from the Boeing of one of the survivors"

- From 11:11-11:13: a clause ("his camera is on"), then an adverbial phrase of time ("a few moments after the crash").

  Result: "A few moment after the crash, the desperate escape far from the Boeing of one of the survivors. His camera is on."

- From 11:15 to 11:17, a second clause ("this passenger is not yet safe"), then a conjunction ("but").

  Result: "A few moment after the crash, the desperate escape far from the Boeing of one of the survivors. This passenger is not yet safe but his camera is on."

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[14] An *event categorization* is a categorization that only mobilizes the narrative framework to describe an agent and does not use another social labels to provide identities.

Besides the separation of the writing into three moments, the summary draws attention to an interesting phenomenon: the order of appearance of the elements during the writing is not the same as the order of appearance in the written text. For instance, the adverbial phrase of time ("a few moments after the crash") that opens the text emerges only during the second moment of writing. Maybe of greater importance for our point is the integration, only in the third moment, of the second clause ("this passenger is not yet safe") with a coordinating conjunction that shows contrast ("but"). The character's positioning as highly agentive appears only in the third moment. As we will see, such a positioning emerges step-by-step during the writing because the journalist hesitates over different ways of telling that imply different configurations of the story. The table below documents in detail the writing moves made by the journalist between 11:15 a.m. and 11:17 a.m.

Excerpt 10: not yet safe I (Computer logging 11:15-11:17 a.m.)

Writing moves: W = writing; R = replacement; C = correction; E = erasure.

Time	Op.	Text	Context
11:15	W	'une quest'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… **une quest**sa caméra est enclenchée
11:15	E	'une quest'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… sa caméra est enclenchée
11:16	W	'alors même que l'a'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… **alors même que l'a**sa caméra est enclenchée
11:16	R	'que l'a' *by* 'qu'il est loin'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… alors même **qu'il est loin** sa caméra est enclenchée
11:16	R	'est loin' *by* 'n'est pas encore h'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… alors même **qu'il n'est pas encore h** sa caméra est enclenchée
11:17	R	'alors même qu'il n'est pas encore' *by* 'il'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… **il** sa caméra est enclenchée
11:17	W	'n'est pas encore à l'abri'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… **il n'est pas encore à l'abri** sa caméra est enclenchée
11:17	R	'il' *by* 'ce passager'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… **ce passager n'est pas encore à l'abri** sa caméra est enclenchée
11:17	W	'mais'	…Quelques instants après le crash, la fuite éperdue loin du Boeing de l'un des survivants… ce passager n'est pas encore à l'abri **mais** sa caméra est enclenchée

From 11:15 a.m. to 11:17 a.m., we observe nine writing moves before reaching the final dramatization design. At 11:15 a.m., the journalist writes "une quest" (*i.e.* the incomplete form of "a question"). Even though is difficult to analyse such a small fragment, we can assume it underlines to some degree the uncertainty of what is at stake. At 11:16 a.m., "une quest" is replaced by an incomplete concessive clause "alors même que l'a" ("even though the a"). Because of the context, we can guess the incomplete word is "l'appareil" or "l'avion" ("the aircraft" or "the airplane"). As a concessive clause, "alors même que l'a" is

subordinated to the clause "sa caméra est enclenchée" ("his camera is on"). Such a construction introduces a *narrative tension* (Baroni 2007) in the text as it puts together two clauses that have a relation of simultaneity and a relation of opposition. Then, "que l'a" ("the a") is replaced by "qu'il est loin" ("he is far away"). If the structure is still a concessive one, the subject of the clause changes: the focus is on a human agent rather than the circumstances (the aircraft). Then, "est loin" ("is away") is replaced by "n'est pas encore" ("is not yet"). In "est loin" ("is far away") as well as in "n'est pas encore" ("is not yet"), there is the same idea of an action that has not yet reached its goal. The main difference between the two is that one of those ("is far away") makes an evaluation of the distance from a goal while the other one ("is not yet") only states the incomplete achievement of the action. At 11:17 a.m., the journalist replaces the concessive clause by a declarative one "il n'est pas encore à l'abri" ("he is not yet safe") and specifies the goal to reach (safety). Then, he explicitly identifies the agent by replacing "il" ("he") by "ce passager" ("this passenger"). It should be noted that the demonstrative determiner functions as an element of the anaphoric chain (taken between "one of the survivors" and "his camera") and as a deictic marker (by pointing at the images). Finally, the journalist brings the adversative logic back by adding the conjunction "mais" ("but") between the two clauses ("ce passager n'est pas encore à l'abri" and "sa caméra est enclenchée").

The audio and video recordings of the working session show that some of the successive formulations written by the journalist are the product of an 'internalized' and 'self-centred' reflection, as the long silence of 25 seconds (l.2, below) between the writing of "une quest" and its replacement by "alors même que l'a" indicates. Likewise, the passage from "he is far away" to "he is not yet" seems mainly related to the journalist's reflection (l.13-16, below). Nevertheless, formulations are also negotiated with the cutter. From the line 18 (below), the practitioners discuss the appropriateness of the following formulation: "at the risk of his life he turned on his camera".

Excerpt 11: not yet safe II (Cutting room, 11:15-11:18 a.m.)

```
1   J       a question huh ((while he is typing 'une quest'))
2           (25 sec.)
3   J       even though ((while he is typing 'alors même que l'))
4           (20 sec.)
5   C       it's incredible I'm keeping it like this ok I'll be very long I have put
6           two shots for now there the best ((laughs))
7   J       alors même que
8           (8 sec.)
9   C       okay hum yeah and after we'll see (xxx) maybe
10          (2sec.)
11  C       yeah
12          (3 sec.)
13  J       <(( while he is typing 'qu'il est loin')) he is far he is far he he
14          he is out of danger>
15          (17)
16  J       <(( while he is typing 'n'est pas encore')) even though he is not yet>
17          (6sec.)
18  J       at the risk of his life he turned on his camera no
19  C       no do not exagerate
20  J       no
21  C       when he turned on his camera the risk for his life was over
22  J       no but it could still explode there are still some-
23          the plane could still explode
```

24	C	well he sold his images for three thousand dollars to the Indonesian
25		television that's all huh
26		(2)
27	J	he's not yet safe there huh
28	C	((wagging his head from left to right and pursing his lips))
29		(7)
30	C	I'm making a war film there
31	J	<((while he is typing 'il n'est pas encore à l'abri')) he is not yet
32		safe comma>
33		(4 sec.)
34	J	<((while he is typing 'ce passager')) this passenger is not yet safe
35		comma> <((while he is typing 'mais')) but his camera is on> does it
36		seem tiny to you what I say <((reading his text)) a few moments after
37		the crash the desperate escape far from the boeing of one of the
38		survivors this passenger is not yet safe but his camera is on>
39		that's it huh
40	C	yeah you can read it one more time if you want you can read it

At line 16, the journalist writes a concessive clause ("even though he is not yet"). Nevertheless, at line 18, he suggests an alternative formulation ("at the risk of his life he turned on his camera") and submits it to the cutter for evaluation (as signaled by "no"). It should be noted that this formulation differs from the concessive clause in its structure: the tension is brought by an adverbial phrase of manner ("at the risk of his life" // "au péril de sa vie"); the main clause is not anymore a passive one ("his camera is (turned) on" // "sa caméra est enclenchée") but an active one ("he turned on his camera" // "il a enclenché sa caméra"). Such a formulation more precisely situates and motivates the action in a network of events. However, the cutter evaluates the formulation in a negative way due to its excessiveness (l.19 and l. 21). He considers such a description does not fit with what happened (l. 21, "when he turned on his camera the risk for his life was over"). The journalist suggests an assumption (l.22-23, "no but it could still explode there are still some- the plane could still explode") that supports his own interpretation of what happened. The cutter does not ratify that assumption and keep on with his own line of arguments. In his argument line, he refuses to position the agent as a heroic character: he presents the individual who is filming as intent on his financial profit in this concern (l.24-25, "well he sold his images for three thousand dollars to the Indonesian television that's all huh"). Next, the journalist suggests another formulation (l.27, "he is not yet safe") and seeks the cutter's agreement. He in turn shows his lack of agreement by shaking his head from left to right and by pursing his lips, but he does not verbally express a refusal (l.28). The cutter moves on to his cutting activity (l.30). The journalist shows then, by speaking while typing, his choice to keep the formulation "he is not yet safe". Then, as he finishes the writing of the escape sequence, he reads his text and asks the cutter's opinion (l.34-39). The cutter suggests the journalist reads the text on the images he has cut.

Despite a disagreement on the interpretation of what happened and how to describe it, the practitioners keep going in order to fulfill their assignment and provide a news item about the airplane crash for the noon edition. Nevertheless, we see a clash between two ways of interpreting the images, the journalist's dramatizing way and the cutter's non-dramatizing way. These two ways are not grounded in the same schema of incidence and do not position the main character in the same manner.

A few seconds later, the cutter suggests once again the journalist reads his text on the images (l.1, below). After a quick discussion about the way to do it, the latter reads his text (l.8-10,

below). At the end of his reading, the cutter immediately takes his turn and explicitly refuses the formulation "he is not yet safe" (l.11, below).

Excerpt 12: not yet safe III (Cutting room, 11:18-11:20 a.m.)

```
1   C    […] do you want to read on the images just to see
2   J    yeah tell me give me the starting beep because when because I need
3        to hear the breathing (xxx)
4   C    okay I do not know either but in my opinion you can let
5   J    yeah yeah
6   C    ((C plays the video))
7        <((then he gives the starting beep)) here go head>
8   J    a few moments after the crash the desperate escape far from the boeing
9        of one of the survivors this passenger is not yet safe
10       but his camera is on
11  C    I think he's safe because he takes refuge under a bush there simply
12  J    but we hear the breathing yeah
13  C    yeah but
14  J    yeah but wait he's safe you see but a thing the boeing that bursts
15       um the debris they eject far
16  C    yeah but there he's taken refuge under this thing you see he's-
17  J    put the image again we'll see if it seems to me-
18  C    in a rice field he's running in a rice field here no
19  J    but we see him running here
20  C    yeah yeah
21  J    you see he would not be running if he was safe you see
22  C    yeah that's true
23  J    but is he getting closer to the plane or not
24  C    no no (xxx) but here he's hiding you see
25  J    yes but before before what before he's not yet safe
26  C    yeah it's how you feel it
27  J    no but you do not feel it like this
28  C    yeah for me it's just that symbolicallly the image here
29       he takes refuge you see even if it's nothing it's just
30  J    yeah yeah
31  C    you see it gives it's stupid he is shocked but he goes under a bush
32  J    yeah yeah
33  C    because he believes that it'll- you know
34  J    so he's not yet safe he is not yet he is not yet=but his camera
35       (2)
36  J    he's looking for shelter under a tree his camera is already on
37  C    yeah
38  J    huh you think
39  C    I do not know you can
40  J    but he's not yet safe (1) or no ((blinking))
41       (5)
42  C    ((makes a gesture with his arms))
43  J    well ok <((speaking to a man who passes the door frame)) hi>
44  C    it works um
```

Rather than carrying out a detailed sequential analysis of this long stretch of talk, we can sketch out the two practitioners' main lines of argument. In short, from l.11 to 44, the journalist and the cutter discuss the appropriateness of the journalist's description. This time, their positions are not really based on the interpretation of what happened but rather on the interpretation of the images they assembled. They evaluate whether or not the verbal description is consistent with the structuring of the visual material. On the one hand, the cutter claims that the character is safe (l.11). His main argument line is the following: the images show the character taking refuge (l.11, l.16, l.24, l. 28-29, l. 31). By doing so, the cutter positions the character as a rather passive agent. On the other hand, the journalist claims that the passenger is not yet safe. His arguments are more diverse. They relate to the intensity of

the breathing (l.12), to inferences regarding the circumstances (l.14-15: a dangerous context) and the agent's motivations (l.21: he runs because he is not yet safe), to the running action depicted by the images (l.19 and l.23), and to the sequential positioning of the action description regarding the images (l.25: before the images of the character taking refuge, there are images of him not yet being safe).

We see here the upholding – even the strengthening – of the two schemata of incidence. This leads to two different dramatization designs. While the cutter is against a verbal dramatization of the action, the journalist exploits the dramatization potential of the running shot. In order to keep going, both practitioners display the schemata as two individual perceptions. This is signalled by specific expressions as "it's how you feel it" or "but you do not feel it like this" (l.26-27). Such a display allows them to compare their interpretations[15]. Nevertheless, they do not reach an agreement and the cutter finally gives up upon the journalist's insistence (l.44, "it works").

Thus, if the cutter had the last word during the selection and ordering of the images, it is here the journalist's call. As stated by Burger (2011), there are two different areas of expertise, the audio-visual, which is one mainly the domain to the cutter, and the verbal, principally related to the journalist. Nevertheless, these areas of expertise are far from being impermeable, as we have seen throughout the analysis. It is particularly in this aspect that telling a news story is a *team performance*[16].

4. Conclusion: what happened in the newsroom?

By honing in on the dramatization of a narrative sequence at the beginning of a news item, the analysis has demonstrated that *telling a story in* or rather *from a newsroom* is a *team performance*: from the ordering of the images to the writing of the text, from the structuring of the narrative to the dramatization of the reported events.

Therefore, regarding the *production format* (Goffman 1981; Bell 1991; Scollon 1997)[17] involved in media communication, the distribution of *authorship* and *principalship* is far more complex than what is stated in the anchors' preface ("[The images] are commentated on by C.A.") or what is written on the news ticker at the end of the news item ("C.A. D.S."). The preface neither draws attention to the constitutive entanglement between text and images in the production of the news item (the images seem to be a given, which is then commented on by the journalist), nor the fact the text stemmed from within a negotiation between two practitioners (C.A. and D.S.). Besides, putting aside the overall responsibility of the news

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[15] The journalist even offers a formulation grounded in the cutter's interpretation (l. 36, "he's looking for shelter under a tree his camera is already on") but he doesn't affiliate with this.
[16] The *team performance* dimension of news stories is also related to other processes in the newsroom, such as the decisions taken by the editorial board in editorial meetings (Merminod & Burger *forthcoming*) or the work made by copy editors.
[17] The *production format* gathers different roles (*animator*, *author* and *principal*) related to the speaker of an utterance. The *animator* is "the physical sounding box verbalizing the utterance" (Bell 1991: 37). The *author* is "[s]omeone who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed and the words in which they are encoded" (Goffman 1981 : 144). Bell (1991: 36-44) refines the category of *author* by differentiating the originators of a text from those who modify it. The principal is "[s]omeone whose position is established by the words that are spoken, someone whose beliefs have been told, someone who is committed to what the words say" (Goffman 1981 : 144).

institution (the French-speaking public TV broadcasting), the journalist is the one who is explicitly considered as responsible for what is said. However, the news ticker mentions D.S. (the cutter) as much as C.A. (the journalist). Nevertheless, it neither specifies their role in the news-making process, nor their responsibilities. Coming back to the dramaturgical metaphor, we can ask ourselves whether this squashing of *authorship* and *principalship* tends to favour the solitary existence of the journalist's figure in the *front stage* at the cost of a relative confinement of the other practitioners in the *backstage*.

Our analysis revealed what led to a dramatization design that presents a non-linear ordering of the events that is focused on the experience of an individual staged as a highly agentive character in an uncertain world. "Opening linguistics up" (Rampton *et al.* 2004: 4), ethnography enabled us to "document local theories of what constitutes a narrative and what the role of narrative is in [a] specific communit[y]" (Georgakopoulou 2007: 21). Rather than only considering news stories as narrative texts, we have considered how and why narrative practices are part of the interpretation and production processes involved in the making of the news. By accessing not only the final performance (the one seen on stage) but also the several performances that created it backstage, we have thus seen that telling a news story is not only founded on interwoven activities but also shaped on (a chain of) diverse (re)configurations of the reported events.

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