Astrid Vandendaele

The room's Line fence

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GHENT UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY

The newsroom's last line of defence:
A linguistic ethnographic investigation into newspaper sub-editing.

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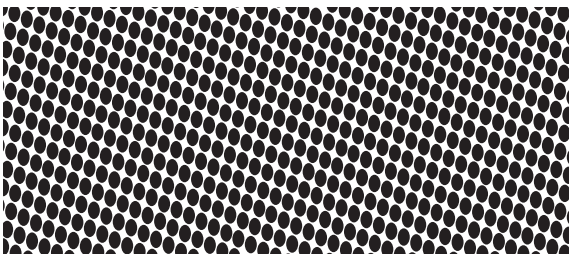
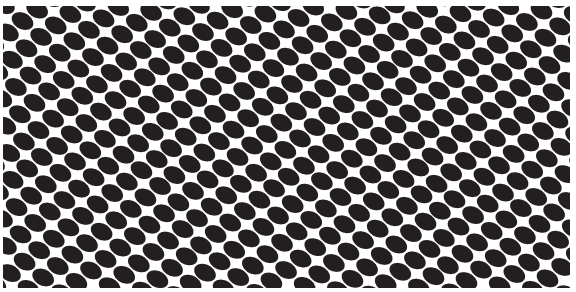
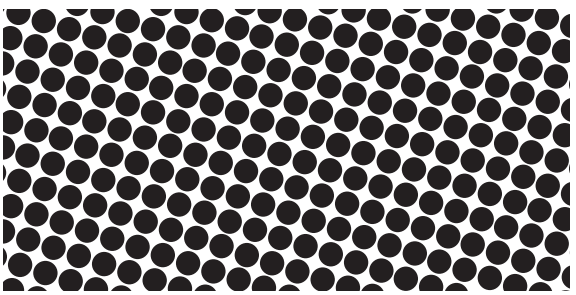
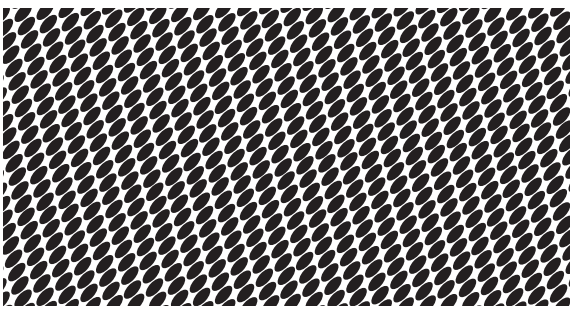
“Be yourself. Be unique. Be a good editor.
The Universe needs more good editors, God knows.”

— Kurt Vonnegut, *Letters*









Preface

"Subs matter." A short, innocuous little sentence I happened to stumble upon years ago, right at the start of my lengthy, treacherous journey into academia. I found it in a book entitled *News Writing* by Anna McKane (2006: 143), in a London Waterstone's branch one dreary October afternoon back in 2012. I had been on the lookout for anything and everything on the language of the media, and more specifically on newspaper sub-editors. Already by that point, just under a month into my PhD trajectory, I had discovered that what was mentioned in academic research about 'subs' was not only vague and modest in quantity (to say the least), but rarely very positive. As I was an inexperienced researcher, this made me actually question the validity of the sub-editor as a PhD topic, the origin of which was a happy accident, as are so many things in life.

To explain how I ended up in my PhD predicament, I have to go back to September 2011, to the Corsendonk priory, where a three-day conference organised by Discourse in Organizations (DiO), an interuniversity network that brings together practitioners and researchers from discourse analysis, linguistic ethnography, pragmatics, text studies, organizational studies and/or critical management studies in small-scale, interactive workshops, was coming to an end. The theme had been 'Managing Trust', i.e. the relationship between discursive practices in organizational or institutional contexts and the psychological/moral category of trust. In the few moments before we were allowed to enjoy the gardens accompanied by a much-needed pint of local ale, I was put on the spot by Professor of Language and Social Psychology Charles Antaki. Surrounded by accomplished researchers and academics he asked: "So, Astrid, what do

you have planned for the next couple of years, research-wise?" I felt the room go silent, and thirty pairs of eyes were looking me up and down quizzically. Spurred on by a combination of blind panic, misplaced bravado and an inordinate amount of 'trust' in my own discursive practices I blurted out: "Well, as it happens I'm considering writing a PhD on newspaper sub-editing. In my opinion, this is an interesting, understudied segment of the news production process".

The person I surprised most that afternoon was myself, but right then and there the seed of an actual idea was planted. I had after all been working as a freelance sub-editor, and had gained some experience researching newswriting practices. Not a single person in the room had burst out laughing. Maybe, just maybe, I could do this. Whether being at a priory had invoked some kind of divine intervention I'll never know, but the fact remains that a little over a year later, I started that very PhD.

Back to the London Waterstone's. Barely a month into the entire process, I was already experiencing the characteristic bouts of self-doubt I am told any PhD candidate goes through: will this amount to anything? Will anyone be interested? Am I truly adding anything to existing news media research? But then, I happened upon that tiny sentence. Just two simple words. "Subs matter." From then on, whenever I felt lost or unsure, I thought of that sentence. Because they matter, sub-editors. They do. I see it every time I enter a newsroom, or during the long Sunday night shift at the copy desk. How they lift an article from the page. How they make the words sing. How they save a hasty reporter from embarrassment, or their newspaper from a lawsuit. How, together with the layout designer, they transform an otherwise drab front-page into an undeniable work of art.

The point I want to make here is that this PhD was inspired and motivated by the sub-editors themselves, and that little sentence reminded me of that. In the end, I wrote this dissertation to deepen general understanding of the art of sub-editing and the key role the sub-editor plays in the newsroom. The current media crisis is hitting newspapers in particular, and, internationally, sub-editors

are often the first to feel its effects. Theirs is a stage in the newspaper production process which is threatened with extinction. Some papers have turned to outsourcing sub-editing, while others have been experimenting with working without subs completely. Therefore, the activist undertone the reader might occasionally pick up on in my dissertation is deliberate, as I wrote it in part to honour the many, often underexposed and unacknowledged accomplishments of sub-editors, who are slaving away in the newsroom until late every single night. After six years of research, I am confident this PhD underlines how McKane's words still hold true: *Subs matter*!

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed either directly or indirectly to the six-year genesis of this dissertation, and I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude.

First of all, I am incredibly thankful for the generosity of the many sub-editors I have met and worked with while preparing this manuscript, and from whom I have learnt an enormous amount. This work would not have reached its present form without their invaluable help, and believe me: I often wished I had their sharp pencils by my side while writing up this PhD, to weed out the chaff and kill my darlings.

I am tremendously grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Geert Jacobs. It was Geert who first awakened my interest in research into news production processes, and subsequently gave me the chance to go on this adventure six years ago. At the start of my trajectory, he entrusted me with the words "It's only a PhD, Astrid", and now I've completed my journey, I can see that he was right: This was only the beginning. I cannot thank him enough for his input and advice, and especially for his tireless enthusiasm and confidence in my abilities, even when I had none at all. He remained a beacon of calm in the midst of my PhD-storm right up to the very end, and I look forward to many years of collaboration to come.

This dissertation could not have been realised without the support of Prof. Ellen Van Praet, my co-supervisor, co-author, and dear friend. Her words of encouragement – be it over the phone, in a text message, via Skype or in midnight emails – always managed to spur me on, even when the going got tough. Within academia Ellen truly leads by example, and she remains a source of inspiration for many (female) researchers,

including myself.

I am indebted to newspapers *De Morgen, de Volkskrant, the Guardian, the Observer, the Times, the Sunday Times* and *the Sun*, for granting me access into their newsrooms. Grateful acknowledgement goes out to their staff, who patiently answered my many questions and took the time in the midst of relentless deadlines to explain and reflect on their daily practices. I wish to take the opportunity to specifically thank the entire staff at *De Morgen,* where I work as a freelance sub-editor and translator. I was given more freedom as a researcher/colleague than I could have ever wished for, for which I will be forever indebted. David Marsh, former production chief at *the Guardian* deserves a special mention: I've never met anyone with a higher regard for the proper use of the English language, and it was an honour to have been allowed to observe his daily practices.

I explicitly want to thank my doctoral advisory committee, Prof. Colleen Cotter, Prof. Karin Raeymaeckers, and Prof. Jef Verschueren for their helpful and extensive comments on my progress. Owing to their valuable input, I always managed to find a new path to explore, another angle to approach things from, or a different perspective to take. I especially wish to express my gratitude to Colleen, who offered me the chance to fulfil my lifelong dream of living and working in London. My three-month research stay under her supervision at Queen Mary, University of London proved to be invaluable for my PhD, and both her guidance and nights out to the BBC Proms were an absolute delight.

I am also grateful to Dr Ludovic Decuypere, for his patience in teaching me about the impenetrable world of statistics. Furthermore, I would like to thank my teaching colleagues Kristin, Tom, Mieke and Olaf, for offering me the chance to vent if needed. In addition, I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers at *Journalism Studies, Journalism Practice, Written Communication* and *Journalism* for their useful comments on my research papers, which allowed me to rework them to a higher standard.

It is important to explicitly thank my Academic Writing Group, i.e. the little collective of driven PhD-

researchers from various scholarly backgrounds, who joined me on many of our bi-weekly writing sessions, and were my trusty companions at La Foresta during our lengthy writing/bickering sessions. Karel, Eva, Willemijn, Jono, Laura, Lennart, and Alan: I may be the first to go, but I'm afraid you're stuck with me for the upcoming sessions!

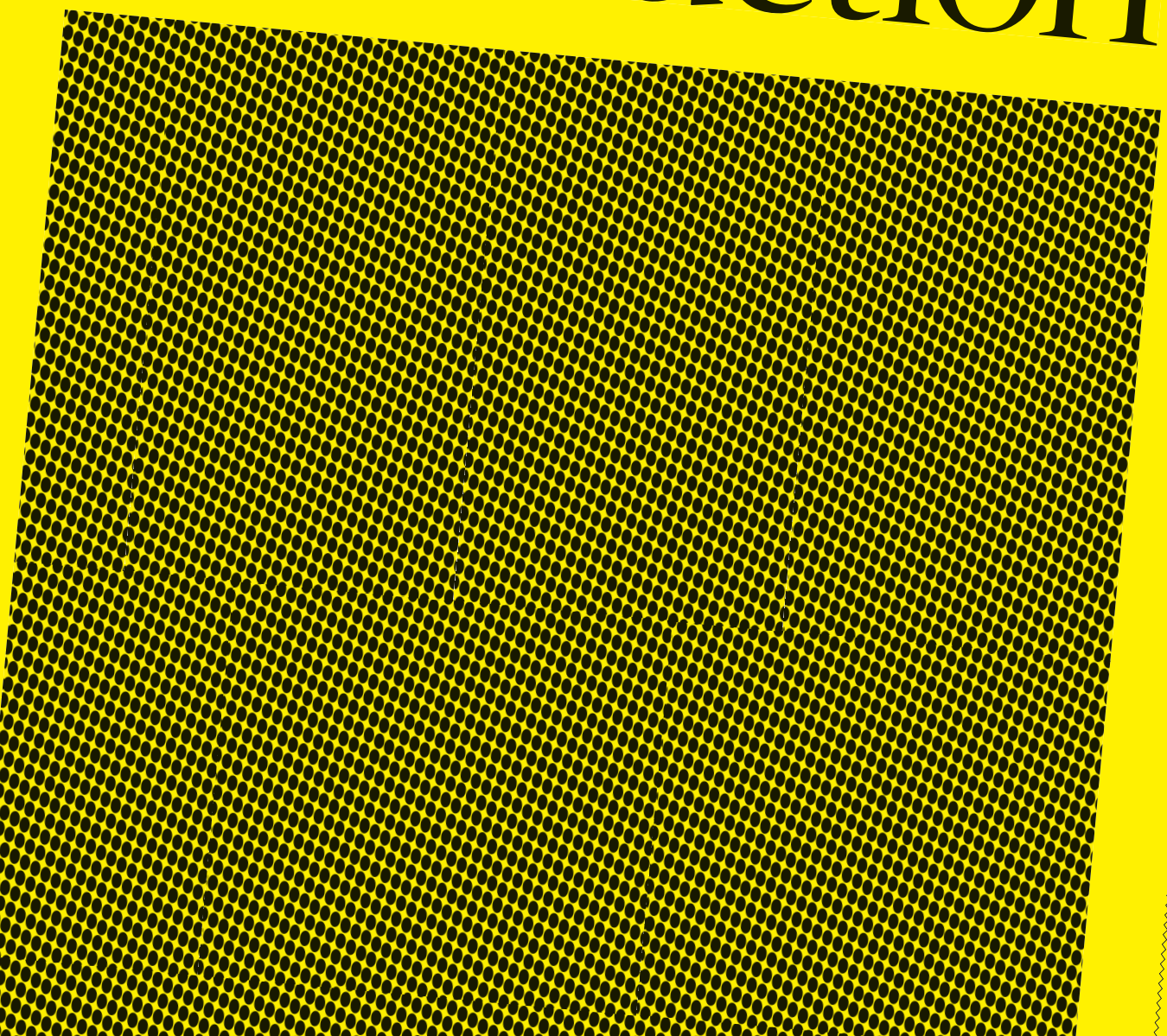
I would like to show my gratitude to the talented graphic designer Lennart Van den Bossche, whose unique designs once more prove that form and content go hand in hand, and when done right, will lift each other to previously unimaginable heights.

On a more personal note, many thanks are due to my dearest friends, for being patient with me when I went on another PhD-inspired rant, and for always being there with a kind word and a glass of fine wine. Tom, Ellen, Maaike, Alexandra, Lies, Ruth, Annelies, Sofie, and Marilyn: the next one is on me!

I would not have been able to get here, if it weren't for my family, whom I love with all my heart. I am grateful to my parents, for being my tireless cheerleaders, my home, safe haven and biggest inspirations. They gave me the opportunity to venture into academia, and supported me throughout my entire arduous journey. After having completed this PhD, I am more aware than ever that I will never outsmart either of them. To my siblings, my clan: Thanks so much! Laure and Livia, for being my truly unique and wonderful sisters, and Bas for being my brand-new brother (in arms). And last but not least: Maxim, for being my brilliant brother, both inside and outside of the newsroom, and the very best colleague a sub could wish for.

A final word of gratitude goes out to Kristof, my Hoboken Hero and the one and only Prince of Words, simply for being by – and on – my side.

1. General introduction



In this PhD I shed light on the role of newspaper sub-editors, the often "forgotten stepchildren of the newsroom" (Wizda, 1997: 38) in the newspaper production process. Whereas a myriad of voices resonate during the process of news production, the sub-editor's voice is never actually 'heard' by the reader, is underrecognized within the newsroom, and remains understudied in academia. Being a sub-editor spurred me on to investigate the sub-editing process and this lead to my practitioner/researcher dual identity. In order to closely examine newspaper sub-editors and their practices I take a linguistic ethnographic approach. By analysing their placement in the newsroom, the textual changes they bring about in the creation of a newspaper article, and the underlying motivations, I aim for a (more) complete definition of the sub-editor as a – in the language of Gieber (1964) – genuine 'newspaperman', and hence toward a better understanding of newsmaking practice.

My dissertation is structured in six chapters, and in what follows, I give an overview of their contents. In the first chapter of this study, the General introduction, I discuss my research topic – the sub-editors and their 'craft' – in more detail. I continue by identifying my unique split position between the worlds of journalistic practice and that of academics, and how the ensuing tension motivated me to drive this study forward. Next, I highlight my main research objectives. I then explain the theoretical framework I lean on throughout my work. After that, I consider this PhD's chosen methodology, characterised by a strong ethnographic component, and the ways in which I collected my data. At the end of this first chapter, I introduce chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, which together make up the core of my dissertation. In these chapters I explore four aspects related to the sub-editors and their daily practices in-depth I conclude chapter 1 by highlighting these four chapters' various foci and how they are related to one another.

In chapter 2 I chart the sub-editing process in the sub-editors' natural habitat, i.e. the physical environment of the newsroom, which can be of influence on the way sub-editors operate. In chapter 3 I show the impact of the sub-editor's 'silent' voice on the final article, by uncovering what exactly happens during the sub-editing stage, i.e. which transformations – linguistic or other – take place. Moreover, in chapter 4, I demonstrate what the motivation is behind the various alterations the sub-editors carry out, and based on their practices, I compile an initial list of reasons for a sub-editor to intervene. In the following chapter, chapter 5, I introduce the graphic designer as an important part of the sub-editing process. Crucially for this study, I confront pairs of practitioners – consisting of sub-editors and layout designers – with my previous findings. The 'So what?'-question is therefore at the centre of chapter 5.

It is important to add that chapters 2, 3 and 4 are based upon articles that have been published, and that chapter 5 has been submitted for publication. All four of these journals feature in the Web of Science or Social Sciences Citation Index.

Chapter 6 serves as this dissertation's closing section. I will first link the main conclusions of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 to my original research objectives, and in doing so I will show that sub-editors prove to be highly skilled journalists, who represent crucial yet often overlooked cogs in the newspaper production process. I will furthermore demonstrate how, as a researcher, I moved from practice to theory, to come back to practice. I then offer an insight into my dual perspective as a practitioner and a researcher while conducting this study. I discuss the implications of being both an academic and a media practitioner when carrying out this linguistic ethnographic research study of the sub-editor in the newsroom. I touch upon the advantages and difficulties that position brought along with it. I complete this section by describing my strategies for overcoming possible hurdles, and how, for instance, a degree of reflexivity is necessary. Next; I share my thoughts on the future of the newspaper sub-editor in a time that is characterised by considerable cost-cutting by newspaper groups. I conclude this study by presenting four avenues for further research, related to the types of (linguistic) transformations occurring in the sub-editing stage of newswriting, the possible differences between sub-editing for print and online sub-editing, the comparison between sub-editing at a broadsheet and at a tabloid newspaper, and, finally, the expression of expertise and power relationships between sub-editors, layout designers and reporters, and how these might influence both productivity in the newsroom, and the final news product.

1.1. The newspaper sub-editors and their craft

The *Newspaper Subediting Bible* issued by the National Council for the Training of Journalists in the UK clearly states that the sub-editor who is good at his job is "perhaps the nearest thing to what might be described as the complete journalist" (1982: 2). This statement alone offers plenty of motivation to dive into the intricacies and the process of the sub-editing profession. With this work I aim to deepen the general understanding of the art of sub-editing and the key role of the sub-editor in the newsroom.

In what follows, I will provide some insights into their tasks and responsibilities, based on both relevant academic literature and practitioner input.

According to Cotter (2010), the skills sets of reporting and writing, although very different, are the two basic 'craft actions' behind the production of a news story. The 'craft' concept can be appropriated by academics to "evaluate the journalistic actions (practice) that are undertaken to produce a news story (product)" (Cotter, 2010: 33). In this dissertation I refer to the work of sub-editors as their 'craft', as craftsmanship "involves more than the performance of specialized tasks. Craftsmanship also refers to the code of normative behavior, that is expected of craftsman" (Coy, 1989: 2). As within the craft concept both notions of relevant actions and community are present, I appropriate it here to refer to the skill set required of sub-editors' within their community of practice.

> "Sub-editors, let's face it, haven't any history to speak of. Their arrival on the scene is due to two factors – the size and complexity of modern newspaper organizations, and the increasing concentration on both readability and design." (Sellers, 1968: 1)

According to this quote by Sellers, sub-editors are here in part because newspapers became larger, implying more work for reporters. However, the sub-editor's craft can be traced from the birth of modern printing processes, through to the current content management systems for digital journalism, a period of nearly 600 years. And since Sellers wrote his book, "there have been numerous technological advances, each of which has added a new layer to the production process as well as radically altering the commercial and economic basis of the publishing industry" (Holmes, 2016: 14). Sellers also alludes to 'readability' and 'design'. Mencher, in his textbook on journalism, briefly alludes to the sub-editor as someone who should prevent all "sloppiness" in an article, and "fix up what is obviously wrong with it" (Mencher, 2007: 163). Is sub-editing mere proofreading? Or making sure an article looks acceptable? What is it sub-editors do exactly?

Although sub-editors have not been widely described, the few authors that do mention "the men whose mission it is to present the news" (Carr & Stevens, 1931: 46), mostly do so coming from a background in professional journalism. Going through the existing literature, I can list a range of (at times rather vague) responsibilities. What does become clear, though, is that sub-editing a news story is a complex process, and involves more than "merely moving commas" for sub-editors (Keith, 2000: 53).

A sub-editor is also called a copy editor, as broadly speaking, "what he edits is called copy" (Shrivastava, 1987: 7). Although 'copy-editing' is predominantly used in the US, in this study I opt for the term 'sub-editing', which is mostly used in the UK, South Africa, Hong Kong, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

It is the sub-editor's job to 'sub' copy, "to make it fit to print which includes collecting, selecting, arranging, reducing, translating and adapting for publication, according to the importance of the copy" (Shrivastava, 1987: 7).

Sub-editors pride themselves on being a "prepublication advocate" (Keith, 2000: 51) for the reader. They intervene at the end of the production process of a newspaper article by taking on the role of 'the first reader' in that final stage of production. By carefully structuring stories, and by maintaining perspective, they step into the audience's shoes. They are the reader's main representatives in the newsroom and must "understand audience-centric thinking. Who is our audience? What do they want? Where do they find us" (MacAdam, 2016)?

A newspaper receives information from a variety of sources, and it is the sub-editor who is responsible for filtering all of this information. One of the more important aspects sub-editors look for is a story's newsworthiness: Why should anyone read this story, and why now? The sub-editor must be capable of either reducing or expanding subject matter, according to the needs of the newspaper. (Baxter, 2012)

Moreover, the sub-editor decides on "the manner in which a newspaper is made-up and sent for printing" (Gupta, 2003: 35). (S)he discusses with the editor "where a particular story should be placed on a page, which picture should be chosen to illustrate it and how the copy should read" (Stephenson, 1998: 107). They direct the reader's eye with clever and unique design.

Although a sub-editor generally does not do much of original writing, (s)he does have the important task of coming up with a suitable headline, photo caption, streamer et cetera, i.e. the necessary 'furniture', to draw the reader in (Baxter, 2012).

In addition, it is vital that the sub-editor is an expert in revising news articles. It is the sub-editor's job to weed out any linguistic and factual errors or other legal dangers and make them fit the allocated space in a newspaper (Franklin et al, 2005). Every story needs to be checked for accuracy (spelling, grammar, and punctuation), sourcing, logical structure, balance, clarity, fluency, brevity, and an individual newspaper's 'house style'.

On top of that, everything needs to be done swiftly, up against a strict deadline, as time, tide, and the printing press wait for no man. All journalists have a sense of immediacy (Deuze, 2005): reporting the news, stressing the novelty of information as its defining principle, lends their work an aura of instantaneity and *immediatism*. Like that of all journalists, the work of sub-editors involves "notions of speed, fast decision-making, hastiness, and working in accelerated real-time" (2005: 449).

The sub-editor therefore needs an orderly mind, and "the capacity for merging rapidity with accuracy", as well as "the faculty of being able to work in an atmosphere of excitement without being affected by it. Given these

qualities, plus a sense of the team spirit and the capacity for quick decision, a man may succeed in the sub-editor's room." (Carr & Stevens, 1931: 46)

In sum, what appears in tomorrow's newspaper and in what form, depends largely on the decisions of the sub-editors. Sub-editing actually "falls into two types of job. One is technical and production-oriented, in the sense that the sub has to process copy in an almost mechanical way. The other is more creative: writing good headlines and captions (...) And producing interesting page layouts is yet another creative act" (Quinn, 2001: 13). Sub-editors make the newspaper readable, accurate and attractive. However, sub-editors labour "in anonymity and struggle for respect in their newsrooms" (Keith, 2000: 43), as they are rarely able to "create content, work independently, or choose the topics they work on" (Keith, 2000: 51). In the following section I will discuss how precisely that anonymity has translated into an important research drive for this study, and subsequently, I will clarify the research objectives that are at the centre of this study.

1.2. Research drives and objectives

> "(...) an editor must never expect thanks (sometimes they come, but they must always be seen as a bonus). We must always remember that we are only midwives—if we want praise for progeny we must give birth to our own." (Athill, 2000)

The quote by British literary editor Diana Athill above suggests some frustration among editors. Indeed, being among sub-editors in the newsroom revealed a similar sentiment; They too often feel frustrated by (others') incomplete stories, missed deadlines, late night hours, low salaries, a lack of time to edit carefully, a lack of opportunity for creativity and advancement, and a lack of recognition (Cunningham, 1987). Sub-editing, it seems, is a dirty job, but someone has to do it. And indeed, I have been doing it: For nearly a decade I have been a sub-editor, and part of that illustrious yet anonymous army of 'spelling checkers', 'newsroom scolds', 'nit-pickers', 'ne'er-do-wells', or occasional 'lifesavers' or even 'unsung heroes of quality control'. Being one of them has provided me with plenty of time to experience the sub-editors' impact on the final printed news product firsthand, from within the newsroom. In this study I am therefore able to approach the sub-editors from a particular and unique dual perspective: that of an insider looking out (practitioner) and an outsider looking in (academic). This implies that my research drives are equally divided. Below, I will discuss how my dual identity has motivated two distinct research drives to explore the newspaper sub-editors and their practices.

a. Research drive 1: The underappreciated sub-editor

According to the *Newspaper Subediting Bible* sub-editing is "one of the great specializations in journalism" (1982: 2). However, the role of the sub-editor has been underappreciated, which became clear to me while working as a sub-editor, but also through my work as an academic. Uncovering their role in the news production process became an important motivation for me when writing this PhD. In what follows, I will describe how the sub-editor has remained in the shadows, both inside and outside of the newsroom, but also in academia.

a.1. Outside of the newsroom

In 1931, CF Carr (assistant manager of Southern Newspapers) and FE Stevens (editor of the *Hampshire Advertiser*), published their work *Modern Journalism*. It provides a broad survey of the journalistic trade, with descriptions of newspaper roles, freelance journalism, and the legal and business sides of the profession. Carr and Stevens described newspaper sub-editors as "a great and modest company of highly efficient technicians, of the very existence of whom, except as a group name, the public is ignorant" (1931: 45-46). This description still does not stray far from the truth today. They are mostly unknown to the world beyond the newsroom. Most readers are still unsure what the sub-editor's role is – "except perhaps to mess up copy or write boring/wrong/sensational headlines" (Baxter, 2012).

Indeed, as a group, their name might ring a bell, but the sub-editors' many responsibilities remain obscure to most. The origin of their relative anonymity lies in the fact that they carry out their duties behind-the-scenes in the newsroom, while the by-line belongs to someone else. Tim Van der Mensbrugghe, a former sub-editor, stated "because your name is never mentioned (...) nobody knows what you have done to transform a bad bit of writing into a well-written article" (Van der Mensbrugghe, 2010). Only on rare occasions will you find a newspaper that "includes a by-line for the sub who takes a mediocre story and makes it memorable" (Quinn, 2001: 4). According to Quinn, journalism students are often surprised to hear that reporters seldom if ever write headlines (2001: 5). The sub-editors tend to be overshadowed by the reporters, the 'visible' experts, whose work is most noticeably on display in

the newspaper as credited authors. Clearly, there is a lack of awareness and recognition of the sub-editor outside of the newsroom.

a.2. Inside the newsroom

According to McKane (2006), the relationship between reporters and sub-editors in the newsroom has always been tense. He explains that in fact "in most offices a kind of demilitarized zone exists between the two areas" (McKane, 2006: 143). He continues how very few reporters "will cross that line and get a toehold in the engine-room of the paper; many don't even know the subs' names, let alone have any relationship with them", although "knowing the names and faces of those cynical subs who seem to do nothing but mutilate your words is vital" (McKane, 2006: 144). Luckhurst ironically describes the sub-editors in the newsroom as "the lowest caste of editorial personnel who earn their meagre livings correcting the style, grammar and accuracy of their 'betters' on news and features desks (2009). He claims that sub-editors are almost always underpaid, but that if they are underappreciated by the writers whose reputations they safeguard, those authors should be considered fools (Luckhurst, 2009). Yet, although they frequently save their newspapers from embarrassment, sub-editors are "often reviled by those whose copy they correct" (Keith, 2000: 43). Obviously, there exists some type of tension on the 'shop floor' between reporters and sub-editors. Where do the origins of these tensions lie?

John McIntyre, the *Baltimore Sun*'s assistant managing editor, wrote on his language and usage blog on the paper's website:

> "Imagine you're about to win a major award. You're beautifully dressed, the crowd is waiting, the spotlight is on – but you have a streamer of toilet paper trailing from your shoes. When someone points that out, you don't like hearing it – but that person has done you a valuable service." (McIntyre, cited in Davenport, 2006)

McIntyre essentially says sub-editors bear a noble burden by serving many masters, ranging from their newspaper, the editor(s)-in-chief, to the reporters and the readership. They may save the reporters and their newspaper from disgrace when correcting language use or facts, but cannot expect great appreciation from the reporters when doing so. I already established how they are never seen by the general public. However, it seems they are rarely recognised for their interventions by the reporters either. Moreover, sub-editing mistakes will happen, some of which "can cause long-term damage to a reporter's relationship with the people who actually put her stuff in the paper" (McKane, 2006: 143), causing more distrust from the reporters' side. This was confirmed to me in numerous interviews I conducted with sub-editors in Spring 2012 in preparation for my study of Belgian and Dutch sub-editing practices and newsrooms (cf. chapter 2 for more on this study). A Belgian sub-editor confided he felt "looked upon as a necessary evil" by the reporters. A Dutch sub-editor stated how reporters often feel the sub-editors are "not good enough to actually be reporters themselves". Another Belgian sub-editor summarized it as follows: "actually, a sub-editor can but make mistakes". Keeping this in mind, it comes as no surprise that the following football analogy was used in the Belgian, Dutch and British newsrooms I visited: The newsroom is like a football team, in which the reporters are the strikers: When they score a goal, they will be celebrated by the fans, but when they miss, those same crowds will hiss and boo. The sub-editors, on the other hand, are like the defenders: They can only get it wrong.

From these insights from the newsroom, I concluded that too few reporters take the trouble to understand the constraints on the production team, or to acknowledge the huge contribution made at the sub-editors' desk. This further encouraged me to look closer into the sub-editors' practices.

a.3. Academia

As a working sub-editor willing to research the sub-editors' practices, I noticed that news scholarship is "vast and theoretically eclectic" (Van Hout & Jacobs, 2008: 61), but has remained in the dark about the sub-editor and sub-editing. Moreover, the little research that has been done on sub-editing has been highly nationalized. There is, for instance, a decent body of work on US newspaper sub-editors. (Examples are Cook & Banks (1993); Cook, Banks & Turner (1993); Solomon (1995); Keith (2000, 2005a, 2005b); Zahler (2007)). In what follows, I provide a brief overview of various disciplines in which the sub-editor has remained understudied.

Critical discourse analysts looking at newspaper headlines (Fairclough, 1989) hardly recognize the sub-editor as their author, which my experience has indicated is a major responsibility of sub-editors. When headline authorship is attributed, this happens in passing, and in rather tentative terms: 'the newspaper', 'the journalist' or simply 'editorial changes' (Develotte & Rechniewski, 2001), 'writer' (Mahmood, Javed & Mahmood, 2011) or 'headline writer' (Greco, 2009; Vandenberghe, 2014), are but a few examples of ways in which the sub-editors are included. Although several CDA studies focusing on newspaper headlines largely overlook their input, some do notice the sub-editor's role, and the research possibilities lying therein, i.e. "analyses of headlines provide an opportunity to examine relationships between reporters (who typically write the stories) and their editors (who typically write the headlines)" (Boykoff, 2008: 555).

Just as the news foregrounds some stories and obscures others, the scope of journalism

studies has been less than fully comprehensive. For one thing, when looking at journalism research and the scholarship on news production processes, it is clear that reporters and editors are predominantly cast as the main 'actors', while other journalism professionals are ignored. Although their tasks have been listed in several journalism textbooks, when we look at classic newsroom ethnographies (White, 1950; Breed, 1955; Tunstall, 1971; Epstein, 1973; Schlesinger, 1978; Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1979; Fishman, 1980) the spotlight has mostly been on the reporter. Although news production studies dating back to the 1970s have captured the newsroom goings-on in considerable detail, little in-depth analysis has been done about the sub-editors. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009) write:

> The neglect of journalistic practices marginalized within the newsroom is particularly alarming. Research tends to overlook particular categories of news workers. It predominantly charts the professional cultures of privileged full-time news reporters over casualized, multi-skilled, and free-lance journalists, to mention just a few neglected categories. (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009: 12)

Clearly, there are other players at work in the newsroom, and far too often these 'other players', actually taking up half the newsroom (both in staff and in space), have been overlooked. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitsch (2009) make a case for the work of arts reporters, music reporters and features reporters, i.e. specialist journalism (Harries & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007), and the ever-expanding specialism of business journalism. Still other forms of journalistic production, like sub-editing, which – admittedly – operate even further at what are traditionally looked upon as 'the peripheries' of the newsroom, are equally neglected in research.

Finally, consumption of newswriting – i.e. focus on those on the other end of the writing process spectrum, the readers – has been dealt with rather elaborately in research. Eye-tracking research has provided us with exhaustive insights into the reader's interaction with a variety of media stimuli and his priorities with respect to text. Moreover, this type of research helps to describe the distribution of the reader's attention, be it in print or in a digital publication (Garcia & Stark, 1991; Hansen, 1994; Stenfors et al., 2003; Outing & Ruel, 2004; Holmqvist & Wartenberg, 2005; Holsanova et al., 2006). However, with the exception of Wartenberg & Holmqvist (2004), this reception-oriented approach again overlooks sub-editing.

Based on my professional experience, I argue that sub-editors contribute an underestimated amount to the construction of the story, and the final product. Yet, even though the sub-editors are an integral part of the construction of the content put out by news organizations, they are mostly ignored in journalism studies and media linguistics in favour of who is traditionally regarded as the "producer-provider", i.e. the reporter and/or the editor. The sub-editor's role in the news production process is omitted – or at best downplayed. From a research perspective, more work on the sub-editor needs to be done. In my study I therefore take them and their practices as my central focal point. By focusing on the sub-editor and sub-editing in the news production process, I am attempting to expand existing knowledge of the sub-editors' practices, and thus filling a gap in existing research.

b. Research drive 2: Print media in crisis

News workers across the globe find themselves under tremendous pressure. In the business of mainstream media news nowadays, the stakes are high (for the most recent numbers, see stateofthemedia.org).

It is clear how over the past few decades, the media landscape, as well as its production, texts, and consumption, has radically changed (for an overview, see Domingo & Paterson, 2011; Ryfe, 2012). Traditional print media is in decline, and we are transitioning to an age of 'convergence'. From a technological perspective, convergence refers to the coming together of different media industries and products (Pool, 1983; Negroponte, 1995). In a converged newsroom, journalists from different media (TV, radio, newspaper, online) share the same workspace. As the newsroom transitions from a print world to a digital one in a process of production convergence, many jobs are on the line.

In part as a consequence of the growing digitalisation, newspapers are watching readers abandon them at an increasingly alarming rate (Mindich, 2005). In the US, the portion of readers turning to print newspapers continues to decline, given that in 2015, 75% of newspapers' advertising revenue came from non-digital sources. In 2014, the latest year for which data were available, newsroom employment in the US declined 10%, more than in any other year since 2009. In fact, the total newspaper workforce has shrunk by about 20,000 positions, or 39%, in the last 20 years (Pew, State of the News Media, 2016).

News company buy-outs seem to dominate the corporate agenda. Advertisers who once relied predominantly on traditional media to deliver their messages are looking for alternative ways to do so, the Internet being one of them. As newspaper revenue declines, so does the industry's employment. In an age when profit pushes newspaper management ever further to cut costs, it is common knowledge that newsrooms have dwindled in all departments. Newsroom staff are being laid off in record numbers. Newspaper sub-editors have

frequently drawn the short straw in a print world under duress. My own experience working at a newspaper has taught me that sub-editors are especially vulnerable when people are made redundant. This implies that, across the globe, fewer eyeballs go over news stories during the sub-editing process. García (2017) writes:

> "The best newspapers and magazines are those in which copy follows a strict and systematic approach as it flows from the reporter, to an assignment editor, and to copy editor who polish it to make it as perfect as it can be. In today's digital environment where speed is key, copy editing does not become a feasible priority." (García, 2017)

Russial (1998) already emphasized the importance of the 'copy desks', in a time when several newspapers have, entirely or in part, dismantled them. Nearly a third of sub-editors working for US daily newspapers in 2007 were no longer employed in those positions in 2013, according to an American Society of News Editors' survey of 985 publications. Signs point to a veritable 'endangerment' of the sub-editing profession. David Ayrton (research and information assistant organizer, National Union of Journalists) stated in *The Guardian* (Hattenstone, 2009): "There is little doubt the sub-editor has been a target for cost-cutting". Although little research has been done on the number of sub-editors who have left journalism over the past few years, it is clear that an increasing number of newspapers' editorial boards take the view that sub-editing is a functional task that no longer needs to be part of a paper's core activity.

With audiences retreating from commercial news products, any study of the language of journalism, has to take into account "the precarious context of its object of study" (Deuze, 2008: 861). Seeing the context of journalism change suggests that

> "journalism in various media forms is confronted by significant challenges in which newswork and the people who carry out this labor face a period of intense uncertainty, insecurity and even crisis." (Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009: 557)

However, Deuze and Marjoribanks continue, "all of these issues warrant significant scholarly attention to the working conditions and labor practices in journalism" (2009: 557). Working in a profession that is clearly under threat, spurred me on even more to undertake this study. A second motivation for writing this dissertation is therefore the current pressure on the world's newspaper newsrooms. By showing exactly how the sub-editors impact on the final news article, the significance of their presence in the newsroom can be demonstrated.

In sum, approaching my research topic both as a practitioner and an academic truly shaped and inspired this study. From that perspective, I noticed how the public seems to appreciate little of the sub-editor's role even though (s)he has a major influence on what people read. Among their colleagues the sub-editors' work is not frequently recognised. In research, the sub-editors remain understudied. Moreover, as new technology has made the existing newspaper model less viable, sub-editors might be forced to change their practices, or be eliminated altogether. This makes investigating newspaper sub-editing in its current form a rather urgent undertaking. As the sub-editors' best work is – and should be – invisible, my aim in this dissertation is to paint a clearer and more detailed picture of their varied tasks and impact on the published news article. In the research objectives I discuss in the section below, I will clarify in which ways I will attempt to do so.

c. Research objectives

Being a sub-editor convinced me of the need to describe the sub-editing process, and the significant role sub-editors play in the newsroom. My overall research objectives in this study are therefore quite simply:

- **What is the role of the sub-editor in the newspaper production process?**

In other words, I would like to pinpoint in what stage(s) of the newspaper production process the sub-editors intervene. When can their 'voices' be heard the loudest? Which tasks and responsibilities do they take on, and how do they interact with other key newsroom staffers.

- **What is the impact of sub-editing on the final product, i.e. the newspaper article?**

What I want to clarify here is exactly how sub-editors intervene in a newspaper's articles. What is it they might change in the text, and what would motivate them to do so?

By step-by-step uncovering their professional actions, my goal is to shed light on the sub-editors, and uncover the part they play in constructing what leaves the newsroom on a daily basis.

My two main research objectives are broken down into four separate questions. I wrote an article-based PhD, which means that instead of a monograph, my PhD consists of a collection of four articles of which I am the main author, or first author. I will take the four subquestions below as my lead for each of those papers. These questions will be tackled in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this dissertation. The various subquestions that will be dealt with are the following:

a) **Where does sub-editing take place? How is the sub-editing craft put into practice there? Is the sub-editors' placement in**

the newsroom connected to how they put their craft into practice?

The sub-editors' daily practices seem to be firmly rooted in the newsroom. How do they interact with e.g. reporters, layout designers, and picture editors? Does the sub-editors' placement in that physical space influence their practices and interactions? If we compare newsrooms, can differences be detected, and might those have an impact on their practices?

b) What happens in the sub-editing stage?

Sub-editors are the final gateway to the reader, meaning they intervene at the end of the production process of a newspaper article. The reporters hand in their pieces to the desk chief, who will then pass it on to the copy desk. In that final stage of production, what do the sub-editors exactly do to the article? Which micro-discursive linguistic practices can be noted? Are all changes purely textual, or can they be graphic in nature? Are certain types of changes more prevalent, or urgent?

c) Why does a sub-editor do what (s)he does?

After having observed which (linguistic or graphic) changes take place in the sub-editing stage, it would be interesting to find out what the underlying motivations of a sub-editor are. Is it possible to compile a list of reasons that warrant a sub-editor's intervention?

d) So what? When we feed these research findings back to the practitioners, (how) should we fine-tune them, based on their insights and experiences?

As I am writing this study from a shared practitioner-academic perspective, I feel the practitioners' input on previous findings is crucial. If confronted with a preliminary analysis of their role, interventions and motivations, what might their reaction be?

By formulating answers to these questions in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this PhD, I want to work towards a deeper understanding of the sub-editing process and the sub-editors themselves. First, however, I will explore the main research traditions which have guided my approach throughout this study.

1.3. Theoretical framework

The news' constant (re)generation, varying foci, ever-evolving format, and the many professionals behind its production have made it – and journalism as a whole – an intriguing object of study to academics from fields as diverse as sociology, history, literary studies, political science, and cultural studies. Many researchers and their endeavours to get to grips with the(language of the) news, news products and how they come to be, have played an important part in shaping my approach to, and conceptualisation of, the study of newspaper sub-editors and newspaper sub-editing. In keeping with my hybrid identity as a researcher and practitioner, the academic disciplines I lean on throughout this study are equally heterogeneous in origin. In this section I select and discuss a number of key research traditions and concepts that lie at the heart of my PhD. Just like the sub-editor's tasks are diverse, these research disciplines are varied as well, ranging from journalism studies and media linguistics, to writing studies.

a. Journalism studies

Journalism studies are a "pluralistic, differentiated, and dynamic field of research" (Erjavec & Zajc, 2011: 9).

Broadly speaking, journalism studies can be defined as a multidisciplinary study of journalism, which entails the critical analysis of the various processes involved in gathering, evaluating, interpreting, researching, writing, editing, reporting and presenting information and comments on the a wide range of subjects, that are disseminated via an expansive range of mass media to diverse audience in local, regional, national and international settings (Franklin et al., 2005: 128).

Anthropologists have been critical of their field's tendency to "study down" (Nader, 1972), or to mainly focus on the lives of (relatively) powerless and culturally distant groups. Of researchers within the field of journalism it can be said they do quite the opposite: it is argued that they have focused on "studying up" or engaging in "elite research" (Conti & O'Neil, 2007), by paying a disproportionate amount of attention to elite individuals, news organizations and texts (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitszch, 2009).

This is backed by Cushion (2008) when he observes that most of the research published in key English-language journals on journalism studies (*Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly (JMCQ)*, *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism, Journalism Studies* and *Journalism Practice*) focuses on reporters, their practices and the texts they produce. Studies focusing on policy, agency, objectivity, gatekeeping (Shoemaker, Vos & Reese, 2009), writing processes and organizational contexts all concentrate on the reporters. Within the dominant news media reporters (and editors) are seen as the key players. They are held responsible, and seen as holding power. Critics also

refer to the focus on journalism produced in the main national television and newspaper newsrooms in elite nations. The news texts that are scrutinized in research focus on major events and disasters or on the routine news processes and products of elite news organizations. In this study of the sub-editor, I want to explicitly contribute to the existing work on those newsworkers who have remained under the radar in journalism studies.

b. Media linguistics

Studying the language of journalism is a worthwhile undertaking because news shapes our world, and the way we see it, ourselves and others (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitszch, 2009). Newspaper texts are one of the most common forms of discourse, and can be placed in a category of their own. Even the everyday consumer of the news will notice how the language of the newspaper is characterised by certain stylistic features (van Dijk, 1988a), and has its own specific vocabulary (Pape & Featherstone, 2005), which makes it stand apart. From a linguistics perspective on the analysis of professional language use, research into newswriting still remains somewhat understudied (Cotter, 2010; NT&T, 2011; Perrin, 2013). However, in the growing field of linguistics of newswriting it is understood that looking into the linguistics of newswriting equals "challenging and unpicking of journalists' 'common sense' explanations of their craft" (Harcup, 2011: 33). Moreover, this kind of research can benefit practitioners too, as it allows them to increase insight into their own craft, and be encouraged to "think critically" about their process (Zelizer, 2009: 38). In what follows, I will situate my study of subediting practices at broadsheet newspapers within various research traditions.

Within linguistics, critical discourse analysis and critical linguistics have produced a great many prominent studies on news discourse (for an overview see e.g. van Dijk 1988a, 1988b; Conboy, 2007; Carvalho, 2008; Bednarek & Caple, 2012). With a focus on the ideologies behind news discourse, and the power relations that are at play, the critical approach moves beyond the text, while taking institutional and socio-cultural contexts into consideration (Fairclough, 1995; Richardson, 2007). Research areas include gender (cf. representation of women in Fowler, 1991), politics and conflict (cf. war reporting in Lukin et al, 2004), the multicultural society (cf. ideological construction of racism in Teo, 2000), globalization (cf. representation of refugees in Baker, 2006), to name but a few.

My work, however, can be situated in media linguistics (Perrin, 2013), a strand of linguistics with a special focus on news media, which can be found at the intersection of applied linguistics and journalism studies (Van Hout & Burger, 2015). Media linguistics aims to investigate the complex and dynamic interplay of language use in public spheres such as newsrooms, and focuses on aspects of text production (written, oral and online) in the news media. An important research objective is describing exactly how the news comes into being. Rather than looking into language in the media, or investigating how the news media represent language issues such as language standards, language ideologies, and language change (Johnson & Ensslin, 2007; Johnson & Milani, 2010; Van Hout & Burger, 2015), I look at language of the media, more specifically that of broadsheet newspapers, and how this is constructed in part by the sub-editors. I approach sub-editing from a linguistic/pragmatic perspective, meaning the news texts are always investigated in connection to their contexts.

Behind my approach to the study of subediting lies the idea that the news media mediate, and/or construct social 'reality' (Bell, 1991), as "whether in print, broadcast or digital form, news media spread culturally authoritative representations of social life, from traditional domains such as politics and business to more recent ones such as health and lifestyle" (Van Hout & Burger, 2015: 2). However, news is also the social manufacture of an organizational product, one that can be studied like other manufactured goods (Schudson, 2012). Here, I refer to Epstein's study (1973) that grew out of a political science seminar on organizational theory at Harvard. In his words, that seminar took as its working assumption that members of the organization "modified their own personal values in accordance with the requisites of the organization" (1973: xiv). In order to properly analyse the output of organisations – in this case, news – you have to come to grips with those organizations, not individuals.

Zelizer mentions that although textual approaches to the news have developed the notion of the construction and negotiation of meaning-making through journalism, they tended to remain 'unpeopled' (2004: 43). She asserts that, in fact, sociology's distinctive strength lies in the fact it attempts to fill this gap by focusing on people and their interactions. The importance to 'people' research into journalism is especially important to those taking a language-based approach to understanding the processes and practices of journalism. News may be "a depletable consumer product that must be made fresh daily" (Tuchman, 1978: 179). But it is exactly by disclosing how news organisation through the interactions of the people in it produces fresh news (products), which provides a better understanding of the news, and its creation. Looking closely into the journalistic profession – or 'craft' (Cotter, 2010) –, news texts, practices, and processes has allowed many researchers to uncover more about what makes the news what it is, what makes the professionals behind it "tick" and how a news events finally makes its way

to the newspaper, a radio broadcast, a telecast, the screen of a mobile device, a tweet, a social media post et cetera.

However, to achieve this, going backstage, in the newsroom, and emphasising various organizational and technical requirements in the news production process, is required. In section 1.4.a, I will illustrate this in more detail.

c. Writing studies

Newswriting is seldom a solo performance (Bell, 1991). Rather, a great many people and practices play their part. Journalistic practice embodies "a broad range of activities" (Zelizer & Allan, 2010: 62–63), including research, sourcing, narrative writing, reporting, judging, analysing, editing, cutting, typesetting et cetera. Just as revision is a crucial part of the writing process (Allal, Chanquoy & Largy, 2004), so too is sub-editing, and, thus the sub-editors. When it comes to writing studies, extensive research has been done on editing and revision (See e.g. Allal et al, 2004; Bisaillon, 2007; Hacker et al, 1994; Hayes et al, 1987) and often it is defined as a subprocess of writing (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001; Fitzgerald, 1987; Laflamme, 2007; Rijlaarsdam et al; 2004). However, thus far, very few studies have addressed professional editing, "an activity that consists in comprehending and evaluating a text written by a given author and in making modifications to this text in accordance with the assignment or mandate given by a client" (Bisaillon, 2005: 4, *translation*).

Professional sub-editing involves many aspects of revision and editing (See Rohman's, 1965 pre-write/write/re-write model; Britton et al., 1975). During the construction of a news article, for instance, there are in fact multiple stages of revision (Allal et al., 2004), and multiple players are involved (Myhill & Jones, 2007): Rather than an end-of-the-line repair practice, it is a continuous process of "re-vision" or "re-seeing" (Sommers, 1980). Only on a few occasions the work of the sub-editor is recognized (cf. Ross, 2013; Dahl 2015). Recent studies (Bisaillon, 2007; Rijlaarsdam et al., 2004) have shown the need for more research on professional editing in various contexts, since "only then will we have a proper description of the realities of the profession in all their fullness and complexity" (Bisaillon, 2007: 319).

In this study of the sub-editor, I aim to add to existing work within research on writing, and this will be explored explicitly in chapter 3. First, however, in the following section I will elucidate my methodology.

1.4. Methodology and data

The main aim of this study is to better understand sub-editors, their craft, their community of practice, and their impact on the news article. Looking at journalistic products and practices from an outside position, will leave a lot unclear, as crucial contextual clues will be missed. By focusing exclusively on textual output I would be ignoring "the communicative process, the active work done by participants as well as the cultural context that underpins the action" (NT&T, 2011: 1846). The discursive process underlying the actual putting together of the news needs to be studied, as well as its connection to context. With this work I strive to fill a current gap in the field by providing ethnographic descriptions and offering insider perspectives on the practices and values of news production, and documenting how these often differ from the claims of both producers and theorists (NT&T, 2011). This linguistic ethnographic study of the newspaper sub-editors (cf. Rampton et al., 2004; Creese, 2008; Blommaert & Dong, 2010 for more on linguistic ethnography) ties in with a shift in media discourse studies focusing on news production practices and their relation to text, talk and social meaning (Cotter, 2010; Van Hout, 2010; Jacobs & Tobback, 2013). My methodology is characterized by corpus-based discourse analytic research and ethnographic fieldwork in three countries, i.e. Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK. In what follows I will focus on my production-oriented, ethnographically supported approach to this dissertation, as well as how I collected the necessary data through fieldwork, interviews and focus groups.

a. A production perspective

The study of news language and news discourse has been a focus of journalism studies and well-known linguistically-based approaches to discourse for many years. Yet, to this day, very few researchers with training in linguistics have shown interest in the news production process; most have instead been focusing on a close analysis of the products of those news production processes. Examples are seminal studies by van Dijk (1988a, 1988b), Bell & Garrett (1998b), and Fairclough (1995b). These studies approach news texts as stand-alone objects, ignoring the complex and dynamic processes prior to news product's final materialization – be it on paper, online, on television or radio. Similarly, all professionals, including the sub-editors, involved in the construction

of that product are overlooked. It is, however, important to realise that 'news' refers to "a broad spectrum of journalistic activity" (NT&T, 2011: 1844). As "the production process underlying the news text is an essential constitutive component of news contexts" (NT&T, 2011: 1845), it is claimed that lack of attention to the news production process can only lead to weak hypotheses. Additionally, "it is everyday practice that shapes the language of news" (Cotter, 2010: 4).

The study of how news organisation produce news (products) can be traced back to studies of US newsrooms in the 1950's, when several social scientists looked at 'gatekeepers' in journalism (White, 1950; Gieber 1964). White (1950) concluded: "we see how highly subjective, how based on the 'gatekeeper's' own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations the communication of 'news' really is". Gieber was mainly "concerned with goals of production, bureaucratic routine and interpersonal relations within the newsroom" (Gieber 1964: 175). Molotch and Lester (1974) and Tuchman (1978) see the news as 'constructed', suggesting that it is socially constructed, relying on the interaction of newsmakers with each other. Alongside classic work in this tradition (Epstein, 2000; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978), the last few decades have witnessed a veritable outpouring of ethnographic newsroom research (Anderson, 2013; Boczkowski, 2004; Cottle, 2007; Eliasoph, 1988; Klinenberg, 2005; Domingo and Paterson, 2011). Most relevant to discourse analysts are those studies looking into gate-keeping processes; 'objectivity' as a strategic ritual (Tuchman, 1972); the values, roles and ethics of journalists; the effects of journalism; and the newsroom ethnographies of the 1970s and 1980s. These studies 'people' the academic approach to media texts and shed light on the processes and practices of news-making and interpretation. (Magilchrist, 2004)

Clearly, a product, in this case the news article, cannot be understood and studied completely, if no research is executed on how it came about. It is the steps in between, the construction process, which contributes to understanding the finished product. In order to observe said processes, I needed to be socialized into the journalistic practices, interactions between sub-editors and other newsroom staffers and participate in the daily newsroom routines which structure the daily production of news (Tuchman, 1978). As linguistic interest in the news has long been limited to the analysis of the news product, the idea of going behind the scenes and charting the news professionals' practice is relatively new. From within journalism scholarship the need arose for "a new critical approach to journalism that illuminates the processes and decision-making from within, rather than making deductions solely on the journalistic output" (Niblock, 2007: 23). Media linguists have come to learn from those journalism scholars, that it is exactly those processes which shed light on why the news is what it is, and how situated language activity in the newsrooms and contextual resources, social settings and the newsmakers themselves are related (NT&T, 2011)

NewsTalk&Text (NT&T, 2011) strive for a production perspective instead of a product-only perspective as the pre-eminent approach to study of news production. This perspective "makes context integral, and is a theoretical and methodological consideration in interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, community of practice, linguistic anthropology, and pragmatic paradigms" (NT&T, 2011: 1845). NT&T wants to bring a linguistic analysis to "the discursive processes that shape the news product, and, in this way, fill in a blind spot in news scholarship" (NT&T, 2011: 1843).

It has been a conscious and very deliberate choice to choose a production-oriented approach to my subject. In my work, I want to stress how textual choices should be seen in the broader context of the social practice of news production. By looking into the production process, I was able to "scrutinize the complex back-and-forth between journalists and the world out there and, in doing so, to unravel the details of institutional contexts, conventions, and procedures as they impact in the news product" (NT&T, 2011: 1845).

b.
An ethnographic approach

Ethnography is a dialectic epistemology and methodology whereby ideas, values and perspectives are constantly criticized and scrutinized (Van Praet, 2005: 36), used to explore and describe the culture of a group of people. So, the "primary orientation of an ethnographic focus is the community" (Cotter, 2010: 19). Its origins are situated in anthropology and the studies of small, rural and remote communities in the early 1900s conducted by researchers such as Malinowski (1922) and Radcliffe-Brown (1922). A great deal of emphasis is placed on the concept of 'culture', i.e. a system of shared beliefs, values and norms, activities, language, rituals and material possessions by one and the same group of people in order to comprehend the world around them. Ethnography aims to represent a clash within that culture, a "collision between two worlds and two cultures" (Scheper-Hughes, 2000: 132). Hammersley (1985) defines the ethnographer's task as follows:

> "The task [of ethnographers] is to document the culture, the perspectives and practices, of the people in these settings. The aim is to 'get inside' the way each group of people sees the world." (Hammersley, 1985:152)

Although immersing oneself in the field by working in might by rare in journalism studies, sociologists and anthropologists have been doing this for various purposes for many years,

ranging from a study of gendered interaction patterns in an American college (Spradley & Mann, 1975), to an ethnography of fire-fighters in Arizona (Desmond, 2007) and an ethnography of violent urban schools in deprived neighbourhoods of New York and Amsterdam (Paulle; 2013).

Newsroom ethnographies dating back to the 1970s and 1980s (Tunstall, 1971; Tuchman, 1972, 1973, 1978; Epstein, 1973; Sigal, 1973; Sigelman, 1973; Roschco, 1975; the Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, Gans, 1979; Schlesinger, 1978; .Golding & Elliot 1979; Fishman 1980; Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1987) are continued by researchers such as Van Praet (2005), Cottle (2007), Van Hout (2010), and Perrin (2013) to name but a few. In recent years, ethnographic studies have begun to take account of the new environment facing journalism (see collections edited by Boyer and Hannerz, 2006 and Klinenberg and Benzecry, 2005. Also see Benson, 2001; Boczkowski, 2004, Ryfe, 2009; Wallace, 2009, Steensen, 2009b). There still, however, exists a need for more in-depth ethnographic, field-based, interaction-oriented research into the production of news, "with the researcher sitting in on the story meeting, looking over the journalist's shoulder at the computer screen, out on assignment, and listening to watercooler or coffee break chat (NT&T, 2011: 1846).

Blommaert suggests that a more insightful study of news discourse can be obtained through adopting "an ethnographic eye for the real historical actors, their interests, their allegiances, their practices, and where they come from, in relation to the discourses they produce" (Blommaert, 1999: 7). NT&T pleads "for an ethnographic approach to the analysis of news that integrates text, practice, and interaction" (NT&T, 2011: 1845). The ethnographic method allows researchers to access information on newsroom production first-hand. This means that ethnographic research "encourage[s] a more qualified stance to some of the circulating claims and generalizations made about the news media" (Cottle, 2007: 1).

By studying the sub-editors and their craft of sub-editing from a linguistic ethnographic point of view (Rampton et al, 2004; Creese, 2008; Blommaert & Dong, 2010), I highlight a distinct part during the creation of news, aiming to help clarify why a newspaper article is published the way it is, and who had a hand in this process. Mark Peterson (2001) summarises that, to understand what a journalist writes, it is required to

> "understand his or her place in the journalistic field – the status of the newspaper for which the journalist writes (and hence the authority with which he or she speaks and asks questions), the journalist's specific competence in the writing technologies privileged within the field, the position of the journalist within the sets of roles within the newspaper, and the history of the journalist's prior relations with the social actors he or she is constituting as sources." (Peterson, 2001: 207)

Clearly, in order to investigate the newspaper sub-editors and "the real-time, ethnographically situated, process-oriented actions and dynamics" (NT&T, 2011: 1845) of their daily routines and how they reinforce them, I had to 'get inside' the way they see the world. Simply gathering articles before and after the sub-editing process would not be sufficient. Physically, I needed to be in the newsroom, among the sub-editors, reporters, desk chiefs and other newsworkers.

c. Data collection

The ethnographic approach is an interpretive method which relies heavily on informants. To collect the necessary data, participant observation and spending substantial time in the field are required. Interviews to confirm "analytic judgments with community members themselves" (Cotter, 2010: 20) are further necessary components of this method. In order to provide a rich, holistic description of sub-editing practices, this dissertation draws heavily on ethnographic research methodologies, mainly participant observation, and interviews at the news and copy desks of several newspapers.

My participant-oriented approach builds on seminal work in media discourse analysis by Bell (1991) and Verschueren (1985), and more recent ethnographic work by Briggs (2007), Perrin and Ehrensberger (2008), Cotter (2010), and Perrin (2013). Participant observation enables a researcher to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). According to Cottle, participant observation is the only method by which "the normally invisible realm of media production can be recorded and made available for wider consideration" (2007: 5). He adds, however, that 'good' participant observation is not a "fishing expedition" (Cottle, 2007: 5), i.e. a search for information without knowledge of whether such information exists. Cottle continues it also invariably involves five sequenced research stages, more precisely: (i) research design, (ii) securing access, (iii) negotiating field relationships, (iv) collecting and recording data, (v) analysing data, and (vi) write-up.

Before I entered the newsroom and started my fieldwork, I had planned to track "the story of a story" from 'pitch to page', i.e. I would follow a newspaper article from its conception to its publication, with a particular interest in the sub-editing stage. I decided to do so after being spurred on by Boyer & Hannerz. They stated that "in the ethnography of journalism, 'following the story' must often be a fruitful approach" (2006: 12). They continued by saying that such

analyses "may become intriguingly complex as one realizes that after a local interplay of interests and competences at the point of origin, a story may bounce back and forth between stringers, bureaus and desks in different locations, involve competitions between parallel intermediary channels of news flow, translations and reinterpretations at different points of the passage, and then final editing before reaching its audience destination. We see interesting possibilities for a versatile media ethnography here" (Boyer & Hannerz, 2006: 13).

As Sellers stated that it "is in the big, highly-tuned newspapers that the craft of subbing is developed to the highest degree" (Sellers, 1968: 15), my preferred fieldwork locations were swiftly decided on. The three main newsrooms I visited for longer periods of time all belong renowned quality broadsheets in Flanders (Belgium), in the Netherlands and in the UK. The Belgian Dutch-language newspaper has its headquarters near Brussels, and has a total daily circulation of about 54,882 copies, of which 40.488 are copies in print, and of which 14.394 are digital copies (CIM, 2015; Centrum Informatie Media, i.e. the Belgian Centre for Information on the Media; *cim.be*). The Dutch paper has its headquarters in Amsterdam, and currently has a daily print)circulation of 223.467 (NOM, 2016; Nationaal Onderzoek Multimedia, i.e. Dutch organisation that collects, checks and publishes data on circulation of newspaper and magazines; *nommedia.nl*), which makes it the second largest newspaper of the Netherlands. It is the largest digital newspaper, with 88,535 subscriptions. They are both known as progressive quality papers targeting a wide, well-educated audience. I was fortunate enough to have a professional link with the Belgian newspaper, and as the Dutch newspaper was acquired by the same publishing house, access was granted rather easily. The main newsroom of the British broadsheet is located in London, and has a print circulation of 161,191. The newspaper's digital performance is strong with over 155 million unique monthly browsers on average (ABC, 2016; UK-based organisation that independently verifies and reports on media performance; *ABC.org.uk*). It is politically situated to the left of centre. Through professional connections, I was granted access quite swiftly.

My study of newspaper sub-editors is based on one week of observation in the Dutch newsroom (June 2012) and four longer periods of observation (in December 2011, October 2012, May 2013, and February 2015) in the Belgian newsroom, covering a total of six weeks. In addition, I attended two sub-editing workshops, visited for single day observations, and spent three days in two UK newsrooms. It is important to note that I did not add the many times I was actually working as a sub-editor over the past six years to my fieldwork. Of course, these experiences ended up becoming part of the study, albeit not officially.

I was typically situated among the newsroom practitioners in large open space offices which allowed for observation of the newspaper production process. I would usually sit at the copy desk. Sometimes, I sat close to – or at – the chief sub-editor's desk, depending on my focus. I attended many editorial meetings where stories were pitched. I then tracked how the reporters gather their materials and check their sources, and finally wrote up their stories. I focused especially on the moment it was handed over to the sub-editors, and followed them while they worked. During that time I tracked which changes were made until the final printer's deadline. I would also participate in other daily newsroom routines, including meal times and coffee breaks.

As I followed the story, I made plenty of field notes and five recordings of the meetings, recordings of two tutorials led by chief 'subs', recordings and transcriptions of interactions between sub-editors, and recordings of interactions between sub-editors and design editors. I also collected screenshots of the alterations made in the text by both sub-editors and design editors.

Besides field notes of daily informal talks with sub-editors, reporters, and the layout designers, I recorded and transcribed qualitative in-depth interviews with key players in the newsroom at various levels of the news organization. I conducted a total of 36 semi-structured interviews with newsroom staffers (16 sub-editors, 8 reporters, 10 other newsroom professionals, i.e. editors-in-chief, desk chiefs, layout editors, chief sub-editors, and two journalism scholars).

For the interviews I used a semi-structured approach. This lets the informant take unexpected turns and thus may lead the researcher down unpredicted paths (Hannerz, 2003). By going back and forth between findings in the field, my own experiences as a practitioner and insights from literature, I developed a set of questions. In order to gain as many viewpoints as possible, I interviewed people in the newsroom with various professional backgrounds, and levels in the newsroom. The face-to-face interviews took place in settings where informants could speak freely, either in a quiet corner of the newsroom, empty offices, cafeterias or vacant meeting rooms. Two interviews were conducted over the phone, and two interviews took place in a bar near the newsroom.

All relevant written sources, such as e-mails, the newspapers' ever-changing 'budgets' (featuring the articles which will appear, the advertisements and the preliminary layout) for sub-editors and layout editors, were collected. Furthermore I took computer screen shots and made prints of articles at various stages of production.

Being in the newsroom, I could observe how sub-editors "shape the social environment in which they interact, and to what extent [their capacity to choose and act is] delimited by social structures and institutional practices" (Manning, 2001: 53). On the basis of the collected data, and my insights from fieldwork conducted in Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK, allowed me to analyse the sub-editors'

practices, and the rationale behind their interventions. Before I move on to my actual research in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, I will discuss my various approaches in some more detail in the final section of the first chapter below.

1.5. An overview of my study of the sub-editors and their craft

My focus in this study is to uncover how the sub-editors fit in the daily news production process. In other words, my aim is to disclose which tasks and responsibilities they take on, and when. Moreover, I want to clarify how sub-editors intervene in the text of a newspaper article, and how their input actually influences the final news product. In order to achieve this, I take a linguistic ethnographic approach. I will scrutinize the sub-editors' textual output, and take on the role of participant observer in the newsroom. To that role, I bring my professional experience as a sub-editor. From that dual practitioner-academic perspective, I look into the processes constituting the sub-editors' work in the newsroom.

The purpose of this section is to provide the necessary introduction to the four following chapters, which lie at the heart of this PhD on the newspaper sub-editors. Together, they describe the various steps I took to lay bare the role of sub-editing practices in the news production process. I will briefly explain where each of the four core chapters of this dissertation is situated in my study of the sub-editor and sub-editing. I will also highlight each chapter's focus, and how it fits in the bigger picture. I move from a *macro* perspective (chapter 2), to a *micro* perspective (chapter3). I then zoom out again, to take a *meso* perspective, and ask why a sub-editor will intervene (chapter 4). Finally, I focus back on who I believe are the heart of this dissertation: the practitioners themselves (chapter 5).

As I mentioned earlier, chapters 2, 3, and 4 are articles that have been published, and chapter 5 has been submitted for publication. The journals these articles are published in, or have been submitted to, all feature in the Web of Science or Social Sciences Citation Index.

a. Macro (Where & How?)

In 1971, Tunstall wrote about the most important distinction in the newsroom, i.e. the one between the 'news gatherers' (i.e. the general reporters and specialists) and the 'news processors' (i.e. the sub-editors and the design editors). This strict divide is referred to as "the major internal functioning boundary within the occupation" (Tunstall, 1971). Different newsroom models, hearkening back to this distinction, have been looked at by researchers in media discourse. Esser, among others, wrote about two main ways a newsroom can be organized: the German model on the one hand, and the Anglo-Saxon model on the other. (Esser, 1998) These operate quite differently: Whereas British and American newsrooms favour centralized newsrooms with a high division of labour, German newspapers tend to decentralize their work by maintaining many more branch offices, completing various sections of the newspapers.

'Journalist-turned-academic' (2004: ix) Barbie Zelizer regularly refers to openings for further research, for example, the lack of up-to-date newsroom ethnographies taking account of today's hi-tech, multi-modal, corporate environment (2004: 68). In chapter 2, entitled 'The Lowlands newsroom model: Fieldwork notes on the position of the newspaper sub-editor', I take these researchers' input as starting point.

I consider the sub-editors' position within the larger organizational model of the newsroom, by going into two newsrooms. In order to explore the sub-editor's position in the news production chain, I take an ethnographic approach. I draw on participant observation in the newsrooms of a Belgian broadsheet and a broadsheet from the Netherlands. I look closer into the differences between the so-called 'In/Out system' I was first introduced to as I was working as a freelance-sub-editor in the Belgian newsroom.

In my study of the sub-editor, I observe how at both newspapers the newsroom model differs from those previously described by Esser (1998; 1999), and after comparing the Belgian and the Dutch newsrooms, I identified what we termed the 'Lowlands newsroom model'. At the same time, I demonstrate how, although the same Lowlands newsroom model is applied in both newsrooms, the spatial setting, division of workload and the sub-editor's profile impact on the sub-editor's ability to intervene in the news production process. Seeing that the organizational structure of these newsrooms has clear implications on sub-editing, I argue that exploring this newsroom model is necessary, not only considering the general newsroom flow, but also the much-debated future of the newspaper 'sub'.

b. Micro (What?)

Christopher McKane, *The Times'* former senior news revise sub-editor, gave this advice to budding journalists: "Look carefully at how [the story] was subbed – far too few reporters bother to compare their original copy with the

published version" (McKane, cited in McKane, 2006: 144). Taking this advice to heart, I decided to track and categorise the (linguistic) changes made in the story in the sub-editing stage. In 'Beyond 'trimming the fat': The sub-editing stage of newswriting' (chapter 3), this process is described in detail.

It is important to also mention that professional editing has not been researched extensively in writing research. I therefore focus on sub-editing in newswriting as a form of professional editing, addressing three research questions: (a) What are the ways in which a news article's text is altered?, (b) Are some types of news article altered more significantly than others?, and (c) Are certain news article sections more prone to alterations?

Merging the contextualized insights of fieldwork with a corpus-based discourse analytic research perspective, I trace the differences (viz. additions, deletions, translocations, replacements) between the "initial" (right before sub-editing) and "final" (published) version of six different types of news article, (front-page, headline, long, medium, short, and news wire article) in a corpus sample of 30 broadsheet articles, which I gathered in the newsroom of a Belgian broadsheet.

The findings are first that—contrary to popular belief that subeditors mainly cut back news stories, or "trim the fat"— additions actually prevail. Second, I found that most interventions occur in high profile articles. Third, I discovered the largest number of interventions in the "entry points" of an article, that is, where—according to eye-tracking research—readers stop scanning and start reading.

c.
Meso (Why?)

It is claimed that journalistic judgement "requires split-second decision-making or, as it is often put, "thinking on your feet"" (Niblock, 2007: 20). But what does 'thinking on your feet' mean – and more specifically: what does it mean in case of the sub-editor? It is true that simply because the rules for the practice may not be overtly visible, it does not mean necessarily that they are not in existence (White, 1982). With these notions in mind, I wanted to move beyond the analysis of what happens in the sub-editing stage of newswriting, to expose why it does, in an attempt to lay bare 'the rules of the sub-editors' practice'.

In 'Trust me, I'm a sub-editor': 'Production values' at work in newspaper sub-editing' (chapter 4), I analyse the sub-editing process through participant observation in newsrooms in the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Looking at both the sub-editors at work (think aloud protocol) as well as the articles in various stages of production, and informed by (retrospective) interviews, I make a first attempt at compiling a list of the sub-editor's "production values". This preliminary list of values seems to guide sub-editors whenever they intervene, and help them to transform a news story into an appealing, correct and credible newspaper article.

I took the lead from Östgaard's "factors influencing the flow of news" (1965), but also from the much-studied concept of "news values" (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Schulz, 1976; Golding & Elliott, 1979; Gans, 1980; Peterson, 1979, 1981; Staab, 1990; Bell, 1991; Herbert, 2000; Harcup & O'Neill 2001, 2016; Clausen, 2004; Cotter, 2010; Bednarek & Caple 2014; Meissner, 2015), which help reporters to determine which "events" are transitioned into "news". In doing so, I go beyond the limitations of my previous research, in which the types of interventions carried out in the sub-editing stage of newswriting were categorised, because instead of merely describing the changes that occur, I aim to identify the underlying rationale.

By identifying the guidelines driving the alterations made by the sub-editor, I aim to move one step closer towards uncovering the intricacies of the sub-editing process. Moreover, I demonstrate how "the rewrite men" add journalistic value to their newspapers, as perhaps their brand's strongest ambassadors.

d.
Back to the practitioners (What do you think? & So what?)

Driven by my own background as a freelance sub-editor at a Belgian broadsheet's newsroom, and the need to contribute to the sub-editors' community of practice (Wenger & Snyder, 2000; Barton & Tusting, 2005), I decided to take my research insights back to the practitioners. By confronting them with previous findings in 'Designing the news: A practitioner perspective on the production values in newspaper sub-editing' (chapter 5), I aim to further disclose their shared tacit knowledge.

The approach of this paper was in part inspired by Machin and Niblock (2006), as I want to encourage sub-editors to reflect upon their actions within the news-making process to ascertain to what extent they confirm or contradict my own theories about their journalistic practice. Since it is deeply embedded in their minds, it is difficult for the sub-editors to describe, codify or articulate their shared knowledge (Polanyi, 1969). I attempted to do so in three semi-structured qualitative interviews with pairs of sub-editors and layout designers employed by a Belgian broadsheet.

I confront the pairs of practitioners with the practical application of the 'production values' I previously formulated (Vandendaele, 2017), i.e. guidelines that help them ensure accuracy

and readability – thus appeal and credibility – of their newspaper. On the basis of these practitioners' input on their collaborative process, I attempt to re(de)fine my original set of production values.

Furthermore, in these problematic times for traditional print media, there are still newspapers willing to take a risk, by continuing to focus on design. My findings suggest that in this particular newsroom the layout designer's voice can be heard louder than ever.

Sheridan Burns posits that allowing the sub-editors to reflect, can help them "to recognize their own assumptions and understand their place in the wider social context" (2003: 33). By looking closely at the production journalists' shared community of practice and uncovering their tacit knowledge, our understanding of the sub-editing stage in professional newswriting, and journalistic craft as a whole is therefore deepened.

What follows are the four articles I introduced above. The text appears here as it was previously published or – in the case of chapter 5, submitted – but the layout design has been altered for reasons of continuity.

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Vandendaele, Astrid, and Geert Jacobs. 2014.

The Lowlands newsroom model: Fieldwork notes on the position of the newspaper sub-editor.

***Journalism Studies* 15 (6): 879–897.**

Abstract

This paper sheds light on newspaper sub-editors, the "forgotten stepchildren of the newsroom" and considers their position within the larger organizational model of the newsroom. In order to explore the sub-editor's position in the news production chain, we take an ethnographic approach. We draw on participant observation in the newsrooms of a Belgian broadsheet and a broadsheet from the Netherlands. In our study of the sub-editor, we observe how at both newspapers the newsroom model differs from those previously described by Esser, and we propose the term "Lowlands newsroom model". At the same time, we demonstrate how, although the same Lowlands newsroom model is applied in both newsrooms, the spatial setting, division of workload and the sub-editor's profile impact on the sub-editor's ability to intervene in the news production process. We argue that exploring this newsroom model is necessary, not only considering the general newsroom flow, but also the much debated future of the newspaper "subber". Furthermore, we aim to open the door to future journalism studies research of the sub-editor and hope to move towards a more complete definition of the sub-editor as a—in the language of Gieber—genuine "newspaperman".

Keywords

ethnography; newspaper; newsroom model; sub-editing

Introduction

Studying journalism is a worthwhile endeavor as the news shapes our world, and the way we see it, ourselves and others (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009, 3). Just as the news foregrounds some stories and obscures others, the scope of journalism studies has been less than fully comprehensive. For one thing, when looking at the scholarship about news production processes, it is clear that journalists and editors are predominantly cast as the main "actors", while other journalism professionals are ignored. This paper will focus on a particular group of "forgotten stepchildren" (Wizda 1997, 38) in the newsroom, i.e. newspaper sub-editors. Due to the nature of the job the sub-editor is overlooked: the reporter's work is visible to the outside world, thanks to the byline.[1]

We are guided in part by claims, like the ones made by the United Kingdom's National Council for the Training of Journalists in their *Newspaper Subediting Bible*, that sub-editing is "one of the great specializations in journalism", and that sub-editors who are good at their job are "perhaps the nearest thing to what might be described as the complete journalist" (1982, 2). This implies that uncovering the sub-editor's role is bound to provide us with a better understanding of journalism as a whole. We were further encouraged to look into the sub-editor's role by newspaper accuracy research in the United States (Charnley 1936; Meyer 1989, 2004; Meyer and Kim 2005; Maier 2005, 2007), Ireland (Fox et al. 2009), the German-speaking world (Baerns 1999; Breiden 2002), and more recently Italy and Switzerland (Porlezza, Maier, and Russ-Mohl 2012) and Belgium (Bleyenberg, forthcoming). It has been documented that "the press" frequently errs and that vigilant readers find errors in at least every other news article. Readers are nevertheless hesitant about whom to hold responsible. Sub-editors are mostly overlooked, as many are unsure what their role is, "except perhaps to mess up copy or write boring/ wrong/sensational headlines", as sub-editor Charlotte Baxter wrote on *The Guardian* website on July 26, 2012.

In order to explore the sub-editor's role, we conducted fieldwork in the newsrooms of a Belgian newspaper and a newspaper in the Netherlands, both written in Dutch.[2] These newsrooms have recently become linked through a takeover by a Belgian media company.

In this study we take a close look at the larger newsroom structures in which the sub-editors operate. We will therefore introduce the concept of the "Lowlands newsroom model" to characterize the newsroom structure in Belgian and Dutch newsrooms as different from the way in which the newsrooms of German and Anglo-Saxon newspapers are organized (Esser 1998, 1999). Moreover, we will highlight differences within the Lowlands system at work in both newsrooms and demonstrate how this affects the sub-editor's position.

This paper features within a larger linguistic ethnographic study of the (textual) interventions by newspaper sub-editors (cf. Rampton et al. [2004], Creese [2008] and Blommaert and Dong [2010] for more on linguistic ethnography) and ties in with a relatively new shift in media discourse studies focusing on news production practices and their relation to text, talk and social meaning (Cotter 2010; Van Hout 2010; Jacobs and Tobback 2013). As linguistic interest in the news has long been limited to analysis of the "news product", the news production processes prior to its final materialization—be it on paper, online, on television or radio—have been ignored. However, as media linguists have come to learn from journalism scholars, it is exactly those processes which shed light on why the news is what it is, and how situated language activity in the newsrooms and contextual resources, social settings and the newsmakers themselves are related (cf. NT&T [2011] for a position paper on this new kind of media linguistics).

First, we briefly discuss previous research, and how it is complemented by the present study. Secondly, we explain our research methodology, as well as the first author's unique vantage point within the newsroom. Then, we uncover more specifics of our fieldwork and the newsrooms we took as case studies. Next, we look into the role of the sub-editor, based on interviews with key players and our newsroom observations. This is followed by a comparison of the two newspapers' newsroom models and their relation to the position of the "eindredacteur" (in Dutch), or sub-editor. Finally, we offer some conclusions.

Literature Review

The Sub-editor

When looking for a definition of the term "sub-editor", multiple journalism textbooks offer definitions of the wide range of relevant

1 We have chosen the term "sub-editor", used in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, to refer to the news workers who are the focus of this study. In the United States, however, they are called "copy editors". This article uses the word "journalist" in the British sense, to mean exclusively "reporter" or "writer."

2 After some discussion we agreed not to use the newspapers' titles.

tasks (Bowles and Borden 2010; Brooks, Pinson, and Wilson 2013; Einsohn 2011; Ellis 2001; Fellow and Clanin 2003; Russial 2003; Saller 2009; Smith and O'Connell 2007). Franklin et al. (2005) define sub-editing as the re-writing of news stories by checking them for factual errors or other legal dangers and making them fit the allocated space in a newspaper. They also refer to the sub-editor as a headline writer, and designer of page layout (329). Mencher (2007) describes them briefly, as someone who should prevent all "sloppiness" in an article, and "fix up what is obviously wrong with it" (163). Deacon, Fenton, and Bryman (1999) only mention the sub-editor as someone who writes headlines. Furthermore, they are credited for "cropping back" the article (18). Research is lacking, however, when it comes to a deeper exploration of these tasks.

Classic newsroom ethnographies (White 1950; Breed 1955; Tunstall 1971; Epstein 1973; Schlesinger 1978; Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979; Fishman 1980) have mostly put a spotlight on the journalist. This research bias towards the journalist is backed by Cushion (2008): he stated that most research published in key English-language journals on journalism studies (*Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism, Journalism Studies and Journalism Practice*) focuses on journalists, their practices and the texts they produce. Clearly, other forms of journalistic production, operating at what are looked upon as "the outskirts" of the newsroom, are neglected. Hartley (2009) argues that journalism studies have actually "fetishized" the producer–provider. He refers to the dedication of mainstream journalism studies to the "powerful" producer/publisher/provider, or supply side (318). True as this observation of media research's inclination towards the supply side may be, there are a number of contributors there whose role has yet to be explored. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009), for instance, make a case for the work of arts, music and business journalists, and features reporters when they write:

> The neglect of journalistic practices marginalized within the newsroom is particularly alarming. Research tends to overlook particular categories of news workers. It predominantly charts the professional cultures of privileged full-time news reporters over casualized, multi-skilled, and free-lance journalists, to mention just a few neglected categories. (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009, 12)

We believe the sub-editor, belonging to a category of news workers "marginalized within the newsroom", has similarly been ignored by research.

Although news production studies dating back to the 1970s have captured the newsroom goings-on in considerable detail, little in-depth analysis has been conducted concerning the sub-editing stage. Moreover, research on sub-editing has been highly nationalized. There is a decent body of work on US newspaper sub-editors. Examples are Solomon (1995), who provides a history of how the job of sub-editor developed in US newspaper newsrooms. Cook and Banks (1993) conclude how sub-editors are more likely to suffer from burnout than reporters. Together with Turner (Cook, Banks, and Turner 1993), they explore how the work environment in the newsroom affects sub-editors, and found they are significantly less satisfied. Zahler (2007) and Keith (2005a) chart how (dis) satisfied US sub-editors are with their jobs. Keith (2000, 2005b), furthermore, recognizes sub-editors' anonymity, and their struggle for respect in the newsroom. She suggests that by adopting existentialism as a "guiding moral philosophy", the sub-editor can pluck up the courage to act as a final guardian of ethical journalism and become a true "steward of good journalism" (Keith (2000, 53).

While it is common knowledge that newsrooms have dwindled in all departments, sub-editors have frequently drawn the short straw: nearly a third of sub-editors working for US daily newspapers in 2007 were no longer employed in those positions in 2013, according to an American Society of News Editors' survey of 985 publications. Sub-editors who remain on the job often find themselves, in the newspaper's bid to cut costs, in centralized "sub hubs" or handling online production. Russial (1998) emphasizes the importance of the "copy desks", in a time when several newspapers have, entirely or in part, dismantled them.

From a linguistic research angle, the sub-editor has been ignored: critical discourse analysts focusing on the ways social and political domination are reproduced in text and talk (Fairclough 1989), looking at newspaper headlines, for instance, hardly ever refer to the sub-editor as their author. When headline authorship is attributed, this usually happens in passing, and in rather tentative terms: "the newspaper", "the journalist" or simply "editorial changes" (Develotte and Rechniewski 2001), "writer" (Mahmood, Javed, and Mahmood 2011) or "headline writer" (Greco 2009; Vandenberghe, Goethals, and Jacobs, forthcoming), are but a few examples. Bell (1991, 186) points out that the title characteristically is not part of the agenda of the journalist writing the article but is the job of "a specialist in that field", a sub-editor. Kniffka (1980, as cited in Bell 1991) briefly mentions the sub-editor in a detailed comparison of leads and headlines, as does Herrera Soler (2008) in his study of metaphors in business press headlines. Dor (2003), similarly, refers in passing to "the copy editor" in his discussion of newspaper headlines as relevance optimizers, as does Shie (2011) when comparing lexical features in *New York Times* and *Times* Supplement news headlines. Although the sub-editor's input is largely overlooked, Boykoff (2008) does notice research possibilities when he states how "analyses of

headlines provide an opportunity to examine relationships between journalists (who typically write the stories) and their editors (who typically write the headlines)" (555).

The Sub-editor in the Newsroom

It is noteworthy that the focus on the relation of the newsroom space and journalistic work has been limited. This is especially true when it comes to sub-editing. Whereas the traditional centralized newsroom setting may appear somewhat anachronistic in this age of digital and networked media (Rodgers forthcoming)—it is even argued that it could be headed for extinction—sub-editing is still very much rooted in the newsroom. Tuchman (1978) was among the first to look into space as an important part of news work. She saw how the social organization of newsgathering permits certain events to be identified and reported as news, and how spatial and territorial aspects could be significant for decision-making in the newsroom. She argued that news entails two simultaneous processes of "framing" (Goffman 1974), each coming with a specific set of rules. One set, identification of a story as "hard news" or "soft news", delineates how news workers expect occurrences to unfold temporally and spatially and so establishes the sorts of work reporters (and editors) expect to do.

Researchers in media discourse have long been aware of the existence of different newsroom models: there are fundamental differences between newspapers' organizational structures, although the final product might not allude to that. Other research focused on the newsroom's historical evolution (Sanchez Aranda and Barrera 2003; Wilke 2003; Nerone and Barnhurst 2003; Wallace 2006), and its much-debated future (Duhé, Tanner, and Peterson 2006; Zhang 2012). The various geographical differences between editorial structures and work principles within newsrooms have been a research topic of some interest: Esser (1998, 1999) compared German newsrooms to their British and American counterparts. Maier (2007) gave an overview of modern newsroom models in Central European agency newsrooms (Austria, Germany and Switzerland), where "revolutionary changes" have been made through the global trend towards convergence, but also by bridging traditional barriers between departments and introducing more flexible structures. García Avilés et al. (2009) conducted a comparative study on "integrated newsrooms", combining print and online, and in some cases television and radio, in Austria, Spain and Germany. They deducted three models of newsroom convergence, ranging from "full integration", to "cross-media" and "co-ordination of isolated platforms".

Recently, more research has been conducted exploring the implications that the newsroom's spatial settings have for journalistic work. Rodgers (forthcoming) considers the relation of the newsroom and the city, drawing on an ethnography of editing work at the *Toronto Star*. He focuses on the newsroom as "the inherent milieu of editing practices" (3) and states that the principle connection of the newsroom and urban public space is through its "entanglement" with the newspaper as circulated media form: Rodgers proposes that, despite its specificity, the relationship of the newsroom and the city illustrates wider themes related to the material settings through which public life is perpetuated. Zaman (2013) also examines the newsroom as news workers' prime space of work, and zooms in on journalists' descriptions of newsrooms using "battleground" metaphors. He continues by looking into how journalists highlight the importance of centrality of location in news work in an explicit manner, which, to his mind, puts spaces of news work (i.e. location of newsroom, information or journalists) into a hierarchy and turns apparently innocent places into contested terrains and subject to the struggle of social power. He concludes that the newsroom, "always active, always working on unfolding stories, is truly a work in progress" (14).

Research Methodology

This paper's first author became increasingly aware of the lack of knowledge about —and recognition of—the sub-editor as she has been working as a freelance sub-editor for several years. Consequently, she has had first-hand experience of the impact of sub-editing on the final news product's formal features, and its content. She noticed, however, how beyond the newsroom, there was very little awareness of the job's contents. This prompted the design of the study into the sub-editor's role, from within the newsroom. Being in the newsroom and partaking in the process proved to be of utmost importance.

Newsroom ethnographies from as early as the 1970s and 1980s (Tunstall 1971; Tuchman 1972, 1978; Gans 1979; Golding and Elliott 1979; Fishman 1980; Ericson, Baranek, and Chan 1987) have demonstrated the added value of being in the field, and were successful in drawing attention to structural dimensions of news production. The newsroom is where one should be when looking into any part of the production process. An ethnographic study of sub-editors and their practice was therefore an obvious methodological choice. Anthropologist Laura Nader (2008) claimed that researchers should study "up, down and sideways simultaneously", and we have attempted to adhere to this three-way approach.

To begin with, it has been argued that jour-

nalism researchers have focused on "studying up" or engaged in "elite research" (Conti and O'Neil 2007), by "paying a disproportionate amount of attention to elite individuals, news organizations and texts" (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009, 12), reflecting the fact that studies of news organizations have mainly focused on journalism produced in large (national) television and newspaper newsrooms in elite nations. Based on our choice of newsrooms, it could be argued that we too have been susceptible to this tendency. The newsrooms selected as preferred research loci belong to two, large national broadsheets, as "It is in the big, highly-tuned newspapers that the craft of subbing is developed to the highest degree" (Sellers 1972, 2). At the same time, in focusing on the sub-editor, "laboring anonymously" (Keith 2000, 43) at "the peripheries of the newsroom" (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009, 12), we are in a way "studying down", and attempting to acknowledge an overlooked part of the news production chain. Finally, all investigations into journalism can be seen as "studying sideways" as we, the researchers, are looking into a craft not that different from our own. Plesner (2011), for instance, mentions how "familiarity with each other's professional language [makes] the borders of interviewer's and interviewee's contributions blurred" (473). In our research we "study sideways" on two levels. On the one hand, as researchers, we are investigating a profession not dissimilar to our own. On the other, it could be argued that "studying sideways" is an integral part of the first author's research stance: she has procured both "insider knowledge" as a researcher, and as a sub-editor. This way, she could simultaneously observe colleagues as a researcher, and be fully aware of the (possible) intrusiveness of an onlooker as a professional. Having "insider knowledge" could actually prove to be beneficial. Giddens (1982), for one, stated that valid descriptions of social activities presume that researchers possess those skills necessary to participate in the activities described:

> I have accepted that it is right to say that the condition of generating descriptions of social activity is being able in principle to participate in it. It involves "mutual knowledge," shared by observer and participants whose action constitutes and reconstitutes the social world. (Giddens 1982, 15)

Being a sub-editor, already possessing the necessary skills and sharing (professional) knowledge, allowed the first author to participate quickly to a high degree in newsroom activities, to "make the invisible visible" (Cottle 2007, 5).

Into the Field

Because of the first author's professional link, fieldwork was initially conducted at a Belgian broadsheet. This independent and progressive newspaper has its headquarters in Brussels, and, according to its publisher's website, is aimed at "a young and highly educated audience looking for quality reporting, background information and interpretation of the news". Recent figures show it has a circulation of 54,387 (print).[3]

In a later stage of the study, for comparative purposes, the first author also visited the newsroom of the Dutch leading center-left national daily morning newspaper. Its headquarters are in Amsterdam and the paper currently has a circulation of 232,523 (print). The paper is known as a progressive quality paper targeting a wide audience.

The two newspapers in this study have become closely linked following the acquisition of the Dutch newspaper in 2009 by a Belgian publishing house. For decades, it had been a leading newspaper publisher in Belgium, where it currently owns three Dutch-language and one French-language newspaper. In the Netherlands it now publishes four major newspapers. The arrival of the Belgian publisher's in 2009 was met with mixed feelings in the Netherlands. According to Sanders (2012) because it resulted in a considerable number of Dutch layoffs, mostly among journalists, and a growing "interference" by shareholders in the newsroom, which "could prove to be problematic for journalistic independence" (98).

The takeover and ensuing "closeness" between the now "sister papers" manifests itself not only on a managerial level, but also in the newsroom: employees from both papers visit each other's newsrooms, temporarily set up camp at, or are actually employed by the other paper. Moreover, while internationally the concept of "convergence" is introduced in the newsroom, the publishing house implemented a new "de-converged" model, where print and online now have their own newsroom with specific journalistic standards and values. Newspaper sub-editors are therefore not involved in online production. Tameling and Broersma (2013) termed the new model "horizontal convergence" as the publisher clusters the different outlets (newspapers and websites) of its various Dutch and Belgian brands.[4]

Since the takeover, both the publisher's Dutch and Belgian newspapers have adopted the Quark Publishing System ("QPS")—a "col-

3 In Belgium, CIM (Centre for Information about the Media) collects and publishes data about media distribution. It takes into account the circulation of newspapers and magazines, as well as charting the range of TV, radio, the internet and cinema. HOI, the Institute for Media Auditing, is the Dutch counterpart.

4 At the Belgian newspaper consecutive changes at the top brought along another shift: the online newsroom is now physically integrated in the print newsroom. Print and online remain separate disciplines; the print journalist is not charged with multimedia tasks.

laborative workflow management system" which allows the journalists, editors-in-chief, layout sub-editors and sub-editors to manage the process by which the publications are created, and track the flow of created articles through the various phases of editing, review, combination, layout and printing. This system facilitates the exchange of content, and the Belgian and Dutch newspapers in this study are enabled to share articles on a daily basis.

From June 2012 to January 2013 the first author spent over 300 hours as a participant observer in the papers' newsrooms, of which 265 hours were in the Belgian and 35 hours in the Dutch newsroom.[5]

She performed the tasks of a sub-editor, while observing news processes, and attending daily storyboard meetings. Besides field notes, she collected relevant written materials, including email correspondence, newspaper "budgets" and memos. Our data consist of audio-recordings of storyboard meetings, and computer screen shots taken at various stages during the articles' production. Apart from having daily informal talks with sub-editors, journalists and the layout sub-editors, she also conducted 17 semi-structured in-depth interviews with news workers employed at several levels of the news organization: from editors-in-chief to the sub-editors, layout sub-editors and journalists.[6]

Findings and Discussion

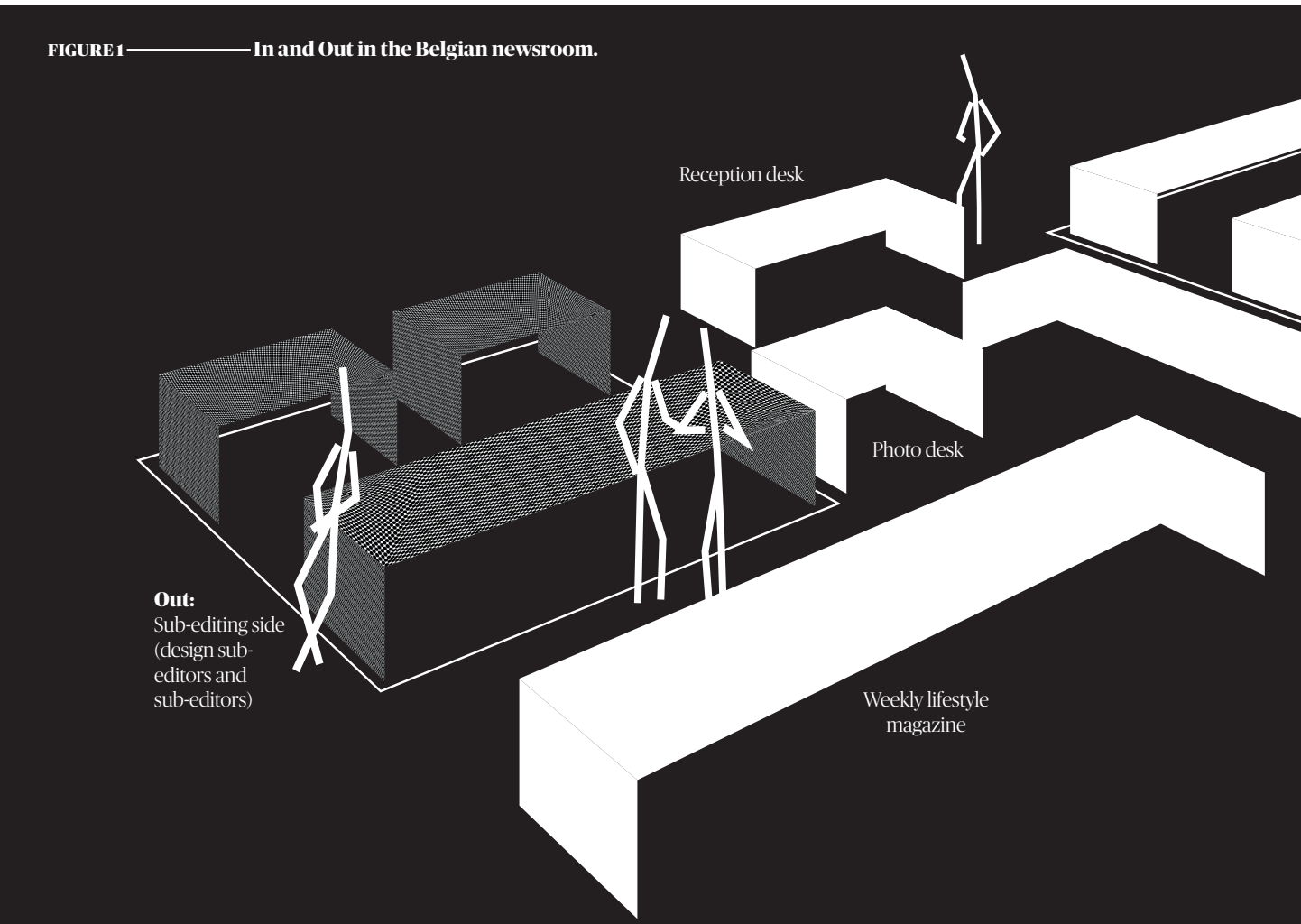
Based on our findings in the interviews and on the newsroom floor, we were able to get a more complete picture of the (role of the) sub-editor. With this knowledge, and focusing on the sub-editor's position in the news production process, we will look into the newsroom organization of the Belgian newspaper; we then will discuss the Dutch newsroom model and how it is organized differently from its Belgian counterpart and, finally, we will discuss some of the consequences these differences have on the sub-editor ('s work).

Newsroom Organization: A Belgian Newsroom

Once we had entered the Belgian newsroom, in our aim to chart the sub-editor's role, place and interventions in the news production process, we observed two things: first of all, a strict division of labor termed "In/Out". Secondly, we noticed a new Dutch presence in the newsroom.

In/Out is essentially a way in which to organize the newsroom (*see* **FIGURE 1**). One of the

FIGURE 1 —— **In and Out in the Belgian newsroom.**



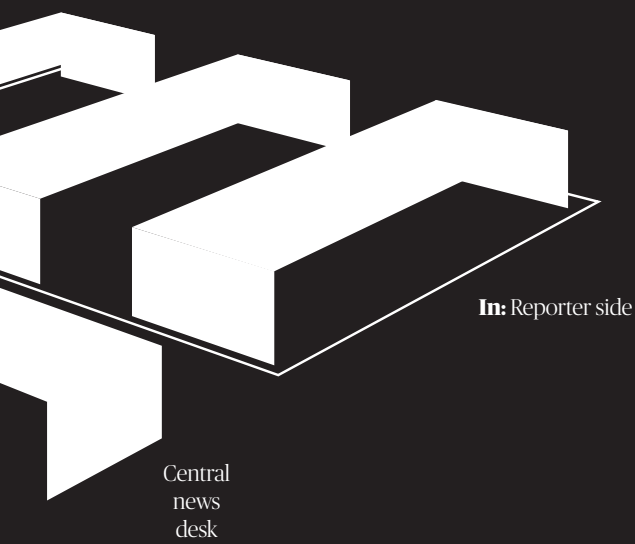
sub-editing chiefs termed it "a way to organize your creativity and to optimize workflow". The most important divide within any newsroom is that between the "news gatherers" (i.e. the general reporters and specialists) and the "news processors" (i.e. the sub-editors and the layout sub-editors).[7]

Tunstall (1971) wrote that this strict divide "is the major internal functioning boundary within the occupation" (30). According to a sub-editing chief, In/Out actually divides the newsroom into "two completely different worlds"; in the Belgian newsroom, there is a physical divide between the journalists (In), as they are placed on the far left of the newsroom, and the sub-editors/layout sub-editors (Out) who are seated on the far right of the newsroom. The room is cut in half by the central news desk at which the heads of all the newspaper's sections and the editor(s)-in-chief are seated. In the morning, articles are started on the In side and are then passed on to the Out side, via the central news desk. One sub-editing chief compared them to "rough diamonds", being fed through and processed by the sub-editing funnel. Once the boundary to Out is crossed, stories are hardly ever sent back to the In side, despite the sub-editors' claims in the interviews. Although they stated repeatedly how confronting a journalist with a (finished) story that did not comply with standards is a must, during our fieldwork this rarely happened.[8]

Sub-editors did approach reporters when it came to timing issues or issues of clarity. The articles finally appear at the other end by the time the newspaper has to be sent to the printer's at about 11 pm. From our observations, we noticed that the deadline is considered more of a guideline than an absolute cutoff point.

Back in the early 1990s, the Belgian owner of the paper introduced In/Out at the largest Belgian tabloid newspaper. The system has been jokingly referred to as "The Gospel" (Oremus 2009, 16) in the newsrooms of several other papers belonging to the publishing house, where the model had been implemented.

Esser (1998) discussed two ways in which a newsroom can be organized: the German model, on the one hand, and the Anglo-Saxon model, on the other. These operate quite differently: whereas British and American newsrooms favor centralized newsrooms with a high division of labor, German newspapers tend to decentralize their work by maintaining many branch offices completing various sections of the newspapers. Moreover, employees in German newsrooms tend to have more responsibilities than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts: "multifunctionality" versus division of labor (381). In Germany, a "Redakteur" will be involved in the entire production process: the "Redakteur" will collect and select information, even pictures, write the actual piece and captions, proofread the article,



5

The reason why significantly more time was spent in the Belgian newsroom has to do with the fact that the Belgian newspaper was the primary site for the first author's broader research project. We believe that for the purposes of this paper, this difference can be overlooked, as the time spent in the Dutch newsroom was meant as a focused ethnography to address the specific research questions for this individual paper only.

6

Initially, our research had the full cooperation of the management of both papers: access to the newsrooms, meetings and documents was allowed without restrictions. Over the course of this study, boundaries have grown narrower. Times are hard for written media and both in Belgium and the Netherlands magazines and newspapers have seen sales figures plummet. Recently, this resulted in far-reaching changes in the Belgian newspaper's organization. Changes at the top in 2012 and 2013 have had repercussions for staff on the newsroom floor, resulting in a "newsroom in turmoil", reminiscent of a much protested termination of 13 news workers in 2009 (six journalists, three sub-editors, two layout sub-editors and two photo desk employees).Two others left voluntarily. As the (three) newly appointed editors-in-chief were working towards a fresh start in the autumn of 2013, full access to the first author was discontinued indefinitely. She, however, continues to work as a sub-editor.

7

We must mention that, in accordance with Russial's (2009) findings, the sub-editors in our study were not involved with the production of online news.

8

We will look into this further. For now, we can state that deadlines and newsroom conventions play a part.

be occupied with page layout, and will coordinate all these activities. In British and American newsrooms, however, employees will be specialized, and asked to zoom in on one aspect.

In/Out can be placed roughly in the middle of the continuum described by Esser. However, the newsroom model we observed is closer in nature to the Anglo-Saxon system than its German counterpart. For the purposes of this article, we propose "Lowlands newsroom model" as a label, differentiating it from the Anglo-Saxon and German models. The Belgian newsroom was centralized and open-plan, as the Anglo-Saxon newsrooms tend to be. The sub-editors we observed did perform a distinct and rather specialized job, but were more involved in the "newspaper-making" process than their Anglo-Saxon colleagues. Although they are not as "multifunctional" as the German "Redakteur", they are charged with more responsibilities than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts.

During the time spent in the Belgian newsroom, a new presence could be discerned on the shop floor. As the newspaper had been plagued by management changes and mass layoffs over the past few years, unfamiliar faces were not a novelty. However, an increasing number of Dutch journalists and chiefs regularly visited the Belgian newsroom, articles written by Dutch reporters featured more often, workshops were being taught by Dutch newsroom professionals, and even senior positions were filled by Dutch colleagues. This followed the 2009 acquisition by a Belgian publishing house of the Dutch newspaper featured in this study, bringing with it the mentioned managerial and editorial changes.

When discussing the In/Out system during interviews, one sub-editing chief who had recently joined the Belgian newspaper after working at the Dutch daily in our study for 28 years, made looking more closely into the model of the "sister newsroom" seem crucial when he said: "In all my years at [the Dutch daily] I missed my deadline once, in my few months at [the Belgian daily] I made my deadline once". He continued that, even though both newspapers use In/Out, there are "huge differences" between the functioning of both newsrooms.

Further questioning uncovered that, although the Dutch newspaper had adopted the (Belgian) In/Out system relatively recently, they were somehow able to implement it more successfully, as it was claimed the daily battle with the deadline was won more frequently. Prompted by these comments, and for the purpose of comparison, we decided to include the Dutch newsroom in our study of the sub-editor.

Differences Between the Belgian and Dutch Lowlands Newsroom Model

Upon entering the Dutch newsroom, we were confronted with the same Lowlands newsroom model as at its Belgian counterpart. In fact, back in 2006, in his attempt to find a better organizational structure for his newsroom, one of the Dutch newspapers' sub-editing chiefs encountered the Belgian In/Out system. The system appeared both effective and "transparent". At this point in time, talks about the takeover by the Belgian publishing house had not yet begun. Of course, the takeover facilitated visits to the Belgian newsroom to experience the system at work. The Dutch newspaper could benefit from the knowledge and experience of the Belgian team. It was introduced in several stages at the Dutch newspaper: at first, the National News and General Reporting sections, and the newsroom in The Hague, the political heart of the Netherlands, started using it. As soon as the system proved to be successful, the Foreign Affairs and the Business News desks followed. The transition went rather smoothly, although a Dutch sub-editing chief added the rules of the systems should be respected: "If you apply it in a strict way, the benefits you will reap are myriad". At the moment the Dutch newspaper changed to a tabloid size in 2010, the In/Out system was fully introduced.

In what follows we shall discuss a number of what the sub-editing chief termed "huge dif-

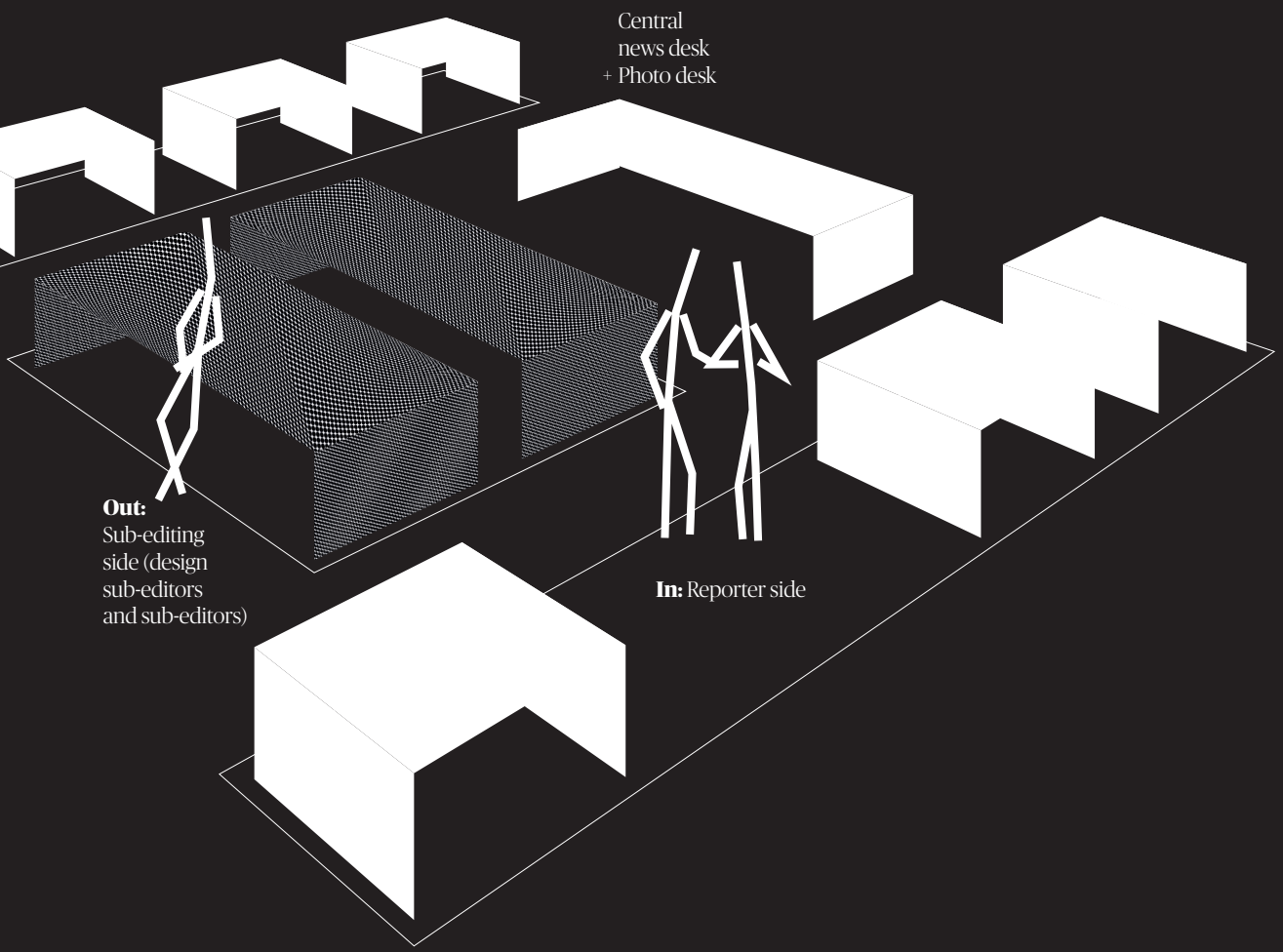
ferences" in both newsrooms, concerning the organizational structure, workload and the sub-editor's profile.

Newsroom layout

At both newspapers, at the time of our observations in 2012 the editorial floor was roughly divided into two parts, not only organizationally, but also physically. The In/Out system was thus reflected on both those levels. At the Belgian newspaper, the newsroom was basically divided into two halves, with In and Out each at opposite sides of the rectangular newsroom, separated in the middle by the central news desk, headed by the editors-in-chief and the Heads in charge of every news section. As articles were passed on from journalists to sub-editors and layout sub-editors they literally and figuratively went through the editorial filter, represented by the news desk. At the Dutch newspaper, however, the sub-editors' and layout sub-editors' desks (Out) were centrally located in the newsroom, next to the central news desk (*see* **FIGURE 2**). The desks belonging to all other sections (Internal Affairs, Politics, Foreign Affairs, Economics, Sports, the Opinions section, Science, i.e. In), were spread around the edges of the rectangular room. Each section consisted of a number of desks set up in rows, all directed towards the center of the room, where the central news desk and the Out side were situated. The sub-editors, "almost as invisible in the newsroom ... as they are to readers" (Keith 2000, 43), were thus made hard to overlook.

Because of the sub-editors' physical proximity to the journalists, communication was clearly facilitated. A sub-editing chief who worked at both the Dutch and the Belgian newspapers stated that although "In and Out are worlds apart, close communication is key; there is still need for close cooperation between sub-editor and journalist". It is exactly communication which seemed to be somewhat hindered in the Belgian newsroom. One could claim that because of the harsh physical divide between the journalists (In), and the sub-editors/layout sub-editors (Out), news workers from either side were not as likely to walk over and discuss certain items. In the Dutch newsroom, the physical set-up actually encouraged this. Observations taught us how, because of newsroom layout, it was in fact accomplished far more easily. A Dutch sub-editor stated: "I start every working day by walking over to

TABLE 2 **In and Out in the Dutch newsroom.**



every news desk, to discuss what's up", something which we never witnessed in the Belgian newsroom. Our observations also revealed how, because of the physical closeness in the Dutch newsroom, employees from both sides actually seemed to be better acquainted. A former Dutch sub-editing chief admitted to being "shocked" after discovering how in the Belgian newsroom people from the In and Out sides did not even know each other's first names.

The sub-editors' central location in the newsroom also underscored how sub-editors and reporters have a different "mission statement". A Dutch sub-editing chief stated that in the Dutch newsroom, there was "a more rigid separation of disciplines", and that In and Out featured "totally different professions". The sub-editor's task as "paper maker" was highlighted in the Dutch newsroom by the sub-editor being placed at the heart of the busy newsroom. The former sub-editing chief continued that in Belgium there is a similar (physical and professional) divide between In and Out, except when it comes to the headlines. He stated that "the journalist will more often 'interfere' in the Out-side", and is apparently bothered with the sub-editor's job, which to him seems "very odd".

Workload

In the Dutch newsroom we observed how each sub-editor was paired up with a layout sub-editor, usually for the entire day. Both were, as a team, responsible for a spread, i.e. two facing pages, often with related matter extending across the fold.

Contrary to most mid-sized and large US papers, where the unit assignment is the story, in the Belgian newsroom each sub-editor was assigned up to eight pages, often teaming up with several layout sub-editors. One Dutch former sub-editing chief admitted that "this is a very heavy workload". He compared this to the Dutch newspaper, which is printed in tabloid format, "smaller, so fewer letters, less text", where sub-editors were assigned a maximum of four pages. The Belgian paper is printed in Berliner format, a format with pages normally measuring about 315 × 470 mm (12.4 × 18.5 inches). The Berliner format is slightly taller and wider than the tabloid format, and is both narrower and shorter than the broadsheet format. He concluded: "I actually think it's [the workload] too heavy here [Belgium]".

Moreover, in the Dutch newsroom, an additional proofreader is part of the Out team. Whereas the sub-editor focuses on the editing job on a computer screen, the proofreader will only check print-outs for spelling mistakes and layout inconsistencies. A Dutch sub-editing chief commented how "Experience has taught us that on the print one can discover up to dozens of mistakes". In the Belgian newsroom, proofreading their own pages on paper was also included in the sub-editor's job description. Recently, however, sub-editors have been tasked with proofreading the print-outs of pages edited by their colleagues. In case of errors, they are asked to check in with the sub-editing chief, who will then decide whether they are "important" enough for the page to be sent to the printer once more. This proved successful, as not only more mistakes have been caught, but in the rush to make a deadline, some of the pressure has been taken off the sub-editor.

Sub-editor profile

Our time spent in the Dutch newsroom actually revealed that the profile of a sub-editor is somewhat different to what we had previously experienced in the Belgian one. At the Dutch newspaper it is exceptional for sub-editors not to write or have written themselves. The editors-in-chief are aware of the lack of appreciation for the job, but the interviews revealed there is a system in place where, every couple of years, sub-editors can go back to full-time reporting, should they choose to do so. The previous job experience explains the noticeable seniority of the Dutch sub-editors, in contrast to the junior staffers in the Belgian newsroom's Out side; a much larger proportion has recently graduated from university/college and they generally indicated how they do not see themselves employed as sub-editors for very long. A sub-editor in the Belgian newsroom stated that "a good sub-editor" should have the "authority to tell a journalist what needs to be altered, or what just isn't good enough", and how the sub-editor should "be in a position to be able to rectify" an article. Our fieldwork showed, however, how the sub-editors' youth and relative lack of experience make exercising authority over senior colleagues at the In side challenging.

The sub-editors in the Netherlands were often more senior. Most of them could look back on a full career, and had already proven to be valuable members of the reporting staff. The newsroom juniors most often took on the reporter role. From our observations, it seems that, in the Belgian newsroom, this is the other way around. A chief sub-editor termed this an "odd phenomenon", which many newspapers in the Low Countries "are trying to get rid of". But "for some reason" making the job of sub-editor attractive enough to the seniors has proved unsuccessful. When asked why this job is unattractive, lack of appreciation and long, late hours were mentioned first.

Since 2010, the Dutch newspaper has changed the sub-editing shift from solely night shifts to more day shifts. Before, some sub-editors would combine their night-time sub-editing with day-time reporting. The reporter-past of some of these Dutch sub-editors was key in the spreads they were assigned. One of the sub-editing chiefs stated: "[X] used to work at the Economics desk, so it's common sense for me to assign him with the economics pages. The same is true for [X2] and the Sports section." One of the consequences we observed

was that Dutch sub-editors are more outspoken about the content of the stories than their Belgian counterparts, both in the story meeting at the start of their shifts, and during the rest of the working day.

Although voicing opinions and engaging in dialogue with the In side seems to happen more easily in the Dutch newsroom, our informants on both sides insist there is still a long way to go. Sub-editing chiefs from both Flemish and Dutch sides commented: "The authority of the sub-editors should be made bigger; this is the only way to make a decent newspaper" and "The power should gravitate to the Out-side".

Conclusion

In this paper, based on fieldwork findings in two newsrooms, and taking our cue from Esser, we link the so-far understudied role of newspaper sub-editors to the spatial settings of their workplace, the newsroom. This paper counts as a first step in a larger study of the so-called "semi-ghost to assist the inarticulate and illiterate" (Barzun 1986), the sub-editor. Our aim is to shed light on this news worker, who is an undisputed crucial cog in the newsroom machine, but who has been largely overlooked by the reader, by the newsroom and in journalism studies research.

In order to explore sub-editors' role in the news production process and their place in the newsroom, we adopted an ethnographic approach. We based our research on fieldwork conducted at two newsrooms, belonging to a Belgian and a Dutch daily newspaper. The first author took on the role of participant observer, bringing to that role her professional experience as a sub-editor. This additional knowledge proved to bring insights about news worker interaction, job satisfaction and the sub-editor's position within the dynamic constellation of the newsroom which would not have been attained otherwise.

In this paper we have shown how the sub-editor's modus operandi is largely determined by the model in place in the newsroom, including its spatial layout. We have proposed the term "Lowlands newsroom model" to describe the model we encountered in the Belgian and Dutch newsrooms, and have highlighted some of the differences between this model and the ones in Germany and the United Kingdom described by Esser.

From this first study we can draw conclusions for both journalistic practice and journalism studies research. When looking at the Lowlands newsroom model we observed that the Dutch version demonstrates better sub-editing practice in terms of timing, communication and visibility because of newsroom layout, division of workload and a varied sub-editor profile. Overall, it seems that—for the time being—the sub-editor's future in Belgium and the Netherlands seems less at stake than is the case in the United Kingdom and United States. The sub-editor is still firmly rooted in the newsroom and proves to be an important player there.

We hope this study opens the door to further research on the sub-editorial role, whether on their place in the news production process, the (linguistic) impact of their editorial interventions, or the future of their profession, in an age of economic recession and the rise of digital media.

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The sub-editing stage of newswriting

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Vandendaele, Astrid, Ludovic De Cuypere, and Ellen Van Praet. 2015.

Beyond ‘trimming the fat’: The sub-editing stage of newswriting.

***Written Communication* 32 (4): 368–395.**

Abstract

Thus far, professional editing has not been researched extensively in writing research. This article zooms in on sub-editing in newswriting as a form of professional editing, addressing three research questions: (a) What are the ways in which a news article's text is altered?, (b) Are some types of news article altered more significantly than others?, and (c) Are certain news article sections more prone to alterations? Merging the contextualized insights of fieldwork with a corpus-based discourse analytic research perspective, we trace the differences (viz. additions, deletions, translocations, replacements) between the "initial" (right before sub-editing) and "final" (published) version of six different types of news article, (frontpage, headline, long, medium, short, and news wire article) in a corpus sample of 30 broadsheet articles. Our findings are first that—contrary to popular belief that sub- editors mainly "hack away" at news stories, or merely "trim the fat"— additions prevail. Second, we found that most interventions occur in high-stakes articles. Third, we discovered the largest number of interventions in the "entry points" of an article, that is, where—according to eye-tracking research—readers stop scanning and start reading. We discuss our findings in the light of training for professional newswriters.

Keywords

writing processes, professional editing, journalism, news discourse, linguistic ethnography, eye-tracking research

Within writing studies extensive research has been done on editing and revision (See e.g. Allal, Chanquoy, & Largy, 2004; Bisaillon, 2007; Hacker, Plumb, Butterfield, Quathamer, & Heineken, 1994; Hayes, Flower, Schriver, Stratman, & Carey, 1987) and often it is defined as a subprocess of writing (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001; Fitzgerald, 1987; Laflamme, 2007; Rijlaarsdam, Couzijn, & van den Bergh, 2004). However, thus far, very few studies have addressed professional editing, "an activity that consists in comprehending and evaluating a text written by a given author and in making modifications to this text in accordance with the assignment or mandate given by a client" (Bisaillon, 2005, p. 4, translation).

Professional sub-editing involves many aspects of revision and editing (See Rohman's, 1965, prewrite/write/re-write model; Britton et al., 1975). During the construction of a news article, for instance, there are in fact multiple stages of revision (Allal et al., 2004), and multiple players are involved (Myhill & Jones, 2007): Rather than an end-of-the-line repair practice, it is a continuous process of "re-vision" or "re-seeing" (Sommers, 1980).

Recent studies (Bisaillon, 2007; Rijlaarsdam et al., 2004) have shown the need for more research on professional editing in various contexts, since "only then will we have a proper description of the realities of the profession in all their fullness and complexity" (Bisaillon, 2007, p. 319). Relying on both fieldwork (participant observation, interviews) and quantitative analysis of a corpus of 30 articles, it is our aim in this article to better understand the contribution of the sub-editor in the newswriting process,[1] and investigate the sub-editing phase, at the "periphery" of "journalistic institutionalized space" (Charron, Damian-Gaillard, & Travancas, 2014). In particular, we answer the following research questions:

1. **What are the ways in which a news article's text is altered?**
2. **When we consider various types of news article, are some altered more significantly?**
3. **When looking at the structure of an article, are certain sections more prone to alterations?**

In order to tackle our research questions, we zoom in on the micro-level discursive practices of newspaper sub-editors when they revise news articles before publication. Entering the newsroom of a large Belgian Dutch-language newspaper, we compare a news article's "initial" version, that is, the version of the article that has been officially cleared by a desk chief to be sub-edited, to its "final" version, that is, the article as it appears in the newspaper.

First, in the second section we provide a concise overview of how sub-editing has and has not been dealt with in past news media and writing research. Next, in the third section we illuminate how we selected and collected our data. We proceed by explaining our coding system in the fourth section. The fifth section focuses on three main findings based on the corpus analysis. We discuss these findings more profoundly in the sixth section. Finally, in seventh section, we come to a number of conclusions and raise some points for further discussion.

With this first step in the direction of a more complete understanding of professional sub-editing, we disclose how sub-editors go "beyond trimming the fat" of an article and are an indispensable part of the newswriting process. Moreover, we highlight the need for further research on the newspaper sub-editor, and the relevant consequences for students of (news)writing.

Sub-editing: Underexposed in Research

Journalistic practice embodies "a broad range of activities" (Zelizer & Allan, 2010, pp. 62-63), including research, sourcing, analyzing, judging, writing, and so on. Moreover, the activity of newswriting is seldom a solo performance (Bell, 1991). Rather, a myriad of people and practices play their part. Just as revision is a crucial part of the writing process (Allal & Chanquoy, 2004)—after all, "writing is rewriting" (Murray, 1978)—so too is sub-editing, and hence the sub-editors are an essential component of newswriting. However, in various disciplines related to the study of news making and writing, sub-editing has fallen between the cracks.

Scholarship about news media tends to cast journalists as the main "actors," while overlooking other journalism professionals. Charron et al. (2014) clearly state this when they write,

> journalism is a public job that ostensibly belongs (from byline to celebrity) to reporters. It's their business. The others who collaborate on this work, but do not sign or publish (technical and service personnel, management, researchers, archivists, graphic artists, sales agents, etc.) remain in the shadows. (p. 11)

One of those often-overlooked cogs in the process of newswriting is the sub-editor, as it is the

1 Only on a few occasions the work of the sub-editor is recognized: Dahl (2015), when discussing news writers' framing of science reports, highlights how the "headline producer"—as the sub-editor is referred to in this study—might cause a different frame to be exploited in headline/lead than in the body of the text. Consequently, readers may have to negotiate potentially diverging messages. Ross (2013), in his study on commonplaces of environmental rhetoric, stipulates how each headline alone tells a story, and encourages further examination of sets of headlines, but he does not mention the sub-editor who creates them.

journalists who are credited—not them. Wizda (1997, p. 38) refers to newspaper sub-editors as "the often forgotten stepchildren of the newsroom," whereas Ellis (2001, p. xiii) calls them the newspaper's "unsung 'brain trusts.'" Indeed, along with the layout designers, sub-editors belong to the backstage team. They are seen as "production journalists," seeing they work on a story that is written, selected, and in the queue to be sent off to the printer.

Recently, there has been a shift toward investigating the shady areas of newswriting within media linguistics (NT&T, 2011). For instance, it is acknowledged that headlines (and leads) are typically produced not by the journalist, but by a sub-editor (Bell, 1991; Cotter, 2010). Relying in part on the computer-assisted writing process analysis method of keystroke logging (Leijten & Van Waes, 2013), Van Hout and Jacobs (2008) analyzed an individual business journalist's writing practices. Van Praet and Van Hout (2011) studied the backstage happenings in editorial meetings. Van Hout (in press), Perrin (2013), Cotter (2010), and Burger (2006) took an all-encompassing view on the newsroom, taking those "on the periphery" into account. Although recognizing the impact of the sub-editor, little detailed research has been done on the sub-editor and his work.

Consumption of newswriting—that is, focus on those on the other end of the writing process spectrum, the readers—has been dealt with rather elaborately in research. Eye-tracking research has provided us with exhaustive insights into the readers' interaction with a variety of media stimuli and their priorities with respect to text. Moreover, this type of research helps to describe the distribution of the readers' attention, be it in print or in a digital publication (Garcia & Stark, 1991; Hansen, 1994; Holmqvist & Wartenberg, 2005; Holsanova, Rahm, & Holmqvist, 2006; Lewenstein, Edwards, Tatar, & DeVigal, 2000; Outing & Ruel, 2004; Stenfors, Morén, & Balkenius, 2003). With the exception of Wartenberg and Holmqvist (2004), this reception-oriented approach again overlooks the sub-editing stage. The present study aims to take a first step in filling this void.

Data Collection —Entering the Newsroom

Since sub-editing is still very much rooted in the newsroom we observed (Vandendaele & Jacobs, 2013), it is the location par excellence to study the daily practices of newspaper staff. Our data were drawn from a period of fieldwork at a large Belgian Dutch-language broadsheet newspaper in spring 2013.[2] During a first phase of data collection, we documented the news production process by means of field notes and semistructured interviews (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). In a second phase, we were able to source the articles in their various versions. In total, our ethnographic data set comprises field notes, 5 video/audio recordings of daily story meetings, and 23 interviews with 11 sub-editors, 7 journalists, and 5 other newsroom professionals (editors-in-chief, desk chiefs, layout editors). Collecting empirical evidence and additional materials from the newsroom, observing newsroom interactions, participating in day-to-day journalistic practices, and generally being part of making the news helped us gain insights into the writing process we could not have attained otherwise. Moreover, the added dimension of the first author's journalistic background proved to be most beneficial for this article, especially when it came to the all-important issue of access.

During the second phase of data collection in fall 2013,[3] we focused on gathering a corpus of articles. We were granted permission to explore the Quark Publishing System (QPS), a collaborative workflow management system used in this particular newsroom. It allows the creators of large publications to manage the publication process and to track the flow of materials through the various phases of creation, editing, review, combination, and, finally, printing. Using this software, we were able to gather a corpus of 30 articles in various phases of production. Since we are interested in the changes a news text undergoes in the sub-editing stage, we decided to focus on the articles' initial versions, that is, the text as it is handed over by the journalist to the sub-editors (after the writing stage in Rohman's, 1965, terms), and their final versions, that is, the text as it was published (after the re-writing stage; cf. Rohman, 1965).

This newspaper organizes articles according to several "types," based on genre, topic, and design.[4] For the purpose of this study, we decided to focus on news articles taken from the first 12 pages of the newspaper. Not only do the articles in this segment contain the actual (hard) news stories, they are mostly produced in-house. Other segments of the newspaper contain more stories produced by occasional stringers/freelance journalists, or stories that have been translated from foreign press (agencies). From that initial section we took six types of news article into consideration.

Our categorization of those six types was

2 The first author has been working as a freelance sub-editor at this newspaper since late 2007. We first did fieldwork in May 2013.

3 We collected our corpus in October and November 2013.

4 Other types of articles featured in this particular newspaper are columns, editorials, op-eds, feature articles, and interviews.

guided wholly by fieldwork of the first author: By attending daily story meetings and taking part in the sub-editing process herself, she was introduced to the news article typology at work in this newsroom. The terms we use to label the different article types are embedded in the sub-editors' and the layout designers' everyday vernacular. They not only are used to communicate among the news workers about news articles, but also are utilized in the so-called budget, that is, the constantly updated document stating the (preliminary) contents of the newspaper. We also noted these categorizations were used when addressing journalists about the length of an article; at times this needed to be altered because of breaking news, lack of space, or an unforeseen gap. For our analysis, we fine-tuned the newsroom's emic categories adding objective characteristics such as length and the articles' placement on the page.

TABLE 1 outlines the six news article types that we examine in this article.

We randomly selected five articles for each of those six types. From QPS, we then downloaded the "initial" versions (with a total of 11,332 words), that is, the versions ready to be worked on by the designated sub-editor and layout editor, and the "final" versions (with a total of 11,079 words; *See* **TABLE 2**).

TABLE 1 — Six Types of News Articles.

1. Front-page news article	Article that features prominently on page 1. Accompanied by a visual (picture, graph, map) and one or more quotes. These stories contain important (breaking) news about world or local affairs. Could also contain a "scoop," i.e., an exclusive news story (acquired by luck/initiative) before a competitor. Length varies according to visual chosen, urgency, etc.
2. Headline news article	Article containing basic news reporting, explaining the who, what, when, where, and why of noteworthy items. Its length varies between 570 and 820 words.[a] Generally news as it occurs, covered by a staff writer, produced in-house. Usually appears at the top of the page. Often accompanied by a visual (picture, graph, map) and a quote.
3. Long news article	News article, with length varying between 430 and 570 words, which contains (national) news that is topical, but does not require a more lengthy treatment. Generally produced in-house. May have a visual or quote. Usually appears at the middle or bottom of a page
4. Medium news article	Article containing basic news reporting, explaining the who, what, when, where, and why of noteworthy items. Its length varies between 310 and 370 words. Generally produced in-house. Usually appears at the middle or bottom of a page. Can be accompanied by a visual (picture, graph, map) and/or a quote.
5. Short news article	Brief article, with length varying between 150 and 260 words, which contains (local/national) news that is topical, but does not require a more lengthy treatment (can be because it is breaking news, i.e., little was known before the deadline). No quote, but can occasionally contain a visual. Produced in-house.
6. News wire article	Brief article, with length varying between 100 and 150 words, which contains (local/national) news that is topical, but does not require a more lengthy treatment (can be because it is breaking news, i.e., little was known before the deadline). No quote, but can occasionally contain a visual. Based on articles produced by Belga News Agency, Belgium's largest press agency.

a *The word counts cited are based on the lengths of the articles in our corpus.*

TABLE 2 — Word Count Initial Version per News Article Type (5 Articles per Genre).

TYPE	WORD COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Front-page news article	1,636	14
Headline news article	3,267	29
Long news article	2,618	23
Medium news article	1,763	16
Short news article	1,160	10
News wire article	888	8
Total initial number of words	11,332	100

Coding Process

For each article, we annotated its type, the number of the page it appeared on, the date on which it was published, and its version numbers.[5] The word count for both the initial and final versions was also added.[6] Next, we broke the articles up into "transformation units" (TUs).[7] The TU could be a single word or a phrase (e.g., a byline or a headline), but might as well be a clause or a sentence (e.g., within the article's body text). Following this, every TU was given a unique identification number. We also coded whether the TUs were (part of) a quote or not. We then identified where in the article's structure each TU appeared. We look at these structural elements as the "building blocks" of the article, as they both function as the foundation (body text) that keeps the article upright and the "embellishments" (quote, captions) that make the article appealing *(See* **TABLE 3***)*.

TABLE 3 — A News Article's Building Blocks.

Headline	Attention-grabbing phrase at the top of the article
Subheader	More explanatory headline, containing information that is not given in the headline
Byline	Journalist's name
Location	Where the article was produced, i.e., "Brussels" in most cases
Lead	Introductory section of a news story, usually containing who, what, where, when, and why
Body text	Main part of the news story
Subtitle	Very short, and often enticing phrases, giving structure to the body text; also there to allow the reader to briefly pause in a long text
Quote	Streamer, the main protagonist/the author of the news story is quoted
Quote name	Person quoted (often the story's main protagonist)/the author of the news story is labeled
Quote job	Person quoted (often the story's main protagonist)/the author of the news story is labeled
Page reference	Mostly added to a front-page news article to refer the reader to a more elaborate treatment of the topic (in a different segment) in the newspaper; reference may also be made to the newspaper's website, or the opinion pages (containing experts' views and readers' letters)
Photo caption	If a graph or picture is included, this is elucidated by means of an explanatory sentence
Photo credit	If a graph or picture is included, this is attributed to the photographer/artist/news agency by means of a credit
Credit	Shorter articles are ended with a short credit, usually two or three letters in between brackets, identifying the author
Bulleted fact boxes	May contain anything from a summary, a timeline, a website address, a location, a date, information about a book release, etc.; sometimes in a little information block

5

The final version number of an article in this particular corpus ran up to 17; that is, 17 revisions were made to one single article before it was published.

6

We also added information about the journalist (type of employment: freelance/ full-time, duration of employment: junior/senior), the sub-editor (freelance/full-time, junior/senior), and the layout editor (freelance/full-time, junior/senior). Furthermore, we indicated whether each news article contained a picture, illustration, or graph. This information will be used in a follow-up study.

7

We took our cue from Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), and their use of the term translation unit, that is, "the smallest segment of the utterance whose signs are linked in such a way that they should not be translated individually" (p. 352).

TABLE 4 — Intervention Types.

TRANSFORMATION UNIT	INTERVENTION TYPE
A character/word/phrase/clause is added to the initial version of the article	**Addition**
1a. Vandaag kan immers iedereen, ook een historicus, zich psychotherapeut noemen en mensen behandelen. [Indeed, nowadays anyone, including a historian, can call himself or herself a psychotherapist and treat people.]	Initial version
1b. Vandaag kan immers iedereen, **[bijvoorbeeld]** ook een historicus, zich psychotherapeut noemen en mensen behandelen. [Indeed, nowadays anyone, including **[for example]** a historian, can call himself or herself a psychotherapist and treat people.][a]	Final version
A character/word/phrase/clause is omitted from the initial version of the article	**Deletion**
2a. Maar voor alle andere zaken zoals sociale zekerheid of personenbelasting moeten de inwoners **[van de hoofdstad]** via een "Brusselkeuze" opteren voor het Vlaamse of het Waalse model. [But for all other things such as social security or personal income tax the citizens **[of the capital]** have to opt for the Flemish or the Walloon model via a "Brussels choice."]	Initial version
2b. Maar voor alle andere zaken, zoals sociale zekerheid of personenbelasting, moeten inwoners via een "Brusselkeuze" opteren voor het Vlaamse of Waalse model. [But for all other things such as social security or personal income tax citizens have to opt for the Flemish or the Walloon model via a "Brussels choice."][b]	Final version
A word/a number of words are replaced by another word/ words	**Replacement**
3a. **[Het]** is het startschot van een gemeenschappelijke campagne voor de Europese verkiezingen van mei 2014. [**[It]** is the start of a joint campaign for the European elections of May 2014.]	Initial version
3b. **[Dat]** is het startschot van een gemeenschappelijke campagne voor de Europese verkiezingen van mei 2014. [**[That]** is the start of a joint campaign for the European elections of May 2014.][c]	Final version
A word/a number of words are moved to another part of the same clause or article	**Translocation**
4a. Antwerps burgemeester Bart De Wever (N-VA) **[heeft]** het licht gezien. [Antwerp mayor Bart De Wever (N-VA) **[has]** seen the light.]	Initial version
4b. **[Heeft]** N-VA-voorzitter en Antwerps burgemeester Bart De Wever het licht gezien?[d]	Final version
Nothing is altered	**Nihil**
5a. Een kind heeft blauwe plekken. [A child has bruises.]	Initial version
5b. Een kind heeft blauwe plekken. [A child has bruises.][e]	Final version

a *Initial and final versions TU 23 from body text in front-page news article "Psycholoog wordt voortaan terugbetaald" (DM_11_5_13).*

b *Initial and final versions TU 15 from body text in front-page news article "De Wever gaat voor het onmogelijke" (DM_10_31_13).*

c *Initial and final versions TU 10 from body text in headline news article "Extreem rechts sluit geheim akkoord" (DM_11_15_13).*

d *Initial and final versions TU 5 from lead in headline news article "Bart De Wever bekeert zich tot de fiets" (DM_5_17_13).*

e *Initial and final versions TU 38 from body text in medium news article "Hulpverleners konden moord op twee broertjes niet voorkomen" (DM_5_22_13).*

Within every TU we highlighted the actual "interventions," that is, what has been altered in the sub-editing phase. Often more than one intervention occurred in a single TU. After careful comparison of the initial and final versions of every TU, we identified four categories among the detected "interventions." Even though intuitively and based on experience we were able to predefine the intervention categories of deletion and addition, it was only after a continuous back and forth between existing literature[8] and corpus-based research, on one hand, and our time in the field, on the other, that we were able to fine-tune them and add the intervention categories of replacement and translocation. When a TU had not been altered in the post-sub-editing phase, we labeled it "nihil" *(See* **TABLE 4***)*.[9] Finally, we also kept track of the differences in length between the two versions of the TUs. This was done in order to compare where text had been added, and where it had been deleted or translocated.

These interventions (i.e., deletion, addition, translocation, and replacement) were then labeled on a macro level as being either textual or graphic. Graphic interventions include all changes in font or the use of symbols, whereas all other interventions were considered as textual *(See* **TABLE 5***)*.

On a micro-level, we then further specified each Intervention.[10] Textual interventions were grouped into six categories, including clausal, subclausal, or phrasal (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, adverbial phrase, adjective phrase, participial phrase, prepositional phrase) *(See* **TABLE 6***)*. In addition, on this same level, we labeled whether the interventions involved changes in numbers, characters, or punctuation (e.g., brackets, bullets, colons, commas, dashes, exclamation points, hyphens, periods, question marks, quotation marks, semicolons, slashes). We also indicated whether interventions regarded typeface (i.e., letters, numbers, and symbols in consistent type weight and typestyle that make up a complete set of a distinctive design of printing type such as Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman), typography (e.g., italics or bold typeface), or spacing. Interventions in typeface, typography, and spacing are always purely graphic in nature. All other interventions on this level can be either graphic or textual.[11]

FIGURE 1 offers a schematic summary of the complete coding system.

TABLE 5 — Macro Level: Textual Versus Graphic Interventions.

TRANSFORMATION UNIT	INTERVENTION MACRO LEVEL
1a. "Had dit vermeden kunnen worden?," **[is]** de vraag die Nederland zich nu stelt. ["Could this have been avoided?," is what the Netherlands are now wondering.]	**Replacement–text**
1b. "Had dit vermeden kunnen worden?," **[vraagt]** Nederland zich nu **[af]**. ["Could this have been avoided?," is what the Netherlands are now wondering.][a]	
2a. BRUSSEL	**Replacement–graphic**
2b. BRUSSEL[b]	

a
Initial and final versions TU 6 from lead in medium news article "Hulpverleners konden moord op twee broertjes niet voorkomen" (DM_5_22_13).

b
Initial and final versions TU 5 from location in front-page news article "De Wever gaat voor het onmogelijke" (DM_10_31_13).

8
Our categories echo Sommers's (1980) work on revision: She posited that revision comprised four types of activity: deletion, substitution, shifting, and reorganization. Allal, Chanquoy, and Largy (2004) discriminated between editing to correct errors, on one hand, and rewriting, which involves transformation, addition, or deletion. Oddo (2013) also presented four kinds of transformation evident in his work on the recontextualization of written political discourse in video journalism, including deletion, addition, relexicalization, and reordering.

9
We agree with Bisaillon (2007, p. 318) that Fitzgerald (1987) is incorrect when stating "revision means making any changes at any point in the writing process" (p. 484): Revising does not always imply altering text.

10
Even though in this article these further codes were not used in the analysis, they were an essential part of the coding process and will be used in follow-up research.

11
This means that, for instance, a headline intervention can be a textual addition when a word is added, and/or a graphic replacement when a font is altered.

TABLE 6 — Micro Level: Clause, Subclause, Phrase, Character, Number, and Punctuation.

TRANSFORMATION UNIT	INTERVENTION MICRO LEVEL
1a. **Minister van onderwijs Smet werkt aan een "groot loopbaanpact" dat onder meer dat probleem moet aanpakken.** [Education Minister Smet is working on a "large-scale career pact" that should address that problem among others.] 1b. Æ[a]	**Deletion**—clause
2a. Dankzij de financiële constructie hoefden de werknemers en consultants nergens belastingen te betalen. [Thanks to the financial construction employees and consultants no longer had to pay taxes.] 2b. Dankzij die financiële constructie hoefden de werknemers en consultants, **[waarvan er sommigen in het wielermilieu actief zijn]**, nauwelijks belastingen te betalen. [Thanks to the financial construction employees and consultants, **[some of whom are involved in cycling]**, hardly had to pay taxes.][b]	**Addition**—subclause
3a. Antwerpen heeft al **[verschillende]** jaren een charter met afspraken tegen ontoelaatbare doeppraktijken en overlast. [For **several years** Antwerp has had a charter in place listing unacceptable hazing practices and disturbances.] 3b. Antwerpen heeft al jaren een charter met afspraken tegen ontoelaatbare doeppraktijken en overlast. [For years Antwerp has had a charter in place listing unacceptable hazing practices and disturbances.][c]	**Deletion**—adjective phrase
4a. In 2011 bedroeg het **[t]**totale aantal schulden van TMVW 634,22 miljoen euro. [In 2011 the **[t]**total amount of TMVW debt was 634.22 million euros.] 4b. In 2011 bedroeg het totale aantal schulden van de intercommunale 634,22 miljoen euro. [In 2011 the total amount of TMVW debt was 634.22 million euros.][d]	**Deletion**—character
5a. ∅ 5b. >>**[5]**[e]	**Addition**—number
6a. De familie[-]Frère heeft al decennia een financieel partnership lopen met de Canadese familie-Desmarais. [The Frère[-]family has had a financial partnership with the Canadian Desmarais-family for decades.] 6b. De familie Frère heeft al decennia een financieel partnership lopen met de Canadese familie Desmarais.e [The Frère family has had a financial partnership with the Canadian Desmarais family for decades.][f]	**Deletion**—punctuation

a
Initial and final versions TU 16 from body text in short news article "De meester sterft uit" (DM_5_15_13).

b
Initial and final versions TU 18 from body text in medium news article "Massale belastingfraude via Luxemburgse postbusbedrijven" (DM_5_16_13).

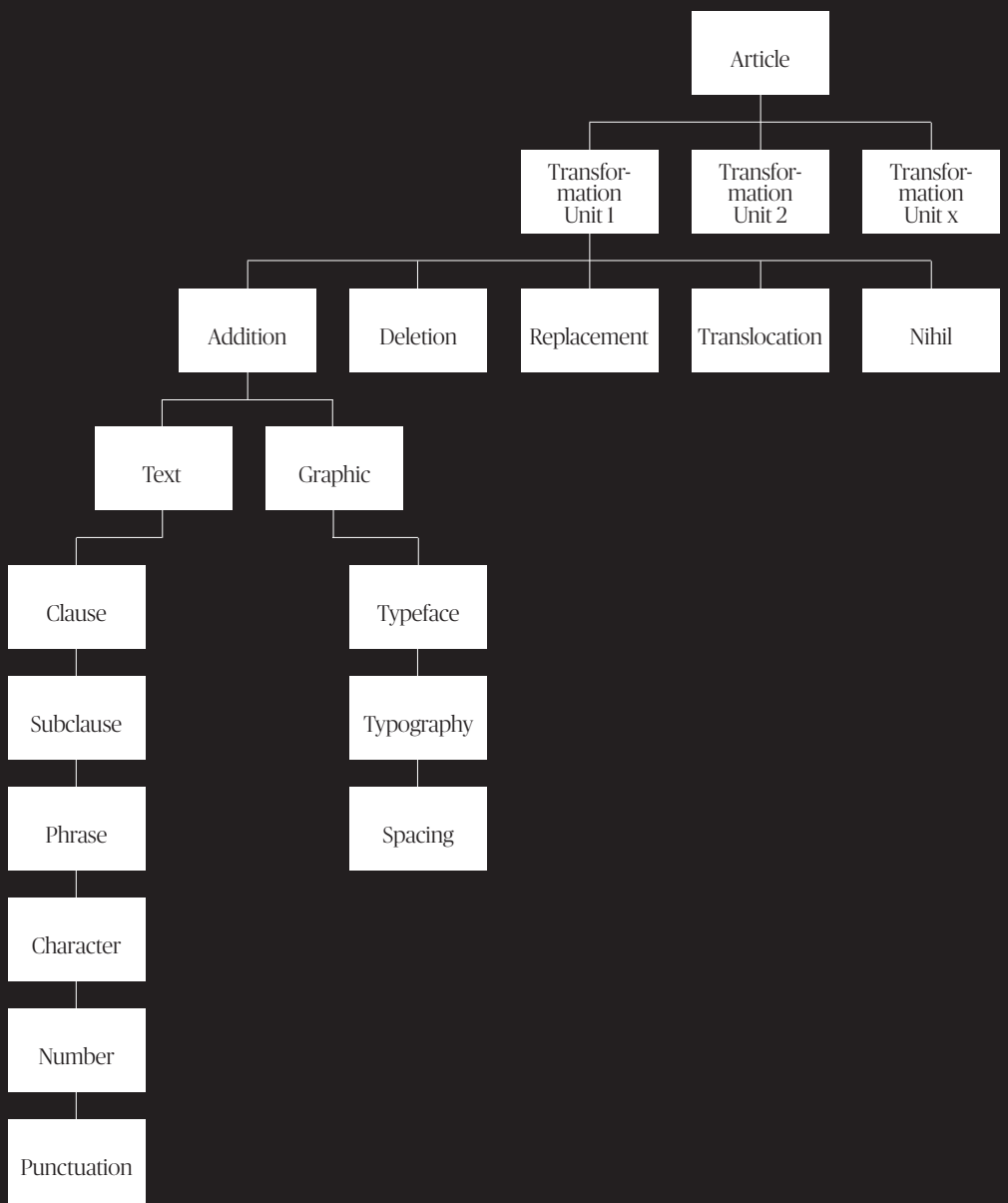
c
Initial and final versions TU 9 from body text in news wire article "Studenten feesten beschaafd" (DM_5_17_13).

d
Initial and final versions TU 21 from body text in front-page news article "Stadion kost Gent miljoenen meer" (DM_11_4_13).

e
Initial and final versions TU 34 from page reference in front-page news article "Loonkloof splitst CD&V" (DM_11_18_13).

f
Initial and final versions TU 45 from page reference in front-page news article "Frère klaar voor laatste grote slag" (DM_5_15_13).

FIGURE 1 ——— Schematic overview of the coding system.



Results

Intervention Type Frequency

Our corpus sample includes a total of N = 1,129 interventions across all 30 articles. **TABLE 7** gives the proportions associated with each intervention type. We found that the intervention types are not equally distributed (chi-square goodness-of-fit test $\chi^2 = 311$, df = 3, $p < .0001$). More specifically, the number of additions and replacements is significantly higher than what one would expect if the proportion of interventions were equal, while the number translocations is much lower than expected. The results further indicate that the number of translocations is much lower than expected.[12]

Number of Interventions by Article Type

TABLE 8 presents the number of interventions that we observed per article type.

To evaluate which article type received the highest number of interventions, one has to take into account the number of words of each article type; obviously, longer article types can be altered more than shorter ones, as there is more text to be dealt with. Our results suggest that the proportion of interventions is not equally distributed among the news article types ($\chi^2 = 180$, df = 5, $p < .001$). Based on content, length, placement on the page, and layout, we consider front-page, headline, and long articles as being the most highly visible to the reader, and therefore as "high-stakes" news articles. Our data show that front-page and long articles receive significantly more interventions than would be expected if all proportions were equal, while headline, medium, and short articles receive significantly fewer interventions.

Type of Intervention by Article Type

TABLE 9 shows the number of different types of intervention by type of article.

Overall, we found a significant association between type of article and type of intervention ($\chi^2 = 95.6$, df = 15, $p < .001$). To put it simply, different types of articles receive different kinds of interventions. If we zoom in on the particular differences, we can see that there are significantly more additions in both the front-page news articles and the headline articles. Long articles have a significantly larger number of translocations. Medium news articles are mostly associated with replacements, while short articles and news wire articles have a significantly larger number of deletions.

TABLE 7 — Interventions Across Six Types of News Article.

INTERVENTION TYPE	INTERVENTIONS[a]
Addition	426 (38, 9.9)
Replacement	388 (34, 7.3)
Deletion	269 (24, –0.9)
Translocation	46 (4, –16.2)

[a] *Values are number of interventions (percentage, standardized residual). Standardized residuals larger than |2| suggest a departure from the null hypothesis of equal proportions.*

TABLE 8 — Number of Interventions per Article Type.

NEWS ARTICLE TYPE	INTERVENTIONS[a]	WORD COUNT INITIAL VERSION
Front-page	311 (28, 11.9)	1,687
Headline	254 (23, –4.4)	3,242
Long	294 (26, 2.4)	2,610
Medium	101 (9, –6.2)	1,759
Short	83 (7, –3.1)	1,151
News wire	86 (8, –0.3)	888

[a] *Values are number of interventions (percentage, standardized residual).*

12 In 406 of all interventions, nothing was altered. For the purposes of this study, we decided to discard those instances. The percentages shown are therefore calculated on the basis of additions, deletions, replacements, and translocations only.

TABLE 9 — Interventions per Type of News Article.

TYPE OF ARTICLE	TYPE OF INTERVENTION[a] Additions	Replacements	Deletions	Translocations
Front-page	151 (49, 4.6)	104 (33, –0.4)	49 (16, –3.9)	7 (2, –1.9)
Headline	116 (46, 3.0)	76 (30, –1.7)	49 (19, –1.9)	13 (5, 1)
Long	107 (36, –0.6)	100 (34, –0.1)	67 (23, –0.5)	20 (7, 2.8)
Medium	24 (24, –3.0)	44 (44, 2.0)	31 (31, 1.7)	2 (2, –1.1)
Short	14 (16, –4.1)	34 (41, 1.3)	34 (41, 3.8)	1 (1, –1.4)
News wire	14 (17, –4.3)	30 (35, 0.1)	39 (45, 4.9)	3 (3, –0.3)

[a] *Values are number of interventions (row percentage, standardized residual).*

Type of Interventions by Article Structure

A fourth finding is that certain building blocks in the structure of an article are more prone to being altered—and more specifically, added onto— in the sub-editing stage, than others. **TABLE 10** shows that 80% of all interventions occur in six article parts, including body—which accounts for nearly half of all the interventions—lead, head, quote, location, and subtitle.

Clearly, there is a significant association between the types of intervention and the six article parts ($\chi^2 = 287$, df = 15, $p < .001$). We noticed how deletions are predominantly observed in the article's body text. The lead and the head feature significantly more replacements and significantly less additions. In contrast, quotes significantly feature additions. Finally, locations and subtitles are significantly associated with additions, more than other types of intervention *(See* **TABLE 11***)*.

When it comes to the headline, we observed two things: First of all, the subheader (part and parcel of front-page and headline news articles in particular) had been provided in the initial version (by the journalist) in just three articles, but was deleted and not replaced in all three cases. When we look at the final headline of the articles, we saw that even though in 28 out of 30 cases (93.3%) a headline had already been written in the initial version, only in 3 of those cases (10.7%), they were not altered at all in the sub-editing stage. Changes were made in all 25 provided headlines (83.3%), and most of those alterations were significant, ranging from the replacement of a few words to a complete change of headline.

Noticeably, in our entire corpus, only one single quote had been provided in the initial version. In all other cases, the quote was selected from the body text and added to the article in the sub-editing phase.

Subtitles and, to a lesser extent, location indicators (i.e., "Brussels" in this particular corpus) are generally being added in the sub-editing stage. In the 30 articles we analyzed, only two subtitles had been written (by the journalist) in the initial pre-sub-editing version, whereas in the published versions of the article, there are 20 to be found. Moreover, both subtitles that had been provided were actually altered in the sub-editing stage.

A final point worth mentioning is that in all 30 articles in our corpus, a byline had been provided before the sub-editing stage, that is, by the journalist. Depending on the type of news article, bylines were sometimes cut back to a journalist's initials, hence the loss of words when we compare initial and final versions.

TABLE 10 — Type of Intervention by Article Structure.

PART	TYPE OF INTERVENTION[a] Addition	Replacement	Deletion	Translocation	Total
Body	129 (23, -4.7)	187 (34, –3.9)	214 (39, 9.0)	25 (5, 0.2)	555 (49)
Lead	15 (11, -5.0)	87 (64, 6.5)	24 (18, –2.9)	10 (7, 1.8)	136 (12)
Head	8 (12, -3.1)	46 (70, 5.4)	11 (17, –2.1)	1 (2, -1.2)	66 (6)
Quote	53 (88, 10.5)	4 (7, –5.3)	1 (2, –4.7)	2 (3, -0.4)	60 (5)
Location	22 (43, 2.3)	23 (45, 1.0)	4 (8, –3.3)	2 (4, -0.2)	51 (5)
Subtitle	36 (86, 8.3)	6 (14, –3.3)	0 (0, –4.4)	0 (0, -1.4)	42 (4)
Other	163	35	15	6	219 (19)

[a] *Values are number of interventions (row percentage, standardized residual).*

TABLE 11 — Word Count Initial and Final Versions of Parts in Article Construction.

PART IN ARTICLE STRUCTURE	INITIAL WORD COUNT	FINAL WORD COUNT	TEXT: MORE DELETIONS OR MORE ADDITIONS
Headline	196	179	Deletions
Subheader	19	102	Additions
Byline/credit	71	67	Deletions
Location	26	37	Additions
Lead	724	699	Deletions
Body text	10,269	9,458	Deletions
Subtitle	3	33	Additions
Quote/quote name/ quote job	16	256	Additions
Photo caption/photo credit	0	226	Additions
Bulleted fact box	0	16	Additions

Discussion

More Additions than Deletions

Generally, people seem convinced that in the sub-editing phase of the newswriting process mostly "savage trims" (Ellis, 2001, p. 174) are carried out, to make the story fit the allocated space. Indeed, our data show that a substantial amount of deletions does occur. After all, newspaper space is known to be expensive and should be conserved for substance. Journalists admit they find it challenging to "trim the fat" (Ellis, 2001, p. 172) from their own stories, because of their quasi-"parental" role toward them. Although—in theory— they appreciate the sub-editors' "fresh pair of eyes,"[13] in our interviews they often express their fear of material being "slashed" all too ruthlessly.[14] One journalist admitted,

> I'm aware sub-editors are used to having an unhappy journalist at their desks, and don't usually receive any compliments from them... Once I noticed the sub-editors had halved a text I'd made (and went to great lengths for). So then I said I would prefer to have it longer, and that I'd rather cut it back myself.[15]

Surprisingly, however, our data also show how a significant amount of text is added to the article by the sub-editor. In what follows, we examine the dispersion of additions in our corpus.

High-Stakes Articles

Front-page news articles are featured on the newspaper's opening page, essentially to sell the paper. Headline news articles are placed prominently at the top of the pages[16] to draw readers in further. Long articles contain news that's worthy of covering in more depth than a medium news article. It is therefore hardly surprising that a greater amount of work is done in these articles, specifically when it comes to front-page and long articles. As we saw in our analysis, many more interventions were noted than in, for example, a news wire article. The significantly low number of interventions in both news wire articles and short news articles leads us to believe that the stakes aren't as high for those types.

These findings were confirmed by sub-editors, and are in agreement with our newsroom observations. From the time spent there, we learned how, as news wire reports are gathered and sold by a news agency, sub-editors were far more rigorous in their treatment of them, especially when it comes to intervening in their length. Because they were mostly quite short to begin with, and were not produced in-house by an employee of the newspaper, they were often considered to be "page fillers."[17] These types of articles would mostly be grouped together and sub-editors would not hesitate to cut back considerably if need be.

13 SV_12_5_15 (journalist).

14 TVM_12_3_12 (sub-editor).

15 Interview SV_12_5_15 (journalist).

16 Headline news articles are often placed on the right page of a spread—as opposed to the left one—as this is considered the most prominent place.

17 BT_16_3_12 (sub-editor).

The high-stakes front-page and headline news articles, however, were treated with a lot more care, not only because of their news value and prominent placement on the page, but also because this is "where a *sub* can shine."[18] Moreover, the front-page news articles were always assigned to the most senior sub-editor on the newsroom floor that day.

Building Blocks of an Article

During a sub-editing workshop a chief sub-editor stated that "20 percent of what the journalist writes is read by our readers, whereas 80 percent of what the *subs* write is read," followed by the statement, "Actually, it is us who sell the article."[19] One might argue that this is merely the underdog attempting to—true to form—rebuke either (his/her sense of) lower status, inferior position and/or relative anonymity. Research by Kennamer (1988), however, supports the chief sub-editor's claim. He stresses the importance of "vivid" information in articles, referring to the degree to which they are emotionally engaging, concrete, imagery producing, and proximate to the reader. Kennamer links this to research done by cognitive social psychologists on the characteristics of information that make it likely to be incorporated into processes of—among others—decision making and inference. Interestingly, it is precisely this notion of "vividness" that *subs* strive to achieve, by for instance incorporating a striking headline or an enticing quote.

Successfully identifying where readers are drawn in to a news text can, however, help further illuminate the chief sub-editor's claims. We therefore turn to eye movement research, since it has long been used with regard to questions on how to design newspaper pages. Especially those insights from eye-tracking research about readers' reading behavior and choice of so-called "entry points," proved to be most helpful here.

The first experimental eye-tracking studies were performed by Garcia and Stark (1991). A major finding was that readers do not really "read" but rather "scan" newspapers. Garcia and Stark therefore define newspaper design as the task "to give readers material that is worthy of their scan, that makes them stop scanning and start reading" (p. 67). The researchers identified certain "entry points," that is, points where readers stop scanning a page and start reading. They furthermore suggest that most readers follow a fixed reading path, entering a page through the dominant picture or illustration, then move on to the dominant headline, then to teasers and captions, and finally to text. The researchers also report that headlines, photo captions, and short news stories are processed often and in depth. However, only 25% of the articles are processed—only 12% are read deeper than half of their length—and 75% are skipped.

Hansen (1994) also investigated the readers' priorities with respect to text. He found that pictures are first seen, then icons and graphics, followed by headlines of different sizes and text. Indeed, the fact that pictures are the main causes of readers' fixation is perhaps the most stable result in all eye-tracking studies of newspaper reading. Hansen's results also show that only short articles are fully read: The longer the article, the smaller the proportion that will be read.

In the study by Holmqvist and Wartenberg (2005), 85% of all texts were seen and only 15% were skipped. Their findings indicate that newspaper readers do not read following any order; instead, they just scan the area looking for an entry point to start reading. The most common entry points are pictures and headlines, particularly quoted ones or those in boxes. Results also show that texts with drop quotes are in fact seen significantly earlier than texts without drop quotes. Moreover, drop quotes are also read for a significantly longer time. Furthermore, the data show that texts that include a fact box are seen significantly earlier and read longer than texts without a fact box.

More recently, in 2006, Holsanova et al. established three groups of newspaper readers: the focused readers (focusing on a single article), the editorial readers (avoiding all advertisements), and finally the entry point overviewers (focusing on entry points such as [colored] headlines and pictures). Newspaper design has a manipulative effect on reading behavior. Large pictures and headlines in big font sizes attract readers' attention, and entry into the page is often performed by headline news and headline news photo.

Clearly, eye movement studies have successfully proven that newspaper readers do not read following any order, but rather just scan the general area looking for an entry point and start reading. The most common entry points are (a) headlines, (b) photos and photo captions, (c) quotes, and (d) bulleted fact boxes (Wartenberg & Holmqvist, 2004). Sub-editors themselves seem very much aware of their impact: Sub-editor Charlotte Baxter wrote on the *Guardian* website on July 26, 2012, "Our 'furniture'… can be decisive in whether a story is read or ignored." Comparing this to our data offers interesting insights into the writing done in the sub-editing stage.

1. **Headlines**
   When headline authorship is attributed in research related to the field of news media, this happens rather vaguely: "The

18 JD_4_12_12 (sub-editing chief).

19 Workshop JtH_15_12_11 (sub-editing chief).

newspaper" or simply "editorial changes" (Develotte & Rechniewski, 2001), "writer" (Mahmood, Javed, & Mahmood, 2011), or "headline writer" (Greco, 2009; Vandenberghe, 2014) are but a few examples. Having been immersed in the daily sub-editing practices, we can confirm that the writing portion of a sub-editor's job largely consists of crafting the headlines (and the secondary subheaders). When asked about this, sub-editors claimed how the headline has to both clearly communicate the gist of the article, and somehow "seduce"[20] the reader by stirring curiosity. Moreover, this has to be done in a specific amount of space, dictated largely by the page layout/the layout editor. They agreed, "Headline writing is an art in itself."[21] Our data show that headlines already provided would be altered in the sub-editing stage, almost without exception: "It's nice if . . . there's a great headline present, but I would not be doing this job, if I didn't enjoy making those myself."[22] When confronting journalists with this, they admit they will mostly provide a headline, as is expected by their desk chief. She does admit that "there are a few rebel journalists who will omit headlines and just add the word 'headline.'"[23] It is striking how headlines are the most highly contested topic among journalists and sub-editors: "Personally, I will most often approach the sub-editors when it comes to headlines. That is because we disagree about what a headline should do: I believe a headline should draw the reader in, full stop... Therefore, I don't mind if a headline is abstract, or does not offer that much information. Sub-editors will often change the headlines of my articles... That really annoys me."[24] A headline's visibility is the underlying reason: "You don't immediately notice when a mistake has been taken out of your article, but you will see when a new headline... is added to your text. That can be rather frustrating, because as a journalist you will be receiving complaints via email/ phone, when actually the sub-editors are to blame."[25]

2. **Photo captions**
   During our fieldwork, we noticed how sub-editors are expected help decide which photos (and graphics) will be selected and which of those will be featured most prominently. Although the news agency or photographer providing the pictures[26] will at times add the accompanying photo captions, none of the captions in this particular corpus were adopted verbatim. Instead, the sub-editor would be the one writing a clarifying caption: "Photo captions are merely bait, in order to catch the readers' attention."[27]

3. **Quotes**
   According to eye-tracking research, quotes play an equally important role in attracting reader attention. However, articles with quotes are also read for a significantly longer time. This means quotes are efficient tools, as they both attract and keep attention. In our corpus we have not only found how the selection of a tantalizing quote is an important part of the sub-editing stage, we also noted how aware the sub-editors are of their significance: "Typically, readers see the quote and the headline. Therefore, it makes good sense to 'tell the story' in these two parts of the design, for instance by contrasting or exemplifying the headline in the quote."[28]

4. **Bulleted fact boxes**
   Bulleted fact boxes, that is, short background texts that complement a longer text on a specific topic, are—as we demonstrated by referring to eye-tracking research—appreciated by the reader. In the field, we learned they are crafted in most cases at the request of the sub-editor, as he or she feels background information is lacking for the reader to grasp the story. Often the sub-editor also writes them, with little to no input from the journalist.

From our data and observations, we can conclude that the all-important entry points headlines, quotes, photos and photo captions, and bulleted fact boxes, are in fact article building blocks that are being created in the sub-editing phase. The sub-editors confirm: "That is where the power of the sub-editor lies."[29] Their importance is recognized by the journalists as well: "It can be tough though for a journalist to agree with certain changes because they most often happen in places that have a large impact/are important. After all, my name features in the byline."[30]

20 GVH_9_5_15 (sub-editor).

21 Workshop PK_26_11_14 (editor-in-chief).

22 GVH_9_5_15 (sub-editor).

23 AG_10_12_12 (desk chief).

24 SV_12_5_15 (journalist).

25 SV_12_5_15 (journalist).

26 Sometimes the journalist provides photos and captions. However, this was not the case in this corpus.

27 FDB_8_5_15 (sub-editor).

28 JD_4_12_12 (sub-editing chief).

29 FDB_8_5_15 (sub-editor).

30 SV_12_5_15 (journalist).

Concluding Remarks

What happens when a news article passes from the hands of the journalist into the hands of other less visible newsroom professionals in charge of transforming the story into a high-quality and salable newspaper? Our aim for this article was to investigate the sub-editing phase, at the "periphery" of "journalistic institutionalized space" (Charron et al., 2014), in order to move closer to identifying what impact sub-editors have on newswriting. We did this by exploring the micro-level discursive practices during the sub-editing stage of a newspaper's writing process, based on a corpus analysis of 30 articles.

By comparing an article's "initial" version to its "final" version, we first of all detected the main ways in which an article's text is altered. We characterized those interventions as additions, deletions, replacements and translocations. Second, our research disclosed that when we consider various types of news article, the interventions are more numerous in front-page and headline news articles, as they are considered "high-stakes" articles. Third, we noted that additions typically occur in specific "building blocks" of an article, that is, headlines and subheaders, quotes, photo captions, subtitles, and location indicators. We were able to link this observation to results from eye-tracking research, focusing on what item(s) on a newspaper page first catches the readers' eye. Since these building blocks are considered key when it comes to making the reader go from "scanning" to "reading," the writing in the sub-editing stage gains considerable significance.

Overall, the sub-editors' work is regarded less content-driven, and more focused on the final phase's trims and tweaks. However, by looking at which changes text undergoes as it travels from one stage of the newswriting process to another—is "re-perspectivized" (Linell, 1998) or "recontextualized" (Oddo, 2013)—we found that, contrary to the popular belief that text is usually cut in the sub-editing stage, sub-editors add more text than they delete. We argue that, because newspaper sub-editors perform much of their work on headlines and other key "entry points" in news articles, their contributions are in fact crucial when it comes to selling the final product, that is, the newspaper, to the reader.

The need for external revisers is clear: Writers are just as not as well equipped to find their own mistakes, which is heightened by timing constraints (Bartlett, 1981; Hull, 1987). Sub-editors take the task of revising upon themselves in the newsroom: They are the last line of defense against bad (news)writing. Yet often, their mastery of language and ability to "trim the fat" off of all too lengthy articles were seen as their most important assets. Based on this study, we argue that the sub-editor, up against ever-looming deadlines, takes on a third role, besides those of "*guardian* of language"[31] and "quality controller."[32] As it is in the sub-editing phase that headlines (and subheaders), quotes, photo captions, and bulleted fact boxes—or "the eyecatchers of an article"[33]—are crafted, it is the sub-editors' work that greatly enhances an article's visibility, that is, salability. We can thus cast them in a third role: the newspaper's marketer. They are in fact "the mainstays behind any newspaper's success" (Ellis, 2001, p. xiii).

In today's economically challenged news media landscape, not only determining strategies to capture readers' attention, but being able to link the creation of what is seen—and therefore, crucially, what is sold—to a specific part in the newswriting process holds great value for any (news)writer. However, this article is just part of the total effort to move toward a better understanding of the sub-editing stage in newswriting, and hence toward a more complete understanding of writing as a whole. The knowledge resulting from this study might provide researchers with greater insight into the professional editing process and, in addition, can help to improve education in editing and revision. Moreover, the differences shown in this article between the original journalists' text and the sub-edited version—and the professionals' rationale behind it—can be beneficial to those learning to write newspaper/ journalistic texts.

A follow-up will adopt a case study approach, analyzing the interplay between the context of the newsroom, the sub-edited article in its various versions, our observations, and the sub-editors. We aim to shed light on the identity of the decision makers behind the changes (whether they be the sub-editor, journalist, editor-in-chief, desk chief, layout sub-editor, or interviewee). We believe that there are links between their profile (junior/senior, full-time/freelance) and the number and type of interventions, as powerful differences can be detected between novices and experts in revision (Myhill & Jones, 2007). Moreover, through additional ethnographic research we will be able to record reasoning behind certain choices, that is, additions, deletions, replacements, and translocations. Finally, we want to turn our attention to the rhetorical impact of these interventions: What effects do (linguistic) changes have on the reader when a news text is "recontextualized" (Oddo, 2013)?

31 RV_8_5_15 (journalist).

32 FDB_8_5_15 (sub-editor).

33 FDB_8_5_15 (sub-editor).

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4. 'TR AS EDIT

'Production values' at work in newspaper sub-editing.

RUST ME, I'M SUB-TOR'

The sub-editing stage

Vandendaele, Astrid. 2017.

‘Trust me, I’m a sub-editor’: ‘Production values’ at work in newspaper sub-editing.

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Abstract

In this paper, I focus on one particular player in the newspaper production process, i.e. the sub-editor. I analysed the sub-editing process through participant observation in newsrooms in the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands. Looking at both the sub-editors at work (think-aloud protocol) as well as the articles in various stages of production, and informed by (retrospective) interviews, I have compiled a list of six of the sub-editor's "production values". These values guide sub-editors whenever they intervene, and help them to transform a news story into an appealing, correct and credible newspaper article. I took the lead from Östgaard's "factors influencing the flow of news", but also from Galtung and Ruge's "news values" which help reporters to determine which "events" are transitioned into "news". In doing so, I go beyond the limitations of previous research, in which the types of interventions carried out in the sub-editing stage of newswriting were categorised. By identifying the guidelines driving the alterations made by the sub-editor, I aim to move one step closer towards uncovering the intricacies of the sub-editing process. Moreover, I demonstrate how "the rewrite men" add journalistic value to their newspapers, as perhaps their brand's strongest ambassadors.

Keywords

journalism; news factors; news production process; news values; newspapers; newswriting; sub-editing

Introduction

For over 50 years, researchers have been pondering: "What is news?" A large body of research has been dedicated to investigating the factors that might explain how (international) news is selected. Famously, Norwegians Johannes Galtung and Marie Ruge attempted to outline the "news values" that are operational in newspapers and broadcast news. In their seminal paper, hailed as the "foundation study of news values" (Bell 1991, 155), Galtung and Ruge (1965) launched several hypotheses about factors characterising (international) occurrences and events that are made into news events, based on an analysis of a selection of Norwegian newspapers. Their study sheds light on 12 factors that determine the likelihood of an event being reported, the prominence a story is given by a media outlet and, consequently, the attention it is given by the audience. Among them, they list eight "culture-free" factors, i.e. Frequency, Amplitude, Unambiguity, Meaningfulness, Consonance, Unexpectedness, Continuity and Composition, and four "culture-bound" factors such as Reference to Elite Nations, Reference to Elite People, Reference to Something Negative and Personification.

Galtung and Ruge's set of news values were originally intended to help explain why the news media in a given country might choose to cover some international events while ignoring others. However, since the original publication their criteria have been applied far more broadly to many types of news (Braun 2009).[1] In their wake, many academics have tackled the concept of "news values"; journalism researchers (Schulz 1976; Golding and Elliott 1979; Gans 1980; Peterson 1981; Staab 1990; Bell 1991; Tumber 1999; Herbert 2000; Harcup and O'Neill 2001, 2016; Clausen 2004; Bednarek and Caple 2014; Meissner 2015) have tried to build on or modify the original list, or apply it to a variety of media outlets, such as fiction writing and film. Ryan (1991, 66) even states "there is no end to lists of news criteria".

The news values Galtung and Ruge describe are based on "common-sense perception psychology", and they stress that "the factors should be anchored in general reasoning and social science findings" (66). Despite their significant contribution to international news theory, Galtung and Ruge have been heavily criticised over the years, partly because of their psychological perspective and the fact the factors were difficult to test (Johnson 1997, 316). Still, it is clear that in the ever-evolving media landscape, the concept of "news value" has remained extremely valuable, as it continues to "dominate" practice (O'Neill and Harcup 2009): news values remain a "structure" journalists use to make sense of the world (Hall et al. 1978, 54).

Galtung and Ruge leaned in part on Einar Östgaard's (1965) article "Factors Influencing the Flow of News". In his study, Östgaard zooms in on the "processing of the news", i.e. the decisions newspaper professionals make, when discarding most of the material available, when choosing what is to be presented, and presenting it in the way they consider best (40). He lists a number of factors influencing the flow of the news, mainly those which impair the news flow and distort the final picture as it is presented by the news media. Östgaard focuses on political and economic factors outside the news process (i.e. sources, news agencies, the cost of transmitting messages and the various worldviews publishers hold) and factors inherent in the news process, i.e. simplification, identification or cultural proximity, sensationalism and "the news barrier". Östgaard basically shows that news generally must be of a certain simplicity, and/or that it must give the receiver some possibility of identifying himself or herself with the news, and/or that it must be sufficiently exciting to pass through the news channel (51).

As linguistic interest in the news has long been limited to analysis of the "news product", the news production processes prior to its final materialisation have been ignored. However, it is exactly those processes that shed light on why the news is what it is (Catenaccio et al. 2011). Also, the focus has overwhelmingly been on the reporter (and editor), and the choices (s)he makes in the selection of what events become news and which ones remain unreported. Research continues to neglect other journalism professionals in the newsroom, and their contributions to the final product (Vandendaele and Jacobs 2014).

The Sub-editor

In this study, I put the spotlight firmly on that other journalist, behind—or better: next to—the reporter in the newsroom, i.e. the newspaper sub-editor. Also called a "copy editor", "as what (s)he edits is called copy" their job is to "sub" copy, "to make it fit to print which includes collecting, selecting, arranging, reducing, translating and adapting for publication, according to the importance of the copy" (Shrivastava 1987, 7). Often overlooked (Vandendaele and Jacobs 2014), sub-editors are responsible for checking articles for correct use of grammar,

1 It is important to note that Galtung and Ruge (1965) did not simply present a list of news values that news organisations necessarily had to follow, and were also critical of the foreign news coverage in the papers they analysed.

syntax and tone. They also ensure that an article's themes are consistent with the vision and style of the media outlet they represent. As the gatekeepers between the unchecked article and its printed version, sub-editors are the last line of defence against factual errors within the articles, safeguarding the newspaper against liability. Moreover, being the initial reader of an article, they are first and foremost the reader's allies in the newsroom, aiming to facilitate and enhance their reading experience.

Although a sub-editor is responsible for only part of the original writing, it is vital that (s)he is an expert in the revision of news articles. It is the reporter who goes out into the field, gathers news and writes it up for the newspaper, while the sub-editors "work at the 'news desk' where all the news that comes is selected, edited, each news story is given a suitable headline and its place in the newspaper is decided" (Shrivastava 1987, 7). So, although the sub-editor is not actually required to write new content, (s)he does have the important and difficult duty of writing a suitable headline for the story (Gupta 2003, 36).[2]

I argue that the choices a skilled sub-editor makes when dealing with a news story concerning accuracy, structure, perspective, style, clarity, fluency and brevity are paramount when reporting a news story. Their interventions help maintain a newspaper's credibility and quality, and additionally enhance the reading experience. As both those elements play a crucial role in actually selling a newspaper (Vandendaele, De Cuypere, and Van Praet 2015), the role of the sub-editor becomes ever more important in a time when—globally— newspapers have been struggling due to declining readership. In fact, 2015 can be termed a recession year in the United States, with newspaper circulation showing the greatest declines since 2010. At the same time, advertising revenue experienced its greatest drop since 2009. In 2014, newsroom employment also declined 10 per cent—more than in any other year since 2009. The newspaper workforce has shrunk by about 20,000 positions, or 39 per cent, in the last 20 years (PEW 2016).

Aim of this Study

In this paper, I am concerned with selecting the news, and more precisely "presenting" it to an audience. The internal factors Östgaard (1965, 40) proposes are "conditioned by the wish to make the news 'newsworthy', 'interesting' or 'palatable' to the public". Since that is part and parcel of the (sub-)editing process, I wanted to establish a link between such news factors (or values) and the internal factors influencing the sub-editors, as it "is they who decide, in the last resort, what is to be presented to the public" (44).

Guided by the concepts of "news values" and "news factors", I aim to take a first step towards defining a number of "sub-editing values" to determine which factors are part of "the woodwork" (Allern 2002, 139) for sub-editors. Just like news values, which determine how much attention a news story is given by a media outlet, I appropriate the term "values" for the production side of news journalism as a broadly agreed set of guidelines or criteria that sub-editors adhere to when intervening in a newspaper article.

By posing the questions: "What are the sub-editor's guiding principles when (s)he is presented with an article?" and "What drives the changes that (s)he decides to make?", I have compiled a list of six "production values"—two of which can be subdivided into two separate guidelines.

I have termed those factors "production values", which originally refers to the technical elements of a production, as the lighting, decor or sound in a film. Such elements are specifically enhanced to increase audience appeal (*Webster's New World College Dictionary* 2016). When one, for example, refers to a film with high production values this means that the quality of elements such as cinematography, props, costumes, special effects, actors, script, editing, soundtrack, etc. is significant. They all play a role in appealing to the audience and convincing them to believe the story is real. Similarly, what we will term "production values" in a sub-editing context are factors determined by the sub-editors' drive to increase readability, thus reader appeal, trust and ultimately newspaper credibility.

Where previously we focused mainly on the product—namely the transformations taking place in the article through comparison of the versions before and after sub-editing (Vandendaele, De Cuypere, and Van Praet 2015)—I am now looking to capture the rationale behind these alterations, and re-formulate those reasons in a number of production values. Crucially, I explicitly link those values to our newsroom research. As this study will demonstrate, going behind the scenes proved an absolute necessity to uncover and categorise the various reasons the sub-editor will give for making a certain change, be it textually, or graphically. My research is therefore very much steeped in practice: I did not only collect data through participant observation and interviews with subeditors, but I also recorded the sub-editing process using the think-aloud protocol. Moreover, as I have been working as a freelance sub-editor since 2008, my own experiences have informed the definition of the production values as well.

In this article, I will first take a closer look

2 For a more in-depth discussion of what the sub-editor does write, cf. Vandendaele, De Cuypere, and Van Praet (2015).

at my data, as well as the methodology I used. Secondly, in order to better frame the sub-editing phase, I will discuss the rather complex news article production process, based specifically on my observations at a large daily British broadsheet. I have identified seven phases: Story Meeting (1), Write-up (2), Design (2+), Layout meeting (3), Checking (4), Sub-editing (5), Revision (6) and Publication (7). Thirdly, I will present a list of six production values, which I compiled based on information from (retrospective) interviews with sub-editors, think-aloud protocol during the sub-editing process and my own professional background. Each of them will be illustrated with (an) example(s) from an article, and (a) quote(s) from a sub-editor. Next, I will zoom in on the sub-editing process of an article featured on the front page of a UK broadsheet, the so-called "splash". More precisely, aided by my observation of the process and interviews, I code the Transformations (Vandendaele, De Cuypere, and Van Praet 2015) by the sub-editor on the case, as well as her/ his reasoning behind them, thus for the first time linking her/his actual interventions to the guidelines (s)he falls back on, i.e. the "production values". I conclude by looking at possible implications of the paper, as well as avenues for future research.

Data and Methodology

For this study, I relied on both ethnographic methods and linguistic analysis. When compiling the list of production values, I preferred a mixed product–production perspective over a product-only perspective: by studying the news production process, I am able to "scrutinize the complex back-and-forth between journalists and the world out there and, in doing so, to unravel the details of institutional contexts, conventions, and procedures as they impact in the news product" (Catenaccio et al. 2011, 1845).

In order to determine which production values are at work during the sub-editing process, I went into various newsrooms, where I observed the reporters, sub-editors and graphic designers during their daily routines and interactions, and partook in the sub-editing process myself. My participant observation was spread over several stints in the newsrooms of larger broadsheets, two of which were based in the United Kingdom (a daily and a Sunday paper), one in Belgium and a final one in the Netherlands, starting in summer 2012 and ending in spring 2016. I recorded my newsroom observations in field notes. During this period I also conducted numerous interviews with sub-editors on their craft, as well as with a number of others involved in the news(paper) production process, ranging from reporters to graphic designers, and editors-in-chiefs. These interviews were recorded and transcribed. I also collected articles in various stages of production, i.e. from when the reporter hands them over to the editor-in-chief to the final published version.

For this paper, I then concentrated on a single case. In March 2016 I captured the sub-editing process carried out by a sub-editor at a large British broadsheet on a front-page article *"in vivo"* through the concurrent think-aloud protocol. Think-aloud protocol is used to gather data in usability testing in product design and product development (Van Den Haak, De Jong, and Jan Schellens 2003), in psychology (Ericsson and Simon 1998) and a range of social sciences (e.g. reading: Davey 1983; writing: Hayes and Flower 1986; translation research: Bernardini 2002; decision making: Lundgrén-Laine and Salanterä 2010; process tracing: Payne 1976). It involves participants thinking aloud as they perform a set of specified tasks, meaning participants are asked to say whatever comes into their mind as they complete said tasks. This might include what they are looking at, thinking, doing and feeling, which gives the observer insight into the participant's cognitive processes (rather than only their final product), and allows thought processes to be made as explicit as possible during task performance. In a formal research protocol, all verbalizations are transcribed and then analysed. Ideally, according to Ericsson and Simon (1980), researchers should aim for thinking-aloud of processes which are naturally verbal— indeed, the literature has shown that think-aloud research methods have a sound theoretical basis and provide a valid source of data about participant thinking, especially during language-based activities. Akyel and Kamisli (1996, 15–16) recommend that think-aloud tasks require "cognitively demanding language use" beyond mere word recognition level so that participants cannot rely on automaticity to perform the task. Charters (2003, 72) describes how a language-based activity at an intermediate level of difficulty for the target group is probably an appropriate task for think-aloud research because it requires more than an automatic response but is not cognitively overwhelming. She also claims that a task that can be broken into shorter units so that it can be worked on one unit at a time is recommended because it would prevent overload of working memory. For these reasons, I decided that the think-aloud method was most appropriate in this case.

After an introductory interview (56 minutes), I asked the participant to speak aloud any words in his mind as he completed the task of sub-editing. I took my cue here from Kuusela and Paul (2000) who distinguished the think-aloud protocol into two different types of experimental procedures. The first is the concurrent think-aloud protocol, collected during the task. The second is the retrospective think-aloud protocol, gathered after the task as the participant walks back through the steps they took previously, often prompted by a video re-

cording. Although a retrospective protocol has less chance to interfere with task performance, in general a concurrent protocol can be more complete. This session —lasting 32 minutes—was audio-recorded so that I could go back and refer to what the sub-editor did and how he commented on his actions. I also collected the articles' various versions (both digitally and on paper) and kept track of the process by making screenshots. Afterwards I conducted a textual analysis of the interventions we ascertained while recording the process, going back to the methods used and typology devised in Vandendaele, De Cuypere, and Van Praet (2015). I then compared and contrasted the product analysis with the process analysis.

I concluded this case study with a retrospective interview—lasting 34 minutes—with the sub-editor, which I again recorded and transcribed. This is in fact the most widely used follow-up strategy. Although it involves difficult retrieval from long-term memory, and may be biased by researcher questioning, Charters (2003, 73) stresses that when retrospective questioning is used only to illuminate and expand on think-aloud results, it may add depth of information about the participant's thought processes.

Apart from my behind-the-scenes research, participant observation, interviews and think-aloud protocol, my own experience in the newsroom as a freelance sub-editor at a large Belgian broadsheet from 2008 onwards has proved to be of enormous value, while compiling the list. It guided my questioning, and helped materialise what have, over the course of time, become instinctive choices into a tangible set of production values.

The Newspaper Production Process

Not much research has been done on what exactly takes place during the sub-editing phase. Most studies focus on the end result, i.e. the finished news article, the reporter or the reader. They look into news reading behaviour, investigate the effect of certain articles through eye-tracking (d'Haenens, Jankowski, and Heuvelman 2004; Holmqvist and Wartenberg 2005; Leckner 2012), but in most cases, the stages prior to the news article in its finished form—including sub-editing—are neglected. Therefore, before zooming in on the sub-editing stage, I will start by dissecting the complete newspaper production process.

By describing the various stages in this process, I move beyond previous research, where we termed everything that happened in between the time the reporter hands in a story to the sub-editing desk and it is published "the sub-editing phase". This time, however, I capture precisely which actions the sub-editor undertakes, and when. At this point I would like to stress that the type and size of a news organisation, its resources, manpower and market orientation clearly influence the internal editorial practices, and particularly how sub-editing is organised. I am aware of the differences between various news organisations, but for reasons of brevity, decided to limit myself to the more established national broadsheets.

During the time I spent in the newsrooms of two Dutch-language broadsheets in Belgium and the Netherlands, and at two large UK broadsheets, I was able to distinguish seven phases of production. In what follows, I describe the phases of the newspaper production process as they presented themselves to me during my fieldwork. I have represented them, and the main actors in these phases in **TABLE 1**. Although there are many similarities between the processes in the various newsrooms I observed, for clarity's sake, I have based this overview upon my observations in the UK daily broadsheet's newsroom.

The "news day" starts with the first phase, i.e. the Story Meeting (Phase 1) during which the stories are pitched, assigned to a reporter, and potential layout, length and deadline are preliminary discussed. Usually the editor-in-chief or his/her deputy leads the meeting. What follows is the Write-up or Scribing stage (Phase 2) in which the assigned reporter(s) write(s) up the story in full by the agreed upon deadline. In case of a "developing" or "breaking" news story, the deadline will be altered or delayed. Simultaneously, there is the Design stage (Phase 2+). On any given day

TABLE 1 — Phases and players in the news production process.

PHASE	NAME	PLAYER(S)
Phase 1	Story meeting	(Deputy) Editor-in-chief, News editor(s), Art director, Reporters, Picture editor
Phase 2	Write-up stage (scribing)	Reporter(s)
Phase 2+[a]	Design stage	Layout designer(s)
Phase 3	Layout meeting	(Deputy) Editor-in-chief, News editor(s), Art director, Production editor
Phase 4	Checking stage	(Deputy) Editor-in-chief or News editor
Phase 5	Sub-editing stage	Production editor and Sub-editor(s)
Phase 6	Revision stage	Production editor/News editor/(Deputy) Editor-in-chief
Phase 7	Publication stage	Printing house

a The addition of "+" refers to stages occurring (quasi) simultaneously.

there might be 40 or 50 people working on this particular newspaper's layout, most of whom are trained designers. Although sub-editors carry out smaller typographical alterations as well, layout design is quite strictly in the hands of the layout designer. The layout designer who is in charge of the front-page design will already draw up an initial version of the front page. Basically, he fits in the fixed components of the front page, i.e. the newspaper's title, a header referring to the following day's most important stories, an opening picture, a pre-defined "box" for the "splash", i.e. the news story the paper will open with, and—sometimes, but not always—another story. This is an on-going phase as how the different elements are given shape can be altered throughout the day, depending on how news events develop.

Next, there is another Meeting (Phase 3), during which the editor-in-chief, news editor(s) and art director decide what goes where on the pages, on layout and design. The production editor, who is in charge of the sub-editors, or one of his/her team of sub-editors, will attend. By then they "probably have some idea" about what will be on the front page. The final decision about what will be featured on page one, is decided at the desk over the course of the day.

Subsequently, there is the Checking stage (Phase 4) during which the editor-in-chief will go over the story for an initial content, length, style and language check. Usually, this happens rather quickly, and few alterations will actually be made. Important (language and/ or content) issues will be flagged up immediately, and communicated to the reporter(s)—in case of serious content concerns, which cannot be dealt with by the sub-editor—and or the sub-editor(s).

The fifth phase, and this paper's main focus, is the Sub-editing stage (Phase 5). Here, the sub-editor takes over and will go over the story in great detail, focusing on issues of language, structure, style, content and length. Every day, a team of about 12 sub-editors work on daily and weekend newspapers in print. At some newspapers, stories are picked up on "a cab rank basis", i.e. the various sub-editors will deal with those that are put in the system one after the other. At other papers, the production editor will assign stories and/or pages to the sub-editors. Interestingly, in this UK newsroom, the sub-editor will sub-edit for the paper and Web versions at the same time. Additional sub-editing specifically for the Web takes place elsewhere, and is carried out by others. The Web-focused sub-editing is mainly centred on length: as the newspaper story has a limited word count, dictated by the space decided on in the Story Meeting, and allocated by the layout designer, the sub-editor is often forced to trim it back. However, the Adobe InCopy system used here allows them to highlight the surplus text, meaning it will later feature in the online version, but not in the paper.[3]

As soon as the sub-editor has finished with a story, it is passed on to the "revise sub", who is in charge of the sixth phase, i.e. the Revision stage (Phase 6). In the case of the front-page splash, however, the editor-in-chief will have a final look. In this phase, there might be discussion about and/or a possible rewriting of the headline, as this is an important way to lure readers in (Dor 2003; Infantidou 2009), and make them buy the paper. Online publication does not include this phase, and therefore the newspaper's webmaster can launch the story online straight away in the Web publication stage (Phase 6+). Finally, after the (deputy) editor-in-chief's final approval, the completed page is sent off to the printer. This is the seventh phase, or Publication stage (Phase 7).

As mentioned before, in this paper I focus on the Sub-editing stage (Phase 5) and the alterations made by the sub-editor during that phase. While coding, however, I also recorded changes made in Phase 3, i.e. the Checking stage, Phase 3+, i.e. the Design stage and Phase 6, i.e. the Revision stage. Although I have records of the interventions in Phase 5+, i.e. the Web sub-editing stage, I will not include these in our analysis and subsequent discussion, as I did not physically observe that part of the process.

Production Values

Inspired by Östgaard's "news factors" and Galtung and Ruge's "news values", my goal was to compile a (preliminary) list of sub-editing or "production values". The questions I asked during this study were: "What are the sub-editor's guiding principles when (s)he is presented with an article?" and "What drives the changes that (s)he decides to make?"

As indicated before, I appropriate the term "values" as a broadly agreed set of guidelines or criteria that sub-editors have in mind as they "tackle" a newspaper article. The term "production", on the other hand, hails from the film world, referring to the technical side of a film production, i.e. every element aimed at in-

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As modern news media dictate, speed is of the essence, so most often a story—or some version of the story—will be put online as soon as possible, i.e. before it is actually printed. This means it will be sub-edited for the Web at more or less the same time by a different sub-editor, focusing on the online newspaper. Web sub-editors are seated elsewhere in the newsroom. We have dubbed this the Web sub-editing stage (Phase 5+). Because we were not able to observe Web sub-editing ourselves, we will not go into it further in this study. We hope to investigate this much closer in a later stage.

creasing audience appeal. However, the term "production" is also informed by my time spent in the newsroom, where a sub-editor discussed him and his colleagues being called "production journalists", versus the reporters, who are the "writing journalists":

> "Production", ... I don't like the word very much because it sounds very technical, it sounds like somebody in overalls with a spanner, although we are metaphorically using spanners with copy. Actually it's everything that has to be done to get it from when the reporter has finished writing, everything that has to be done to get those words to the reader.

So, even though the term "production" stresses the technical side of the newswriting process, in the newsroom itself it is agreed to best describe the process sub-editors take an article through to get a piece of writing from reporter to reader.

In order to test their list's validity, Galtung and Ruge (1965) conducted a content analysis of press cuttings on foreign "events" described in four Norwegian newspapers. These press clippings include "news story, editorial, article (reportage, interview) or letter to the editor" (74). Their analysis involved the coding of a unit (press cutting) according to the presence or absence of specific variables, such as presence or absence of elite nations and/or people, and whether the "mode" was "negative", "positive" or "neutral" (74). It is argued by them that the higher an event's news value, that is: the higher the score on one or more of the news factors, the more likely it will be reported.

Based on my own practice, my fieldwork, the interventions I encountered in my data (i.e. the corpora of articles), and the interviews I conducted pre- and post-sub-editing, I was able to ascertain six guidelines the sub-editors respected when tackling an article, which I have termed the "production values":

1. **KISS (Keep it Short and Simple).**
2. **Get it right.**
3. **Be the reader's guide.**
4. **Know your audience.**
5. **Know your newspaper.**
6. **Make it look good.**

My list of production values is by no means exhaustive. Still, I have decided, for the purposes of this article, to limit myself to those, as I have based them on what was literally verbalised by the sub-editors I observed during their process or in interviews, and my own experience as a sub-editor. Moreover, although in this paper I mainly explore the technical or empirical reasons behind the process of sub-editing, I feel that some acknowledgement of the newsroom socialisation process should be made. Sub-editors, like reporters, acquire an understanding of a particular news organisation's news policy and news values by being immersed in the news production process (Harrison 2009, 66). A particular newspaper's house style or having reports accepted and rejected because they contradict the organisation's news policy teach the sub-editors to duplicate established techniques and styles in the organisational setting in which they work. Thus, newsroom socialisation, be it explicit (formal and managerial) and implicit (informal and collegial), should not be forgotten as a way of informing the sub-editor on how to provide the "right" kind of news, and in which form.

Contrary to Galtung and Ruge, I have opted to formulate the production values as imperative sentences. This was a conscious decision, made on the basis of fieldwork and interviews. I was able to link the sub-editor's guiding values to a number of more general writing principles:

1. **Conciseness.**
2. **Accuracy of language.**
3. **Accuracy of facts and sourcing.**
4. **Clarity.**
5. **Flow.**
6. **Audience appeal.**
7. **Style.**
8. **Design.**

The value Get it Right is linked to the principles of both Language Accuracy and Fact-checking. Writing principles Clarity as well as Flow are linked to the value Be the Reader's Guide. It is worth mentioning that I focus on the treatment of the paper article alone. I am aware of sub-editing for the Web, and how it is quite different. One sub-editor commented:

> In addition to all that stuff, the basics, subs now ... have to do more extra things than they ever had to do, relating to the technology ... For example, they have to know about SEO [search engine optimisation] ... they have to do ... much more work on photographs, on video, on audio. There's quite a lot of technical aspects of the job that didn't used to exist but ... it still hasn't changed the essential nature of it.

I would be entering a completely different world, i.e. that of online publishing, so I have decided to not include "SEO" as a category.
In **TABLES 2–9**, I have provided an overview of the six production values, along with the question(s) a sub-editor might ask before deciding to intervene, some examples and accompanying quotes of the sub-editors.[4]

4
All quotes were recorded and all excerpts were taken from our fieldwork at a UK daily broadsheet in summer 2015 and spring 2016.

TABLE 2 — KISS.

PRODUCTION VALUE	RATIONALE EXPLAINED	QUESTION(S) ASKED BY THE SUB-EDITOR
KISS (Keep It Short and Simple)	Conciseness	Does the story fit? (on the page/the agreed story length) Are things referred to concisely? *"It's about concision, cutting copy back to fit a tighter space."*

EXAMPLES

1. Removal of quotes

"Story is quite a bit too long ... We don't like to clutter up articles with too many quotes"—
"Striking direct quotes is completely routine."

Version a: "If we are going to have another independence referendum I want to know there is support in Scotland for independence that means that referendum is going to be successful," she [said] told Scottish TV.

Version b: []

2. Removal (Web-only mode) of background information and illustrative quotes

"This is not very exciting, just some background info ... It's just not particularly interesting."

Version a: Prof Michael Keating, of the Centre [for] on Constitutional Change at Edinburgh University, said [] Sturgeon knew too many voters were weary of referendums to risk a second vote. Keating predicted that the SNP's popularity would soon dip because of voters' concern over domestic policies. "The shine will wear off, that's inevitable," he said. Keating added that even a split between Scotland and England over whether to remain in the EU in 2017 would not be enough to win a Scottish independence referendum. "That won't be enough itself for people to vote for independence because Europe is a low-key issue; it would have to be combined with something else. Independence would need to be rising higher in the polls for other reasons and then they could say that's a material change in circumstances."

Version b: Prof Michael Keating, of the Centre on Constitutional Change at Edinburgh University, said Sturgeon knew too many voters were weary of referendums to risk a second vote.

TABLE 3 — Get it Right: Accuracy of Language.

PRODUCTION VALUE	RATIONALE EXPLAINED	QUESTION(S) ASKED BY THE SUB-EDITOR
Get it right	Accuracy of language	Are the rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation respected throughout the article? *"Wherever the material comes from; whether it's written by someone who is a good writer, or someone who is a poor writer, [] by the time it appears to be read by the public it should be in [] good English, [] the grammar should be right, the spelling should be right."*

EXAMPLES

1. Removal of "s"—subject–verb agreement

Version a: "But today, polls **shows** backing for a yes vote as high as 55% ... "
Version b: "But today, polls **show** backing for a yes vote as high as 55% ... "

2. Removal of a redundant comma
"I'm just deleting this comma ... It should not be here for grammatical reasons."

Version a: But the reception has been much cooler in Colombia, where audiences have been bemused by the [stars' ropey accents] acting, irritated by its portrayal of the country's recent history, and—in some cases—simply bored by yet another narco-drama.
Version b: But the reception has been much cooler in Colombia, where audiences have been bemused by the acting, irritated by its portrayal of the country's recent history and—in some cases—simply bored by yet another narco-drama.

TABLE 4 — Get it Right: Accuracy of Facts and Sourcing.

PRODUCTION VALUE	RATIONALE EXPLAINED	QUESTION(S) ASKED BY THE SUB-EDITOR
Get it right	Accuracy of facts and sourcing	Is the story clear of any misinformation (times, names, locations), to avoid potential libel suits? *"Obviously we do expect people to get the facts right. Sometimes you don't have time to check every single fact but we generally expect people to [] have a wide-ranging general knowledge and to know stuff."* *"It's about accuracy, to weed out any factual mistakes."*

EXAMPLES

Checking names
"Long live Google! I just checked the name of an MP mentioned here, and found out he doesn't exist: was the name of a snooker player."

Version a: Kelvin Hopkins is one of several Eurosceptic MPs who along with **Darren** Skinner and Ronnie Campbell are backers of Corbyn.
Version b: Kelvin Hopkins is one of several Eurosceptic MPs who along with **Dennis** Skinner and Ronnie Campbell are backers of Corbyn.

TABLE 5 — Be the Reader's Guide: Clarity.

PRODUCTION VALUE	RATIONALE EXPLAINED	QUESTION(S) ASKED BY THE SUB-EDITOR
Be the reader's guide	Clarity	Do things make sense for the intended readership? Is the "anatomy of the article" correct, i.e. are the who, what, where, when, why and how addressed adequately and completely? *"It [the copy] should be absolutely clear and unambiguous."* *"It's about clarity, being clearer, to make the reader understand."* *"One of the things that I'm very keen on is [that] English—English can be a very ambiguous language and you know [] sometimes people can inadvertently write something that could be taken one or two or more ways, so you need to rewrite it or make it absolutely clear, that the messages will be sharp."*

EXAMPLES

1. Replacing ambiguous terms

"People don't know whose 'triggers', or what that means ... We haven't mentioned Scotland ... In general we are assuming more knowledge here."

Version a: **His** triggers include[d] the **UK** parties breaking their "vow" on more powers [last September], **UK** spending cuts, the EU referendum and a divided Labour party.

Version b: **Salmond's** triggers include the **other** parties breaking their "vow" on **devolving** more powers **to Scotland**, **Tory** spending cuts, the EU referendum and a divided Labour party.

2. Word choice to convey newspaper stance

"If we agree with someone 'warns' is fine"—same with 'claims' []. We need to find a balance between always boringly saying 'says'. 'Warns' gives credibility', 'claims' has more scepticism. [] Something only subs think about, is about the weight of words: 'warns' can be okay when it's not politically controversial. 'Says' is completely neutral. We're always looking for active words, alternatives for 'claims', 'says' and 'warns'. 'Insists' is overused by the political writers. I like 'reiterates', because it's okay for an educated audience, and it's quite tight. [] 'Warns' is okay here, though."

Version a: FBI could force us to turn on phone cameras, Apple **says**.

Version b: FBI could force us to turn on phone cameras, Apple **warns**.

TABLE 6 — Be the Reader's Guide: Flow.

PRODUCTION VALUE	RATIONALE EXPLAINED	QUESTION(S) ASKED BY THE SUB-EDITOR
Be the reader's guide	Flow	Are who, what, where, when, why and how addressed as soon as possible? Is the lead not "buried", i.e. does the article get to the point before they get to the point in a timely fashion? Is the article structured logically, i.e. following the classic "inverted pyramid" structure? Is there not too much repetition? Does the text flow smoothly? *"You're an intermediary and you are there to help readers make sense of it."* *"It's about making the world a better, tidier place ... We spend our life making order out of chaos."* *"In the paper it's like an 'eleventh commandment', you never ever repeat the same word in the headline and standfirst (furniture) ... we do anything to avoid repeating it."*

EXAMPLES

1. Removal of "but" + avoiding repetition
"This statement is not in contrast to what is said before ... I'd go for another verb here, seeing she's 'making' a lot 'clear' here."

Version a: **But** Sturgeon has **made clear** she sees *those* polls as clear evidence that she *risks* a second defeat by demanding *a quick* second referendum. *Sturgeon* has already dampened down calls for a rerun within the SNP by refusing to allow a debate on a second referendum at next month's party conference. She **made it clear** at the weekend that the *party's* manifesto *for May's elections* would set out *what* the triggers *would be* for a potential rerun but would not *necessary* pledge to stage *on with*in the next five years.

Version b: [] Sturgeon has **made clear** she sees the polls as clear evidence that she *would be risking* a second defeat by demanding *an early* second referendum. *She* has already dampened down calls *within the SNP* for a rerun by refusing to allow a debate on a second referendum at next month's party conference. She **said** at the weekend that the *SNP* manifesto *next May* would set out [] the triggers [] for a potential rerun but would not necessarily pledge to stage *one* []in the next five years.

2. Avoiding too many subclauses + constructing one sentence
"Although I don't particularly like dashes, I want to get rid of endless subclauses in between commas ... It doesn't make for easy reading."

Version a: That increases the *internal* pressure on Sturgeon from party activists and particularly from Alex Salmond[.] *The former SNP leader*, who is still a talismanic figure for many in the party, *has been* pressing the case for a second referendum and appears to be ignoring Sturgeon's far more cautious stance.

Version b: That increases the [] pressure on Sturgeon from party activists and particularly Alex Salmond[,] her predecessor [–] [] for many in the party [still] a talismanic figure [–] who is still pressing the case for a second referendum and appears to be ignoring Sturgeon's far more cautious stance.

3. Mind punctuation
"I'm deleting this ellipsis here ... This is an example of punctuation slowing the story down."

Version a: Adonis added: "There is no good reason to delay. Crossrail 2 will help keep London moving, create hundreds of thousands of homes across the city ... we should get on with it right away and have the line open by 2033."

Version b: "There is no good reason to delay," Adonis said. "Crossrail 2 will help keep London moving, create hundreds of thousands of homes. We should get on with it right away and have the line open by 2033."

TABLE 7 —— Know your Newspaper.

PRODUCTION VALUE	RATIONALE EXPLAINED	QUESTION(S) ASKED BY THE SUB-EDITOR
Know your newspaper	Style	Are elements such as numbers, capital letters, etc. spelled out and used in the manner agreed upon in the individual newspaper's in-house style? Are rules of language appropriateness (swearing, references to disabilities, age, ethnicity) respected according to the Style Guide? *"Subs are the custodians of style."* *"Style is my life. [] And it isn't just about making sure that we're consistent or that we punctuate properly or we spell [] the president of Egypt the same way every time we mention him. [] It's [] far more important than that. It's about [] embodying our values in the newspaper ... Our style is one of the things that makes [us] different."* *"Whenever I've made any kind of ruling down the years, on this is how we write about race, this is how we write about gender, sexuality, disability or mental illness. It's not about being politically correct []. It's about reflecting the values of the [newspaper] by [] using language that is fair."* *"We've got quite strong guidelines on [] sexist and ageist writing, for example. We don't call people 'grannies' if it's not relevant to the story, which it isn't normally. There's loads of things, but think it's important because it reflects the values of the paper. It's not just about consistency."*

EXAMPLES

1. Avoid hyphens

"We only use hyphens when it's ambiguous, for example 'lion hunting dentist' versus 'lion-hunting dentist'."

"Our style is to use one word whenever possible. Hyphens tend to clutter up text (particularly when the computer breaks already-hyphenated words at the end of lines)."

Version a: "It's ubiquitous," said Richard Gowan, until recently research director at the Centre on International Cooperation, a **think-tank** in New York that works closely with the UN on peacekeeping.

Version b: "It's ubiquitous," said Richard Gowan, until recently research director at the Centre on International Cooperation, a **thinktank** in New York that works closely with the UN on peacekeeping.

2. Removal of adverb "actually"

"The use of the word 'actually'—or adverbs like 'controversially' and 'arguably'—should be avoided in news pieces, as they seem to imply an opinion more than stating fact. You would expect them more in the comment section."

Version a: In 1989 Krikalev became the last Soviet Union cosmonaut: he was **actually** in the space station when the world into which he was born in 1958 disintegrated.

Version b: In 1989 Krikalev became the last Soviet Union cosmonaut: he was in the space station when the world into which he was born in 1958 disintegrated.

3. Avoid questions in headlines

"If they don't know, why am I reading this paper?"

4. Use of semi-colon

"I read it and put a semi-colon in there, when originally, there was a colon. This would never happen in a tabloid. In the Sun, they would opt for a dash, or a full stop.[] Something as simple as that piece of punctuation reflects our style."

Version a: The message couldn't have been clearer: Dan wasn't some Fairtrade cappuccino drinking member of the metropolitan elite, he was a real Dan the Man of the Working People.

Version b: The message couldn't have been clearer; Dan wasn't some Fairtrade cappuccino drinking member of the metropolitan elite, he was a real Dan the Man of the Working People.

5. Dealing with swear words

"We believe our audience is grown-up enough to deal with swear words. This word is being used in a direct quote anyway."

"There are very few things that are outright banned. We trust reporters to use their judgement. A couple of medical terms ... like 'Siamese twins' become 'conjoined twins', because that's offensive. 'Actor' versus 'actress'. Nancy Reagan is an actress, so is Marilyn Monroe, as they hail from an era when that word was always used. Judi Dench, on the other hand, is an actor. Different times, different context."

Version a: Two lines from the end of The Patriotic Traitor on Tuesday night, Fox altered the script and turned to a man who had been heckling throughout, shouting: "I won't bother telling you the story because this **cunt** in the front row has ruined it for everybody."

Version b: Two lines from the end of The Patriotic Traitor on Tuesday night, Fox turned to a man who had been heckling throughout and shouted: "I won't bother telling you the story because this **cunt** in the front row has ruined it for everybody."

TABLE 8 — Know your Audience.

PRODUCTION VALUE	RATIONALE EXPLAINED	QUESTION(S) ASKED BY THE SUB-EDITOR
Know your audience	Appeal	Is the target audience drawn in? Are elements in place to "seduce" your reader to start reading, and keep on reading? *"Put a good headline on it, make people want to read it, and do it quickly and accurately."* *"We think that we know who the readers are [] We think we know which readers we're aiming at [] we know what we regard as the readership [], and so the story that we're presenting is something that we feel is clear and well- expressed English that is aimed at our audience."* *"We have got an idea of our readership, which is generally left of centre and liberal."* *"It becomes instinctive: you think you know what to expect."* *"You have got to preserve the original voice of the writer, make sure it's good English, and make sure it is understood and appreciated by an educated readership."* *"It's about appeal, being appealing, to attract the reader."*

EXAMPLES

1. Reference to pop culture in photo caption

"I thought it would be a clever reference ... You can do that, as it's not hard news."

Version a: [] *(pictures of singers Liam Gallagher and Nicole Appleton leaving the family court where they are getting divorced.)*

Version b: Don't look back in anger

2. Highlighting provenance of reporter

"We want to show our readers we were there."

Version a: Christopher Dhontski

Version b: Christopher Dhontski Scotland editor

3. Select appropriate pictures

"A picture often says more than a thousand words. But here we need to see the guys, not just the wreckage" [while explaining the choice to publish the deceased band members in happier times much larger than the crash]."

TABLE 9 — Make it Look Good.

PRODUCTION VALUE	RATIONALE EXPLAINED	QUESTION(S) ASKED BY THE SUB-EDITOR
Make it look good	Design	Is the "furniture" (headlines, subheaders, quotes, graphs, illustrations, pictures, captions, etc.) in place? *"[We make sure] there are good headlines on it, and standfirsts, and the captions are good and the pictures are the right pictures and just generally produce a high-quality printed newspaper."*

EXAMPLES

1. Add a headline
"'Explains' is not a headline word, because it's boring. The original title is far too dull and assumes prior knowledge—who are Viola Beach?"

Version a: Police **explain** road crash that killed Viola Beach band members
Version b: Police **blame** "inattention" for road accident that killed Viola Beach members

2. Headline length
"I'm gonna make this headline longer. The readers don't mind, but we do."
"I don't know why we worry about shape so much, I guess implicitly we believe the reader does as well."

Version a: Woman found guilty of kidnapping baby
Version b: South African court finds woman guilty of kidnapping baby Zephany

3. Add a standfirst
"It's [the standfirst] part of the article's make-up ... We don't mention the referendum in the headline ... Now we can get it in! ... You'll want to read it now."

Version a: []
Version b: Sturgeon tells Cameron: change your policies or face a second referendum

While I coded each transformation carried out by the sub-editor, and subsequently coded the rationale behind it, I was occasionally faced with more than one underlying motivation, or production value, at play. Although the sub-editor verbalised most of his reasoning, it appeared that, either based on comparable transformations I observed, informed by what other sub-editors claimed, as well as my own professional experience, there clearly was another reason to be noted. In those cases, I have therefore coded both the "dominant" reason, and the "recessive" reason.

One example is the following alteration of a time reference, about which the sub-editor said: "We always change this for the paper, to make it more timely, but never online."

Version a: In a speech **on Friday** to mark the first anniversary of last year's independence referendum...
Version b: In a speech **today** to mark the first anniversary of last year's independence referendum...

I could either label this transformation as the sub-editor wanting to get the facts straight ("Get it Right: Facts"), or because he wants to guide the reader, and make the timing more clear ("Be the Reader's Guide: Clarity"). Fortunately, I was able to probe the sub-editor afterwards about his reasoning: getting the facts right was "dominant" in his view, whereas here the "Clarity" aspect was "recessive".

Case Study: The Splash

In previous research we focused on what takes place in the sub-editing phase (i.e. which alterations, or interventions, are done after the reporter has written the story, and it is published; Vandendaele, De Cuypere, and Van Praet 2015), whereas now I want to uncover why exactly the sub-editor in particular carries out certain

transformations. In other words: what guides the sub-editor when intervening in an article, and can I perhaps link the interventions to the production values?

In order to gain insight into the guidelines behind the sub-editing process, I decided to focus on the observation and subsequent analysis of a single case, i.e. the sub-editing of the "splash" or front-page article at a large British broadsheet. The article was published on 11 March 2016.[5] As is usually the case at this newspaper, the sub-editor in charge of the splash was the production editor himself. I interviewed him beforehand, and audio-recorded his process relying on the think-aloud protocol. Additionally, I took notes, kept track of the various alterations via screenshots and conducted a retrospective interview afterwards.

I compared two versions of this front-page news article. The "initial" version is the article the reporter sent to the news desk. The "final" version is the article, which was put on the page by the layout designer, checked by the editor, tackled by the sub-editor, cleared for publication and published.

The story was checked by the editor-in-chief at 8.22 pm. The copy then arrived at the sub-editing desk at 8.25 pm. The sub-editor sent the article back to the editor-in-chief at 8.57 pm and it was approved by 9 pm, meaning the sub-editing process (Phase 5) lasted 32 minutes. Since nothing was altered in the Revision stage by the news editor (Phase 6), the sub-editor's version was in fact the "final" one (Phase 7: Publication).

For the coding of the interventions, I made use of the categories we devised in a previous study (Vandendaele, De Cuypere, and Van Praet 2015).

In what follows, I provide a brief discussion of my analysis and some preliminary findings.

The Sub's Interventions and Production Values

During the transformation from this news story into a front-page splash exactly 100 alterations were made. I coded each of these interventions, of which 61 were purely textual and 39 were graphic, i.e. related to layout.

The art director made 40 alterations in the Design phase (Phase 2+). Of these, 39 were purely graphic, which we coded as Replacements to "Make it Look Good" (Design) and "Know your Newspaper" (internal style guide). He made one textual Addition, i.e. a page reference as the story was continued on the next page. I categorised this as "Be the Reader's Guide: Flow". Of those 100 interventions, the news editor carried out three in the Checking stage (Phase 4)—all his interventions were coded as Replacements related to spelling. The underlying production values were therefore coded as "Get it Right" (Accuracy of Language; dominant), and "Know your Newspaper", i.e. harking back to the newspaper's internal agreements (recessive). I decided to discard the news editor's and art director's interventions for further analysis, as I focus on the sub-editor. This means I am left with 57 interventions, all of them textual. Among the sub-editor's interventions I coded 23 Replacements (40.35 per cent), 17 Deletions (29.82 per cent), 11 Additions (19.29 per cent) and 6 Translocations (10.52 per cent).

I proceeded by coding the underlying production value for each of the interventions. Below, I provide a brief overview per intervention type.

Replacements.
I found that most of the 23 Replacements, i.e. 9, were done by the sub-editor as the "Reader's Guide", 5 of which for Clarity's sake and 4 for reasons of Flow. The sub-editor carried out 8 Replacements in order to "Get it Right", of which 6 to correct the Language, and 2 Factual changes. Five Replacements were done for stylistic reasons, dictated by the newspapers internal agreements ("Know your Newspaper").

Deletions.
Of the 17 Deletions I encountered, the majority (10) was carried out motivated by Conciseness ("KISS"). For reasons of newspaper style ("Know your Newspaper"), 2 Deletions were made. The sub-editor made 4 Deletions as the "Reader's Guide"—2 for the sake of Clarity and 2 to make the text Flow better. A single Deletion was made to correct the Language ("Get it Right: Accuracy of Language").

Additions.
I counted 11 Additions in total. Two Additions were made by the sub-editor to get the text in accordance with his newspaper's agreed upon style ("Know your Newspaper"), 2 Additions were motivated by the sub-editor's role as the "Reader's Guide: Flow" and 1 Addition was done to correct the language use ("Get it Right: Accuracy of Language"). Most Additions could be categorised under "Reader's Guide: Clarity".

Translocations.
I encountered 6 Translocations, of which 2 were done by the sub-editor because of internal stylistic reasons ("Know your Newspaper"). Four Translocations were motivated by the Flow of the text ("Reader's Guide: Flow").

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We decided not to include the full article in its various versions for reasons of brevity. Moreover, the case study is included here to illustrate the links between Transformations and production values. In a follow-up study, these will be explored further and in more detail (Vandendaele, forthcoming).

Discussion

Armed with these insights, I attempted to link the production values to the interventions the sub-editor made. Contrary to our previous study, I encountered more Deletions than Additions in this particular news story. When probed, the sub-editor cited the layout of the splash as the main reason: the front page is required to have a certain amount of elements (newspaper title, header with the paper's main stories, date and price, advertisements(s), a large image and another (shorter) opening story). Therefore, I found coding the production values behind the Deletions in particular most straightforward: there simply was not enough space, "not because it is bollocks". Consequently, a number of sentences and quotes were deleted in the newspaper version, but did appear in full in the online version.

I not only expected more Additions, but also assumed most of them would be to "Make it Look Good". In other words, I expected a headline, standfirst, pull quote, photo caption, etc., to be added, as the importance of the "furniture"—especially for a splash— was stressed by the sub-editors time and time again. During the retrospective interview, I was in fact told that this was an example of "beautifully clean copy", which had arrived at the news desk with both a headline and a standfirst. They were, however, altered for reasons of Clarity ("Reader's Guide") and cut back for Conciseness ("KISS").

Based on this single case, I can carefully conclude that most Replacements were undertaken motivated by the sub-editor's role as the "Reader's Guide" (Clarity and Flow). I found that Additions were mostly done for Clarity's sake, whereas there is a tenuous link between Flow ("Reader's Guide") and Translocations. Not surprisingly, most Deletions were done to keep the text Concise ("KISS").

Conclusions and Future Research

My aim was to uncover more about newspaper sub-editing by moving on from merely looking at the Transformations we observe in the final article (Vandendaele, De Cuypere, and Van Praet 2015), but also laying bare the sub-editor's underlying guidelines when intervening during the sub-editing process. My list of "production values" is of added value to our previous product analysis as it helps explain elements in sub-editing I could not have disclosed otherwise. Once more the importance of going in the field becomes clear: if it were not for participant observation, interviews with practitioners and my own professional background, I could not have reached the same conclusions about the "often-forgotten but important rewrite men" (Östgaard 1965, 42) and their process.

In the end, all six production values are aimed at improving the reader's experience, be it by getting spelling and grammar correct, trimming back superfluous content, making sure a story is unambiguous and factually correct, or by simply making it attractive to the readership. I could claim that in fact "reader appeal" is the ultimate production value. In fact, this was constantly flagged up during interviews and in the newsroom. Interestingly, being reader-oriented is second nature to the subs. One sub-editor even stated: "It becomes instinctive: We're not even thinking of the reader", underlining how presentation of the news is always "audience-oriented" (Östgaard 1965, 45).

Clearly, additional research is required. I am currently finalising a follow-up study (Vandendaele, forthcoming) in which I explore this topic further by tackling a larger corpus of articles. Moreover, I have organised a number of focus groups and experiments with both sub-editors and layout designers in order to establish firmer links between the Transformations and the underlying production values. Preliminary results reveal the close relationship between design and content, and will help re-evaluate the production values in their current form. This study will clearly illustrate the production values in practice, further highlighting the collective character of news stories, and both the sub-editors' and the layout designers' crucial roles in the shared effort.

Going back to this study's title, *Trust me, I'm a sub-editor*, I wish to emphasise that sub-editing goes beyond appealing to the reader. Everything boils down to getting it right in order for the publication to remain credible, and therefore deserving of the readership's trust, as the production chief at the British broadsheet explained:

If they can't trust you to know how to use an apostrophe, if you're sloppy with punctuation, if you're sloppy with spelling. If you make elementary factual errors, or grammatical errors, then why should you be trusted with anything? I mean it just, it's all about building up trust.

The sub-editor as intermediary between reader and his/her newspaper needs to maintain a high standard of editorial quality to protect the publication's credibility. The sub-editor is therefore not only the reader representative in the newsroom, but also his/her newspaper's strongest brand ambassador in the real world, adding journalistic value with every alteration.

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A practitioner perspective

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Vandendaele, Astrid. 2017.

**Designing the news:
A practitioner perspective on the production values in newspaper sub-editing.”**

Submitted to *Journalism*.

Abstract

This article zooms in on the daily practices of newspaper production journalists. In three semi-structured qualitative interviews with pairs of sub-editors and layout designers employed by a Belgian quality newspaper, I test the practical application of the 'production values' I previously formulated (Vandendaele, 2017), i.e. guidelines that help them ensure accuracy and readability – therefore appeal and credibility – of their newspaper. By not only 'member checking' (Birt et al, 2016) previous findings with sub-editors, but also including the layout designers' input on their collaborative process, I re(de)fine my original set of production values.

On the basis of these practitioners' input on their collaborative process, I re(de)fine my original set of production values. My data suggest that in this particular newsroom the layout designer's voice can be heard louder than ever. Furthermore, looking closely at the production journalists' shared community of practice and uncovering their tacit knowledge, deepens our understanding of this stage in professional newswriting, and journalistic craft as a whole.

Keywords

Sub-editing, newspapers, news production processes, newswriting, newspaper design

Introduction

Newswriting, "the production of true, relevant, readable, understandable, reliable and interesting information" (Grunwald, 2005: 65), is a team effort, practiced through "institutional patterns of collaboration" (Perrin, 2013: 12) within "the confounds of continuous deadlines" (Deuze, 2005: 449). The fact that news is 'constructed' (Molotch and Lester, 1974; Tuchman, 1978) "suggests that it is socially constructed, elaborated in the interaction between the newsmaking players with one another" (Schudson, 1989: 275). Research has shown that the complicated series of collaborative production procedures of newsmaking is ever prone to change. Convergence between print and digital media production (Boczkowski, 2004; Hay and Couldry, 2011; Undurraga, 2016), the changing role of news agencies (Boyer, 2011, 2013), increasing imitation between media outlets (Boczkowski, 2010; Powers and Benson, 2014), growing commercial pressures in media organizations (Benson and Hallin, 2007; Klinenberg, 2005), citizen input in newsmaking via social media (Usher, 2014) and audience quantification (Anderson, 2011), have seriously altered journalistic practices, and newsmaking in the Internet age. It therefore continues to be useful for both journalism researchers and practitioners to map out what happens to journalistic texts on the long way between newsdesk and newspaper. In this study I focus on the printed newspaper within this changing media landscape, which – although considered a 'traditional' medium – continues to bring us most news, and to generate more sales than online news (Rogers, 2017).

Linguistically based approaches to the analysis of professional language use identify newswriting research as a gap (Cotter, 2010; NT&T, 2011; Perrin, 2013), and worth exploring. Scrutinizing the linguistics of newswriting equals "challenging and unpicking of journalists' 'common sense' explanations of their craft" (Harcup, 2011: 33). This kind of research also benefits the practitioners, as they can increase insight into their own craft, and are encouraged to "think critically" about their process (Zelizer, 2009: 38).

Journalism studies tend to concentrate on the reporters as the drivers behind the news production process, whereas the journalists operating behind the scenes are often overlooked in research, by the reader, and even in the newsroom (Vandendaele and Jacobs, 2014). This paper focuses on the unseen 'production journalists' (Ursell, 2004: 45; National Council for the Training of Journalists, n.d.), i.e. sub-editors and layout designers, whose distinct yet inextricably connected daily newsroom practices keep the engine room of the newspaper afloat.[1]

Keith (2015: 49) mentions that the copy desk, home of the sub-editor, when studied at all, has been portrayed as a place of problems, not of power. Traditionally, the relationship between sub-editors and reporters has been tense, as published errors can often be attributed to the editing process (Cranberg, 1987). Sub-editors hold a position of substantial power, as they are the 'final frontier' before news reaches the reader. They edit articles, write headlines and captions, and enforce their newspaper's style at the copy desk. They are, in effect, the reader, seeing copy through their eyes. Layout designers, on the other hand, are responsible for designing the format of their newspaper, and assembling text, photographs and other content in an aesthetically pleasing and easy-to-read manner. Together they represent the heart of production at a newspaper.

The production journalists' practices are particularly interesting to look into today, in a changing news media landscape which sees many newsrooms dismantling their copy desks, centralizing sub-editing and design functions for various publications in a single (overseas) 'sub hub', and even eliminating traditional sub-editing for online news (Channick, 2011; Keith, 2009; Lypny, 2013; Myers, 2012; Keith, 2015).

In her 2015 study of the "largely unsung" material artefacts of 20th-century newspaper journalism – the U-shaped copy desk, stylebooks, pica sticks, proportion wheels, and paper dummies – Keith illustrates the power shifts between three crucial players in US newsrooms. Whereas from the 1920s to the 1970s the copy desk (the sub-editor) was in charge, this faded over the following decades. Power shifted from the 1970s into the 1980s to the writer (reporter), and from the late 1980s into the 21st century to the (layout) designer. Keith concludes that the era of the designer recently ended, and suggests that the second decade of the 21st century might be the era of news-crafters connected with newspapers' online or mobile entities.

With this in mind, I investigate the situation in the newsroom of a Belgian newspaper in the second decade of the 21st century. I zoom in on the 'production values' at work in the final stage of the news production process (Vandendaele, 2017a), i.e. guidelines sub-editors use when altering an article: (1) KISS (Keep it Short and Simple), (2) Get it right ((a) language accuracy and (b) facts and sources), (3) Be the reader's guide ((a) Clarity and (b) Flow), (4) Know your newspaper (style), (5) Know your audience (reader appeal), and (6) Make it look good (design). In three focused interviews with pairs of sub-editors and layout designers I test the workability of the proposed production values. In consultation with the practitioners I aim to re(de)fine the original set.

By observing and questioning the sub-editors' and layout designers' community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), my goal is to

1 In American newsrooms 'copy editor' is commonly used. As I focus on European newsrooms, I opted for the British English equivalent 'sub-editor'.

uncover the tacit knowledge (Nonaka, 1991) they share. Guided by the idea that critical inquiry and research can lead to 'better journalism' (McChesney and Scott, 2004), this study hopes to contribute to both journalism research and journalistic practice. Furthermore, as a sub-editor myself, my underlying motivation for this study is to improve editorial practices and enhance my own production.

This paper is structured as follows: first, I situate this article among my previous research, and explain the current focus. Second, I describe the methodology used. Next, the practitioners are interviewed about the original production values in practice. I then discuss the main findings, and revisit the production values. I conclude this paper with some implications of these outcomes, and provide suggestions for future research.

Previous research and current focus

To start with, we looked at the sub-editors within their natural habitat, the newsroom, and how its layout influences the process of sub-editing (Vandendaele and Jacobs, 2014). Being a freelance sub-editor, I was confronted with the benefits of having a practitioner background, but also faced difficulties when conducting research from within the newsroom (Vandendaele, 2017b). We then focused on what happens in the sub-editing stage by analysing a corpus of articles – collected at a Belgian newspaper in fall 2013 – before and after sub-editing (Vandendaele et al, 2015). The articles were divided into six different types (front-page news articles, headline news articles, long news articles, medium news articles, short news articles and news wire articles), depending on genre, design, topic, source and length. After comparing both versions, we identified four 'Interventions' in the sub-editing stage: Deletions, Additions, Replacements, or Translocations (where something was moved). We discovered that not only more is added than deleted during the sub-editing phase, but that what is added (headlines, captions, streamers) is actually read the most. We concluded that the sub-editor plays an important part in actually 'selling' the paper, which warrents their closer scrutiny in today's media landscape.

In a follow-up study (Vandendaele, 2017a), I wanted to identify the rationale behind the sub-editors' Interventions. I took the lead from Östgaard's 'factors influencing the flow of news' (1965), and from the much-explored concept of 'news values' (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Westerståhl and Johansson, 1994; Palmer, 1998; Niblock and Machin, 2007; Bednarek and Caple, 2017 etc.). Since research on news values is still mainly text-focused, I link the specific practice of sub-editing and the study of news values to the work of scholars who have studied news values in a production context (Bell, 1991; Cotter, 2010, etc.). Looking at the sub-editors at work in newsrooms in the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands (participant observation, think-aloud protocol), as well as the articles in various stages of production, and informed by (retrospective) interviews, I compiled a preliminary list of six production values *(See* **TABLE 1***)*.

These production values are aimed at improving the reader's experience, by getting the language absolutely correct, trimming back superfluous text, making sure a story is factually correct and unambiguous, or by making it an

TABLE 1 — Production values in sub-editing.

1. KISS (Keep It Short and Simple)	Conciseness *"Make sure the story fits, avoid repetition, brevity" (SE2_UK)*
2. Get it right	a. Accuracy of language *"Weed out each and every linguistic mistake" (SE3_UK)* b. Accuracy of facts and sourcing *"Facts and sources must be double-checked" (SE2_UK)*
3. Be the reader's guide	a. Clarity *"Present information as clearly as possible" (SE2_UK)* b. Flow *"Text must be structured logically" (SE1_UK)*
4. Know your newspaper	Style *"Particular choices, listed in the style guide" (SE1_UK)*
5. Know your audience	Reader appeal *"Lure the reader in, any chance you get" (SE1_UK)*
6. Make it look good	Design *"Be different, stand out, be bold" (SE3_UK)*

Note: Quotes were taken from interviews with three sub-editors at a British broadsheet in March 2016.

attractive read. I concluded that 'reader appeal' could be interpreted as the sub-editors' overarching production value. Hence, sub-editors can be considered their newspaper's best brand ambassadors.

In this study, I confront both sub-editors and layout designers, i.e. the main players in the sub-editing stage of the newspaper production process, with those production values. Relying on their practitioner perspective on the existing coding system, the aim is to fine-tune my production values, and to re(de)fine where necessary. My research questions are as follows:

1. **How do production journalists, i.e. newspaper sub-editors and layout designers, respond to the production values I deduced?**

2. **Do these production values hold their own within their community of practice, or should they be modified?**

3. **What does this reveal about this stage in the news production process?**

Methodology

Taking newswriting as an object of study often implies analysing the products only. In fact, "investigating text production processes in media workplaces remains a gap in (...) writing research, journalism studies, and applied linguistics" (Perrin, 2013: xi). In my on-going study of sub-editing, I have therefore consistently combined ethnographic methods (participant observation in newsrooms, interviews) with comparative linguistic analysis of journalistic texts.

First, I collected 36 articles during a week of fieldwork in a Belgian newspaper's newsroom in 2015, dating from the eleventh until the eighteenth of February. This particular newspaper is owned by a media and publishing company from Belgium with media assets in Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark. The paper, with its headquarters near Brussels, is known for being independent and progressive in tone. According to its publisher's website it is aimed at "a young and highly educated audience looking for quality reporting, background information and interpretation of the news". The production journalists at this newspaper are bound by a collective professional identity, which generally concurs with the mission of the publishing house: Fieldwork indicated that they have got a clear idea of their readership, which is "generally left of centre and liberal."

I coded all Interventions carried out in the sub-editing stage (Vandendaele et al, 2015) in an Excel file. Contrary to previous work (Vandendaele, 2017a), I did not code the production values the sub-editor(s) identified. Instead, I did so myself informed by earlier research, and my own experience as a practitioner. When I felt two production values guided the Intervention, I coded both – one was labelled 'dominant', the other 'recessive'. These terms were borrowed from genetics and indicate which production value is more outspoken (dominant) and which one is present, but less clearly so (recessive).

I then organised three semi-structured interviews with pairs of practitioners, each consisting of a sub-editor and a layout designer employed by the same Belgian newspaper. These set-ups, in which a single researcher interviews two participants of relatively equal status, are known as dyads (Anderson, 1994; Lindgreen, 2001). My first-hand experience as a sub-editor in that same newsroom provided me with ample insight into the substantial role both designers and sub-editors play. This was confirmed during my fieldwork, when I observed the (physical) interventions of both practitioners in each article, and their close collaboration throughout the process. Whereas at this paper the production editor is responsible for assigning stories to the page, the splash, the rest of the front page, page 2 and 3 are arrived at in conference. The actual design of each individual page is up to the layout designer and sub-editor in charge of that page, closely monitered by the newspaper's art director and production editor.

To find the necessary informants, I contacted several production journalists via email, in which I briefly introduced the study. I knew all of them through fieldwork, and as colleagues. Three sub-editors and three layout designers were willing to participate. One of the sub-editors was female, all five other practitioners were male – a valid representation of the gender balance among the production journalists in that newsroom in 2015. The same Belgian newspaper employed them all full-time, although the layout designers took on additional work as freelancers. Their experience (in this particular position, but not necessarily at this newspaper) ranged from 'junior' (0-3 years), to 'midweight' (3-5 years) and 'senior' (5+ years) *(See* **TABLE 2***)*.

Doing this, I actually engaged in 'member checking', which is also known as 'participant or respondent validation', a technique for exploring the credibility of results. I confront participants, who were previously involved in this study, with data or results to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences (Birt et al, 2016).

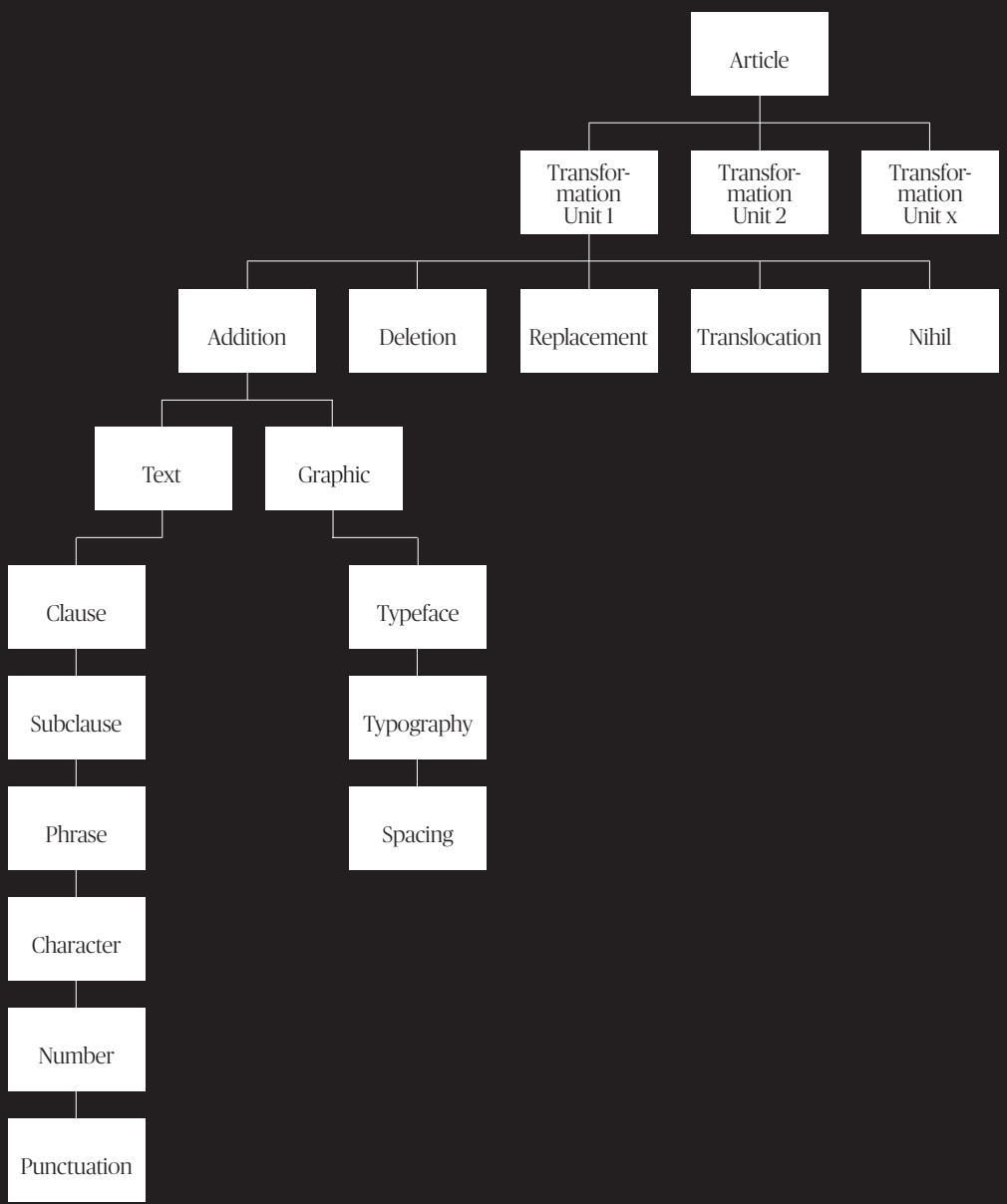
The three in-depth paired interviews took place away from the newsroom in November-December 2016, at the university. The participants were guaranteed anonymity, which encouraged them to speak freely.[2]

All informants, including myself, were sat at a desk, facing a computer screen. Each team of practitioners was given a handout containing a schematic overview of the coding system (Vandendaele et al, 2015), and a brief explanation of the production values (Vandendaele, 2017a) *(See* **FIGURE 1***)*.

TABLE 2 ——— Informant information.

PRACTITIONER	FUNCTION	TAG	GENDER	EMPLOYMENT	EXPERIENCE
		DYAD 1			
MV	Sub-editor	SE1	Male	Full-time	Midweight
LV	Graphic designer	LD1	Male	Full-time	Midweight
		DYAD 2			
TC	Sub-editor	SE2	Female	Full-time	Senior
FH	Graphic designer	LD2	Male	Full-time	Midweight
		DYAD 3			
BF	Sub-editor	SE3	Male	Full-time	Midweight
TM	Graphic designer	LD3	Male	Full-time	Junior

FIGURE 1 ——— Schematic overview of the Intervention coding process.



When the production journalists noticed the numbering of the production values, they inferred the existence of a hierarchy, which they immediately opposed to. I explained the order – if any – was up for discussion. The interviewees then indicated a hierarchy does exist, but not necessarily the suggested one. Clearly, a possible order provided a necessary avenue for questioning.

Next, the practitioners were handed printouts of the six articles – one version pre- and another one post-sub-editing – to be discussed during the interviews *(See* **FIGURE 2***)*.

The informants were then shown an abbreviated version of the Excel spreadsheet on screen, containing one coded article per article type. I made sure the practitioners were never confronted with their own work, as this might tempt them to reconstruct events, or even trigger a defensive stance.

All documents were clarified at the start, and questions were answered as they arose. In order to avoid loss of focus, I had defined a number of questions beforehand. During the sessions, each practitioner was asked to comment on the coding of twenty separate cases, selected in advance because I found the production values to be problematic.

The interviews lasted two hours on average. They were audio-recorded in order to ensure reliability and transcribed at a later stage to allow analysis.[3] All transcripts are available on demand. Because the informants were familiar with one another, the atmosphere during the interviews was conversational.

Reflecting on these set-ups, I can conclude that instead of dyads, they were actually triads, i.e. three-person social groups. I found myself participating as a sub-editor, and speaking from my own experience. From a research perspective this proved to be beneficial: each of the interviewees disclosed how they enjoyed discussing their craft, and did not feel like "an object of study". I was allowed to examine each production journalist's experience in detail, and able to reveal underlying subjective motivation.

FIGURE 2 ——— Versions of front-page article pre-sub-editing (left) and post-sub-editing (right).

Hoewel de christelijke en liberale vakbond –nipt- hebben ingestemd met het sociaal akkoord, komen er toch gemeenschappelijke acties tegen de besparingsmaatregelen van Michel I. Die contradictie wordt niet gemaakt bij de werkgevers: "Ze dreigen in eigen vel te snijden."

Het ontwerpakkoord van de Groep van Tien, met onder meer een lichte loonsverhoging, kan bij het ACV maar op 52 procent jastemmen rekenen. Een historisch diepterust, dat zijn sporen nalaat. Marc Leemans, voorzitter van het ACV, hinkt op twee benen. Hij wil het bereikte akkoord binnen de Groep van Tien grijpen. Meer zaz er niet in, beseft hij. Maar toch komen er acties. Leemans wil de besparingsmaatregelen van Michel I- met de indexsprong op kop- weg. Dat dit niet eens onderwerp was van het sociaal akkoord, dat detail wordt voor het gemak even van tafel geveegd.

Politicoloog Carl Devos wijst op dat slepende schisma. "Het ACV heeft moeite met die dubbelzinnigheid. Enerzijds sluit ze binnen het sociaal overleg een akkoord met de regering. Een regering die dat akkoord ook gretig uitspeelt. Vooral de CD&V en Kris Peeters op kop zagen het sociaal overleg gered. En zo konden ze die verzelende socialisten van het ABVV in de hoek van de onredelijke oppositie zetten. Met deze stemming kan dat niet volgehouden worden." Vooral het ABVV hangt naar een nieuwe algemene staking, een actieterm die Leemans voorzalnog niet in de mond neemt. Maar ook de regeringspartijen hinken op twee benen.

De werkgevers kijken met groeiende ergernis naar het schouwspel. Er is vooral onbegrip omdat het sociaal overleg op deze manier uitgeheld wordt. Werk nut heeft het nog om aan tafel te zitten met deze sociale partners. Een akkoord pakken, en er dan meteen acties aan koppelen. Met deze wens van akkoorden sluiten gaan de vakbonden zichzelf tegenkomen, zegt een lid van de Groep van Tien. "Sociaal overleg, bekijk het verder zelf maar."

Pieter Timmermans van het Verbond van Belgische Ondernemingen (VBO): "De vakbonden moeten individueel goed nadenken waarmee ze bezig zijn. We hebben een sociaal akkoord gesloten, om in alle sereniteit op sociaalvlak verder te overleggen. Als dat sereen klimaat weg is dan ondermijn je meteen ook de bereikte akkoorden. De vakbonden dreigen in eigen vel te snijden." Ook Karel Van Eetvelt van Unizo klinkt scherp. "Dit is een aanfluiting van het pas gesloten sociaal akkoord. Het kan niet zijn dat weinige wat bedrijven uit het sociaal akkoord winnen, door de economische schade als gevolg van die acties wordt teniet gedaan." De zo geprezen sociale stabiliteit die was bereikt, staat hiermee volledig op de helling.

De regering blijft voorlopig ogenschijnlijk rustig. "Wij verwelkomen de goedkeuring van het ACV", zegt minister van Werk Kris Peeters (CD&V), bij monde van zijn woordvoerder. Ook Open Vld-voorzitter Alexander De Croo zegt via zijn woordvoerder dat "met mensen van goede wil te werken valt". Maar tegelijk blijft er dus de dreiging van nieuwe acties. Iets wat de regering absoluut wil vermijden. De vakbonden worden daarom opgeroepen om rond de tafel te blijven zitten. "Aan tafel kan je beter praten dan op straat", laat Peeters weten. Volgens hem is de ontmoeting van het kernkabinet met de Groep van Tien vanochtend een signaal dat de regering meteen werk wil maken van het akkoord. Hetzelfde geluid bij N-VA. "We moeten nu zo snel mogelijk de geplande maatregelen invoeren. Want die zijn niet bedoeld om onze economie te versterken en meer jobs te creëren", zegt Kamerlid en sociaal expert Zuhal Demir. Volgens haar hebben nieuwe stakingen geen zin. De mensen zijn het best en het ondermijnt onze economie, aldus Demir. (AVI/ADH/LID)

2 Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants are central to this study. To conceal their identities I refer to the sub-editors as SE1, SE2 and SE3 and the layout designers as LD1, LD2 and LD3. This way the confidentiality of the data provided by the participants is maintained.

3 All transcripts are available on demand.

Production values to the test

In this section I will go over a selection of cases from the corpus to illustrate where, after 'member checking' with the practitioners, I had to alter the original production values. The cases I discuss pertain to the production values KISS (Keep it Short and Simple), Be the reader's guide (Clarity and Flow), Know your newspaper (Style), Know your audience (Reader appeal), and Make it look good (Design).[4]

KISS (Keep it Short and Simple)

In the body text of a front-page article, or 'splash', a number of deletions were made in one particular sentence: both an article and a subclause had been removed.[5] I had identified the underlying production value 'KISS', meaning the items had been deleted for lack of space, and conciseness. However, SE3 disagreed. He explained that a definite article in front of the name of a political party was considered "coarse":

> I feel it sounds too Flemish, as if it was written in a dialect.

Although actually generally accepted, at this newspaper they avoided this word. SE3 therefore considered this an internal agreement, and coded it 'Know your newspaper: Style'.

When confronted with the same sentence, SE2 said the subclause was removed because it "just didn't add anything", rather than it being too long:

> This politician, whom everyone knows anyway, is quoted later on in the article, making his opinion clear (...) It's unnecessary to bother the reader with this information up front.

She proceeded to label the deletion 'Be the reader's guide: Flow', as she argued including it would actually hamper reading *(See* **TABLE 3***)*.

TABLE 3 — Deletion of article and subclause.

BODY TEXT – CLAUSE A	BODY TEXT – CLAUSE B
Vooral **[de]** *(1)* CD&V **[en [polititicus] op kop]** *(2)* zag**[en]** het sociaal overleg gered. *(Especially the Flemish Christian democratic party, and [politician] in particular, believed the social dialogue would be saved.)*	Vooral CD&V zag het sociaal overleg gered. *(Especially the Flemish Christian democratic party believed the social dialogue would be saved.)*
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE (1) A **KISS**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE (1) A ∅
↓	↓
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE (1) B **Know your newspaper: Style**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE (1) B ∅
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE (2) A **KISS**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE (2) A ∅
↓	↓
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE (2) B **Be the reader's guide: Flow**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE (2) B ∅

4

The production value Get it right ((a) language accuracy and (b) facts and sources) is not discussed here. As there was generally agreement between myself and the production journalists when it came to this, I have decided to focus on the more problematic cases.

5

After deliberation with the production chief of the newspaper, I opted not to include direct references to the articles in question. The author can be contacted, should more information be required.

When discussing length, the practitioners were adamant: 'KISS: keep it short and simple', or conciseness, is not a production value as such.

SE1
When something is reiterated, it can be deleted for reasons of textual flow.

LD1
At times, the addition of a graph or illustration forces us to remove a chunk of text, not because it's bad.

In fact, the majority of cases I coded 'KISS', was labelled differently by the respondents.

LD3
To be frank, I don't think 'KISS' is actually ever the real reason for intervening; there's always something behind it: better flow, clarity, too much information, repetition, and (...) often (...) layout forces me to ask the subs to cut back.

The sub-editors did agree that 'trimming the fat' (Vandendaele et al, 2015), or cutting text, is an important part of their job. LD2 and SE2 commented:

LD2
If it were up to the reporters, they would fill a page to the brim with text; they want to say as much as possible.

SE2
True. They want to show off their journalistic skills, the extent of their knowledge.

Be the reader's guide: Clarity.

In the same front-page article the sub-editor had altered the reporter's original headline, and added a subheader. I had labelled the dominant production value behind that addition 'Know your newspaper: Style', meaning the subheader was included based on an internal agreement: a front-page article in this newspaper must have a subheader. In my opinion, the recessive production value was 'Be the reader's guide: Clarity', as the subheader provides additional information.

LD1 commented that a splash is not required to have a subheader. According to him the headline alteration and addition of a subheader were motivated by pagination, i.e. the design of the page on the screen: the first headline would simply not fit the assigned space. This loss of information needed to be made up for in a subheader *(See* **TABLE 4***)*.

SE1 explained that a subheader should always provide more information, and answer "why should I read it now?" LD1 and SE1 agreed that in this case the production values were 'Clarity' and 'Design'. The weight of 'Design' was illustrated numerous times, pointing towards the significance of this production value. Moreover, this intervention illustrates the close interaction between the practitioners.

When SE2 and LD2 were confronted with a completely rewritten lead, 'Clarity', was again cited as the main drive:

SE2
Look, this original intro scares people away

TABLE 4 — **Addition of subheader.**

	HEADLINE A	SUBHEADER A	DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE A	DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE B
	Wel akkoord, geen vrede *(Agreement, but no peace)*	∅	**Know your newspaper**	**Be the reader's guide: Clarity**

	HEADLINE B	SUBHEADER A	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE A	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE B
	Sociale vrede nu al voorbij? *(Social peace already in the past?)*	Kernkabinet zit vanochtend samen met vakbonden en werkgevers *(Inner cabinet meets unions and employees this morning)*	**Be the reader's guide: Clarity**	**Make it look good: Design**

(...) You should say this in a much more 'human' way.

LD2
It's too highbrow – it immediately starts off way too scientifically.

SE2
You cannot make it too clear though, because then you're treating your readers like a bunch of toddlers.

From numerous exchanges in the sessions it became clear that for the production journalists 'Clarity' was synonymous with the reader.

Be the reader's guide: Flow.

I asked the respondents about the addition of a jump line, i.e. a line at the bottom of a column that directs the reader to a later page where the story is completed. Since this refers to the article's structure, I had originally coded this 'Be the reader's guide: Flow'. As this happened every time a topic was continued on a later page, the recessive production value was labelled 'Know your newspaper: Style'. The practitioners agreed on the dominant production value. Interestingly, they all referred to the reader explicitly in this context. SE2 en LD2 termed this "a service to the reader", i.e. a way of helping their 'customer' to find out more *(See* **TABLE 5***)*.

TABLE 5 — Addition of symbol and number.

JUMP LINE A	JUMP LINE B
∅	▶4
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE A **Be the reader's guide: Flow**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE A **Know your newspaper: Style**
↓	↓
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE B **Be the reader's guide: Flow**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE B **Be the reader's guide: Clarity**

'Flow' turned out to be one of the more important production values, to sub-editors and, especially, layout designers:

LD1
When you use the term 'flow', I immediately think of design.

LD2
The newspaper has to flow nicely.

Far from it being a mere textual phenomenon pertaining to well-ordered sentences and logically structured stories, the flow of the newspaper proved to be one of the layout designers' main priorities. Based on their input, this production value clearly reassessing.

Know your newspaper: Style

Although this newspaper does not have a published style guide, they do have "internal agreements", listed in an online document, which is updated regularly. The sub-editors stress that avoiding jargon and 'journalese', and a preference for short sentences, as well as clear and simple writing is instilled in them from the get-go, but not captured in an "official rule book" (SE1). The tone of the newspaper is summarised as "professional, impartial, and to the point." However, they should always strive for variation, in order to "keep it exciting" (SE3).

In a front-page article's body text the verb phrase *'onderwerp was'* ('was the subject of'), was replaced by *'deel uitmaakte'* ('was part of'). I experienced this as problematic, as both expressions are linguistically correct. At 13 and 14 characters in length respectively, this could not have been a space issue either. I labelled it 'Be the reader's guide: Clarity', since a reader might interpret the second expression more easily *(See* **TABLE 6***)*.

When asked about this, SE1 and LD1 commented:

SE1
I think that *'onderwerp'* sounds a bit wooden. To me, this is a matter of style. However, it doesn't

TABLE 6 — Replacement of verb phrase.

BODY TEXT – CLAUSE A	BODY TEXT – CLAUSE B
Dat dit niet eens **[onderwerp was]** van het sociaal akkoord, dat detail wordt voor het gemak even van tafel geveegd. *(The fact that this [was] not [subject] of the social agreement is ignored for convenience)*	Dat dit niet eens **[deel uitmaakte]** van het sociaal akkoord, wordt voor het gemak even van tafel geveegd. *((The fact that this [was] not [part] of the social agreement, is ignored for convenience)*
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE A **Be the reader's guide: Clarity** ↓ DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE B **Know your newspaper: Style**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE A ∅ ↓ RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE B ∅

really bother me. I actually think I would have left it like that, but I do kind of get it.

LD1
I think it reads much more easily, option two.

With some difficulty, they decided on 'Know your newspaper: Style', but stressed this was a language-based change, and a highly individual one at that.

The issue of 'personal preference' was flagged up again discussing the case of a Translocation (i.e. move) of a verb in a verb phrase: 'volgehouden worden' (*'be sustained'*) became 'worden volgehouden'. Grammatically, neither of the options is wrong, nor does the switch influence then meaning *(See* **TABLE 7***)*.

The sub-editors conceded this was most likely due to personal taste, especially when they noticed the same change a few times in the same article.

SE1
It's probably just personal style. I used to have a colleague who preferred to put past participles at the end of sentence because, in his mind, it made for a smoother read.

Related to this, SE3 mentioned consistency:

If you alter something once, you are obliged to carry it through.

Although this newspaper does not have a published style guide, they do have "internal agreements", listed in an online document, which is updated regularly. The sub-editors stress that avoiding jargon and 'journalese', and a preference for short sentences, as well as clear and simple writing is instilled in them from the get-go, but not captured in an "official rule book" (SE1). The tone of the newspaper is summarised as "professional, impartial, and to the

TABLE 7 — Translocation of verb phrase.

BODY TEXT – CLAUSE A	BODY TEXT – CLAUSE B
Met deze stemming kan dat niet volgehouden **[worden]**. *(After this vote, this cannot [be sustained].)*	Met deze stemming kan dat niet **[worden]** volgehouden. *(After this vote, this cannot [be sustained].)*
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE A **Be the reader's guide: Clarity** ↓ DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE B **Know your newspaper: Style**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE A ∅ ↓ RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE B ∅

point." However, they should always strive for variation, in order to "keep it exciting" (SE3).

One could wonder: Is the production value behind this intervention truly 'Know *your* newspaper'? In fact, *whose* newspaper is it? As one of the sub-editors states he would not change the original wording, there is no reason to label this change as something that their publication dictates.

The discussion around 'Style' as either a general or a personal set of choices kept popping up, indicating that this distinction should be reflected when revising the existing production values.

When a bolder type replaced the font of the article's lead in the sub-editing phase, I coded it 'Know your newspaper', as this suggests an internal agreement. I labelled the recessive production value 'Be the reader's guide: Flow', as the reader can use the font as a visual clue indicating the lead.

When asked who was responsible for this essentially layout-driven alteration, both layout designers and sub-editors said they did it. They decided on 'Know your newspaper' as the main production value. However, they did not agree with the suggested 'Be the reader's guide: Flow' as the recessive one:

LD1
'Know your newspaper' and 'Clarity' often go hand in hand, as they do here (...) You simply must have a lead, but the sub-editor determines its contents, with the reader in mind.

I took this opportunity to ask the informants about the font in newswire articles, which is consistently altered: the font used is significantly lighter, leaving more space between characters. In unison the practitioners identified the main production value as 'Flow', but "on a graphic level":

LD1
This is used to 'break' the page. When you have a column of short newswire-type articles on one side, this font helps break up that solid block of text. That's also why we align the text on the left-hand side, with the right-hand side ragged.

The other production value they identified was 'Know your newspaper':

LD1
This is an internal agreement, in the same way we decided to use another font for a headline news article. Every newspaper has their own specific design rules.

It seemed that 'Know your newspaper: Style' can actually be split into two production values. On the one hand, there is 'Style' related to (individual) language choices, on the other, there is the specific newspaper's 'Style', which covers mainly linguistic choices, but might also have an effect on decisions regarding layout.

Know your audience: Reader appeal

The few times 'Know your audience: Reader appeal' was identified as the dominant production value, the practitioners tended to label another production value behind it. They experienced this production value as problematic: every intervention is, in the end, for the benefit of the reader. I previously (Vandendaele, 2017a) suggested 'the reader' could be labelled the overarching production value: (s)he is the driving force behind every other guideline informing changes during sub-editing.

During my time spent in the field it became clear that the reader is top of mind, although not always mentioned explicitly. The production journalists agreed that discussing the reader during work hours is kept to a minimum, yet terms such as 'ease of reading', 'readability' and 'legibility' were repeated time and time again.

SE1
Keeping the reader in mind happens automatically.

LD1
Thinking of our readers is instinctive behaviour.

During the interviews the reader was mentioned most in relation to 'Be the reader's guide: Clarity':

LD2
I think you should never assume the reader knows a lot.

A prime example of this, according to LD1, is his production chief:

He will send an article back to the copy desk because, as he says: 'I don't get that'. But of course he gets it!

Doing this – by becoming the reader – he suggests that the reader might not, thus reminding his production team of their 'customers'.

Make it look good: Design

Bringing in the layout designers to reflect on the sub-editing stage proved to be especially helpful when it came to the production value 'Make it look good: Design'. When faced with problematic cases, layout and design turned out to have considerable power.

One example is the length of headlines: Every type of article is linked to a specific type of headline (i.e. font and font size). These are all part of the newspaper's design, thought out by the art director. Together with the editor-in-chief, (s)he decides on the newspaper's look. A perfectly good headline might have to be altered simply because it is too long or not long enough.

LD2
Design often trumps internal agreements.

This was illustrated by a case of a newswire article headline. These short articles, provided by a news agency, arrive with a headline in place. Sub-editors avoid passives in a headline, as they "slow down the story from the very start" (SE1). However, among layout designers it is agreed that these types of article are presented in a narrow column on the side of the page, each with a headline spread out over three lines. In this example the headline had been altered to include a passive verb, simply to make the lines fill out, and to avoid having to split words over several lines *(See* **TABLE 8***)*.

While discussing this, other layout examples were given that may force the sub-editor to "break internal laws" (LD3), cut back, rephrase or even alter content: 'orphans', i.e. the first line of a paragraph that appears on the last line of a column of text should normally be avoided, as should 'widows', i.e. the last line of a paragraph that appears alone at the top of the next column.

Discussion

Personal preferences

In a number of cases the production journalists were not able to thoroughly explain why an alteration had been made, as the original version was (linguistically and/or stylistically) correct. As soon as the layout designers had been able to rule out graphic issues or space limitations, I probed the sub-editors about possible internal stylistic agreements. Occasionally, they could not offer any other explanation than 'personal preferences'. According to the informants, an individual's aesthetic can be counted as a production value, i.e. an underlying motivation for a change:

SE1
No doubt a certain amount subjectivity comes into play (...) I for one don't like headlines phrased as a question: That's just click bait, pure and simple. As a sub you then don't make any effort to draw the reader in, but instead you force him to read on. I just don't think that's an interesting tactic – I prefer to tease someone into reading on."

SE1 confessed that when it comes to headlines in particular, personal preferences will come into play:

Earlier this week, my production editor forced me to change my headline (...) whereas I absolutely did not agree, and definitely preferred my own. In that case you just resign yourself to your production editor's opinion. In the end, you sometimes just have to put your own convictions aside, and give in.

Independent of one another the sub-editors described what one of them termed the 'obsessive-compulsive corrector'. A sub-editor should never be overly censorious, as in that case you are "forcing your own style upon a text" (SE1). This is regarded as a mistake: Individual writer's voices should be heard throughout their newspaper.

The layout designers too experienced the influence of personal preferences, when constructing a page:

LD1
Being designers, we too have a new hobbyhorse every month.

Form and content inextricably linked

On the craft of writing news stories McKane said: "Presentation matters enormously" (2013: 142). All three interviews confirmed that graphic design plays a huge part in the news-

TABLE 8 — Addition of verb phrase.

HEADLINE A	HEADLINE B
Jejoen Bontinck naar rechtbank voor partnergeweld *(Jejoen Bontinck [in court] because of domestic violence)*	Jejoen Bontinck **[vervolgd]** wegens partnergeweld *(Jejoen Bontinck [sued] for domestic violence)*
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE A **Know your audience: Reader appeal**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE A ∅
↓	↓
DOMINANT PRODUCTION VALUE B **Know your newspaper: Design**	RECESSIVE PRODUCTION VALUE B **Be the reader's guide: Clarity**

paper production process, and newswriting. Each informant stressed the existence of a powerful link between layout designers and sub-editors in their newsroom:

SE1
Language and design are very much in sync at our paper – it's almost impossible to look at them separately.

LD1
Exactly. Language and whether a text fits are on a par with graphic design.

I witnessed this in the close collaboration between the layout designers and the sub-editors in the newsroom. Even their seating arrangements – next to the designer or sub-editor who they would be working on the same page(s) with – proved this.

Although newspaper layout remains in the hands of the layout designers, the sub-editors are equally encouraged to "increase" their newspaper's "liveliness" (SE3). They report they are told to always look for new ways of presenting a story:

SE2
Why one long story, when you can cut it into five? Think of text boxes, combining text with a picture, highlighting numbers, graphics, illustrations etc. Why choose a picture if an illustration is better? [This should] result in an exciting newspaper that's hard to put down.

The layout designers not only focus on the design of a single page, but of that of the entire newspaper: it all boils down to the flow of the newspaper. My time spent in this Belgian newsroom taught me how from very early on in the news day the chief of layout design was involved. As soon as ideas about news content were pitched during the morning story meetings, he (or his deputy) and his team went to work to visually support and enhance each story. This means that layout designers in this newsroom take *reading* each story that will feature on their pages for granted:

LD2
I take pride in actually reading every article on my pages.

LD3
It's what any self-respecting layout designer should do, although I know it is not the case at every publication. Of course, when it comes to, for instance, deleting an obsolete comma, this is not part of the layout designers' tasks. We never go that deep into a text.

The layout designers' input does not stop at the choice of font or type colour, but they regularly have a say in the 'Holy Quaternity' – headline, lead, quote en photo caption –, which together sell the story.[6] They even claimed they had a better overview of the entire paper, which the sub-editors, who tend to focus on one page at a time, confirmed. This was corroborated in the newsroom where I witnessed layout designers pointed out inconsistencies, repetitions, or blatant mistakes to the sub-editors. The layout designers' focus on visual (news) storytelling was further reflected in the need to compare and contrast each page, leading to a clearer understanding of the entire paper. A constantly updated series of large whiteboards displaying a mock-up of every page assisted them.

The reader as overarching production value

In these interviews it was confirmed (Vandendaele, 2017a) that the reader is the overarching production value, ever present yet unseen in this final stage of the news production process. On the subject of the reader, a number of things are worth mentioning. First of all, sub-editors and layout designers value personal fulfilment in their job:

SE1
Although, I'm very much aware of the reader, in the end I'm kind of in this for myself: I write a wonderful headline for my own satisfaction – I don't constantly think: 'the reader will enjoy this', but rather: 'have I been able to do something great with what I was given?'

Secondly, several practitioners commented how they refused to "give the reader an easy time" (SE2); (s)he needs to be challenged, and persuaded into reading.

Finally, the practitioners admitted that thinking about the reader becomes instinctive as you gain experience. Junior colleagues will be drilled into 'making things clear', but "after a year or two you do this automatically" (SE3). They do stress it is important to constantly keep the readership in mind, especially when it comes to design:

LD1
There are definitely layout designers who will simply never have that skill, (...) who will get so lost in their own designs, that they produce things that are just too weird and complicated.

6
This term was used by a Dutch production editor from the Belgian newspaper's Dutch sister paper, during a sub-editing workshop on 6 August 2012.

SE1
Yeah, you really do have to be able to one thing as a production journalist: look at your work from a distance.

Production values revisited

Based on the insights mentioned above, reassessing the initial proposed set of production values at work in sub-editing, seemed necessary. Both sub-editors and layout designers initially struggled with the concept of a set of permanently fixed production values. They admitted that they often found it hard to identify just one or two production. At one point, the practitioners suggested compiling two sets of production values: one set of 'design values', and another set to be used by the sub-editors. This idea was quickly discarded, as all agreed the sub-editing phase is an intense collaboration between both types of practitioners. I therefore chose to uphold a single set of production values. However, reassessing the initial proposed set of production values at work in sub-editing, seemed necessary. Below, I propose some alterations to the original six production values.

Re-valuation of production values.

1. **'KISS'** was never identified as a production value as such by the practitioners: in story meetings in this newsroom reporters are given a certain amount of characters to write, depending on the story's news value, urgency and placement on the page. The sub-editors should have "enough copy to give it a really good show" (McKane, 2013: 141), but not too much. The sub-editor's job is "necessarily quantitative, reducing the amount of information available to a sum that fits the size of the paper" (Schudson, 1989: 265).

   Clearly, sub-editors will have to cut back when this is not respected, or breaking news demands a complete reshuffle of the page. The underlying reasons they gave were clarity, design (space restriction), style, and language.

2. **'Be the reader's guide: Flow'** is appropriated by both layout designers and sub-editors, but differently. Layout designers will focus on the flow of the page and newspaper, whereas sub-editors are interested in textual flow. According to the interviewees, 'Flow' and 'Design' are intertwined, and hard to separate. I therefore suggest using the production value 'Structure' (within the sentence, within the article) when discussing alterations for reasons of textual flow, and to uphold 'Flow'. This production value should encompass design, as in the structure of a page, or of the newspaper as a whole.

3. **'Make it look good: design'** and the newly introduced 'Flow' need to remain separate production values.

LD1
When I started at this newspaper, 'Make it look good' was not related to 'Design' at all. Our art director had designed the look of the newspaper, and the team of layout designers had to make sure the newspaper's flow was right. (...) Nowadays this is different. Layout designers are asked to make illustrations themselves, but to me this is quite different to 'flow'. We have to make things look good with nice graphics, but we also have to make sure the pages 'flow' well, that there is enough variety between the types of articles.

Consequently, I relate 'Make it look good' to newspaper design, allowing for a certain level of creativity and personal input from the layout designers. 'Flow', then, is linked to the "rhythm" (LD3) of the page, and the complete newspaper.

4. **The sub-editors' and layout designers'** input lead me to redefine 'Know your newspaper'. As of now, it includes on the one hand internal agreements specific to a newspaper. On the other, it includes style: linguistic choices, also allowing personal preferences. This could prove problematic, as it suggests a degree of relativity. However, when a certain intervention takes place throughout the article, – even though the term originally used by the reporter was correct – this points to consistency, and clearly reveals the sub-editor's voice.

Ordering production values.

When asked about a possible hierarchy among the production values, there seemed to be agreement among the interviewees about the more important production values:

SE1
Language comes first. Always. Then you ask yourself: does it fit the assigned space?

SE2 added: "Obviously, all facts must be correct". In sum, the bare minimum from the sub-editors' point of view is thus a thorough spell-check, making sure facts are accurate and superfluous text is cut back.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the layout designers put 'Flow' en 'Design first:

TABLE 9 ——— Production values revisited.

OVERARCHING PRODUCTION VALUE: THE READER	
1. Get the language right	Accuracy of language
2. Get the facts straight	Accuracy of facts and sourcing
3. Flow	Graphic flow ("Rhythm") in article Graphic flow throughout newspaper
4. Structure	Structure within sentence Article flow or structure: inverted pyramid
5. Know your newspaper	a. (sub-editor) Publication-specific style/language agreements b. (layout designer) Publication-specific design agreements/graphic choices
6. Style	Language choices, allowing individual preferences
7. Make it look good	Design and visual appeal, allowing individual preferences

LD3
We make a visual newspaper (...) I'm a designer first.

All three interviews confirmed: "design wins" (LD1). Although language accuracy is crucial, both sub-editors and layout designers agree:

LD1
I feel most satisfied about the job I've done when a page makes sense.

SE1
I know: the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Based on these insights, I have re(de)fined the original production values, and described them in the table below *(See* **TABLE 9***)*.

Conclusions and future research

This paper focused on the production values at work in the sub-editing stage (Vandendaele, 2017a), and 'member checked' their validity with sub-editors as well as layout designers. Based on their community of practice, I wanted to find out in which ways these should be modified, and gain a better understanding of this stage of the news production process.

My data show the significant impact design and the layout designers have on their newspaper. By bringing in the layout designers, I illustrated the collaborative character of the news production process, and especially their close association with the sub-editors during the sub-editing stage. Keith's (2015) claim that the designer era is a thing of the past is contradicted in this study: whereas in many newsrooms text is the sub-editors' domain, I conclude that at this newspaper the layout designers are extremely involved. Design will influence story placement, choice of visuals and will at times drive content. The interviews confirmed how each layout designer possessed a strong awareness of content and flow of the entire newspaper, sometimes even more so than the sub-editors and their production editor. The high regard in which design is held in this newsroom as a tool to not only illustrate the news, but to enhance it and visually appeal to the reader, as well as to stand out from the competition, was rewarded in 2015: the newspaper was chosen as the World's Best Designed Newspaper by The Society of News Design). This suggests that the importance of news design does not go unnoticed, and might prove to be a clever move in an age when many newspapers are in dire straits. LD3 summarised it best:

We (layout designers) will make you read.

Both groups of practitioners proudly label themselves the "producers" (SE1) of the newspaper, sub-editors by employing their linguistic and narrative tools and layout designers by using design skills to build a visual news narrative.

Guided by the practitioners' views, I have proposed a redefined set of seven production values. I categorised 'the reader' as the overarching production value, i.e. the driving force behind every intervention. This altered set allows for some subjectivity, both concerning

certain stylistic preferences of the sub-editors, and of the layout designers. Most importantly, the production values now reflect the presence of the powerful designer voice present in the sub-editing phase of newswriting at this particular newspaper.

It is important to point out hat the still important role of the layout designer, contradicting Keith's claim for US newsrooms, is typical for this newspaper. Other European newsrooms need to be investigated in order te make wider claims. Moreover, newspapers working with a fixed style guide might diminish the influence of "personal preferences" as a production value.

I believe that both the fields of linguistics (research) and that of professional newswriting (practice) gain value by capturing seasoned practitioners' unspoken understanding and tacit knowledge of their craft and translating it into applicable theories about the language of journalism. In time, this could help divise a model for teaching production journalism as a critical practice.

This paper opens doors to future research. First, it would be valuable to explore whether there are links between certain production values and particular interventions by the sub-editors: are some production values translated more often in specific (textual) transformations? Second, more research is required into 'what makes a page work': do the sub-editors' and layout designers' 'gut feeling' about a successful page resonate with the intended reader? Herein lies an interesting opportunity for those involved with multimodal analysis: considering underlying production factors, how does the production journalists' telling of the same news story using different 'modes' (varieties of e.g. page layout, headlines, streamers, pictures, colours and font) affect the readership? Third, the online version of newspapers reaches a much larger (international) audience much faster than the printed version. Recent developments in (the organisation of) online sub-editing offer an interesting opportunity to compare sub-editing of the online version of an article with the printed version.

In conclusion, in an age in which many newspapers struggle to survive, and production journalists are often the first to go, sub-editors and layout designers, remain valuable players in the newsroom: by 'designing' the news, they add all-important journalistic value to their publications, and continue to "make you read".

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6. General discussion and conclusions

In my PhD I investigated the previously understudied newspaper sub-editors and sub-editing practices. In this final chapter, I first go back to my research objectives, and briefly summarize how I attempted to reach each of them in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. I then link up the conclusions I formulated in those chapters in order to come to a general conclusion. In doing so I will demonstrate how, while researching this PhD, I moved from practice to theory, to come back to practice. Next, I will reflect on my dual perspective of practitioner and researcher, and how it affected my research proceedings. I will discuss both the advantages (access, credibility and drive) and difficulties (confusion in the newsroom, and as a researcher), which that particular stance has brought with it. Furthermore, I will expand on how I have tried to overcome the various hurdles by being both reflective and reflexive, and studying 'up, down, and sideways'. Next, I discuss my thoughts on the future of the newspaper sub-editor, keeping the current economic climate in mind. The effects of newspaper (in)accuracy are discussed briefly, followed by the various alternatives (outsourcing, centralising, multi-skilled multimedia journalist) that have been put into practice to (partly) replace the sub-editor. I then suggest two ways in which the newspaper sub-editor can shine today and in the future, both concerning print and online news. I conclude this final chapter with four avenues for further research, pertaining to closer scrutiny of the sub-editors' micro-discursive practices, issues of expertise and power in the newsroom, online sub-editing, and sub-editing at a tabloid newspaper.

6.1. From practice to theory, and back again

In this study I have shed light on the sub-editor. Taking a closer look at the sub-editing stage of newswriting, I aimed to contribute to the emerging movement in media discourse studies towards a linguistics of news production, bearing on the discursive processes that shape the final news product (NT&T, 2011). In line with claims that media studies should not only chart the professional cultures of "privileged" full-time reporters and hence marginalize other news workers (Wahl-Jorgenson, 2009), in this PhD I looked beyond the newsroom 'elite', and investigated the process of newspaper sub-editing at broadsheets in Flanders, the Netherlands, and the UK. My initial main objectives were to explore:

- **what the role of the sub-editor is in the newspaper production process?**
- **what the impact of sub-editing is on the final product, i.e. the newspaper article?**

These objectives eventually led to the following research questions:

a) Where does sub-editing take place? How is the sub-editing craft put into practice there? Are these factors connected?

b) What happens in the sub-editing stage?

c) Why does a sub-editor do what (s)he does?

d) So what? When we feed these research findings back to the practitioners, (how) should we fine-tune them, based on their insights and experiences?

a. The Lowlands newsroom model

To answer the first subquestion (a), I looked at the larger newsroom structures in which sub-editors operate (Vandendaele & Jacobs, 2014). In order to explore the sub-editors' role, I conducted fieldwork in the newsrooms of a Belgian newspaper and a newspaper in the Netherlands. These newsrooms had recently become linked through a takeover by a Belgian media company. In that study I took a close look at the larger newsroom structures in which the sub-editors operate. I introduced the concept of the "Lowlands newsroom model" to characterize the newsroom structure in Belgian and Dutch newsrooms as different from the way in which the newsrooms of German and Anglo-Saxon newspapers are organized (Esser 1998, 1999).

By describing the sub-editors' place in the Lowlands newsroom model at work in a Belgian and a Dutch daily newspaper, i.e. the so-called 'In/Out-system', I demonstrated how, although the same newsroom model is in place in both newsrooms, the spatial setting, division of workload and the sub-editor's profile impact on the sub-editor's ability to intervene in the news production process. Exploring this newsroom model turned out to be necessary, not only considering the study of general newsroom flow, but also as a valid contribution to the debate surrounding the future of the newspaper 'sub'. My personal professional knowledge helped to bring about further insights about news worker interaction, job satisfaction and the sub-editor's position within the dynamic constellation of the newsroom.

b.
Beyond trimming the fat

In order to formulate an answer to the second subquestion (b) I focused on newspaper sub-editing as a form of professional editing, addressing three research questions: (1) What are the ways in which a news article's text is altered?, (b) Are some types of news article altered more significantly than others?, and (c) Are certain news article sections more prone to alterations (Vandendaele, De Cuypere & Van Praet, 2015)?

Merging the contextualized insights of fieldwork in a Belgian newsroom with a corpus-based discourse analytic research perspective, I traced the differences (viz. additions, deletions, translocations, replacements) between the "initial" (right before sub-editing) and "final" (published) version of six different types of news article, (front-page, headline, long, medium, short, and news wire article) in a corpus sample of 30 broadsheet articles.

I found that contrary to popular belief that sub-editors mainly "hack away" at news stories, or merely "trim the fat"— additions actually prevail. Secondly, I uncovered how most interventions occur in high profile articles. Thirdly, I discovered that the largest number of interventions occurs in the "entry points" of an article, that is, where—according to eye-tracking research—readers stop scanning and start reading. I concluded that sub-editors clearly contribute a considerable amount to how an article is presented to the reader, thus influencing the way readers are drawn into the story. Their role as 'marketeers' of a print newspaper is therefore an important one, in a time in which their ranks keep diminishing.

c.
Trust me, I'm a sub-editor

In search of the underlying motivations of the sub-editors (c), I analysed the sub-editing process through participant observation in newsrooms in the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands. (Vandendaele, 2017). Looking at both the sub-editors at work (thinkaloud protocol) as well as the articles in various stages of production, and informed by (retrospective) interviews, I compiled a list of six of the sub-editor's "production values": (1) KISS (Keep it Short and Simple; Conciseness), (2) Get it right (Accuracy of language, Accuracy of facts and sourcing), (3) Be the reader's guide (Clarity, Flow), .(4) Know your audience (Audience appeal), (5) Know your newspaper, and (6) Make it look good (Style, Design). These values guide sub-editors whenever they intervene, and help them to transform a news story into an appealing, correct and credible newspaper article.

I took the lead from Östgaard's "factors influencing the flow of news" (1965), but also from Galtung and Ruge's "news values" (1965) which help reporters to determine which "events" are transitioned into "news". Despite their significant contribution to international news theory, Galtung and Ruge have been heavily criticised over the years, partly because of their psychological perspective and the fact the factors were difficult to test (Johnson, 1997: 316). Cotter makes the point that journalists and "lay people", which include academics, have different views about what news values constitute and how fundamental they are to story design. However, the concept of "news value" has remained valuable, as it continues to "dominate" practice (O'Neill and Harcup, 2009). In fact, many academics have tried to extend or modify the original list of "news values"; or apply it to a variety of media (Schulz, 1976; Golding & Elliott, 1979; Gans, 1980; Peterson, 1981; Staab, 1990; Bell, 1991; Tumber, 1999; Herbert, 2000; Harcup & O'Neill 2001, 2016; Clausen, 2004; Bednarek & Caple 2014; Meissner, 2015).

By compiling this preliminary set of 'production values', I went beyond the limitations of previous research, in which the types of interventions carried out in the sub-editing stage of newswriting were categorised. Instead of disclosing what linguistic or graphic changes take place in the sub-editing stage, this was a first attempt at uncovering why they do so.

Based on this initial set of production values, and from experiences in the field, I could claim that in fact "reader appeal" is the ultimate production value. However, I must emphasise that sub-editing goes beyond appealing to the reader. Everything boils down to getting it right in order for the publication to remain credible, and therefore deserving of the readership's trust. The sub-editor as intermediary between reader and his/her newspaper needs to maintain a high standard of editorial quality to protect the publication's credibility. The sub-editor is therefore not only the reader representative in the newsroom, but also his/her newspaper's strongest brand ambassador in the real world, adding journalistic value with every alteration.

d.
Designing the news

As I have written this dissertation coming from a professional background, going back into the field, i.e. the newsroom, was crucial. To answer the fourth and final subquestion (d), I conducted three semi-structured qualitative interviews with pairs of sub-editors and layout designers employed by a Belgian broadsheet. This was informed by own experiences in the field, which indicated the importance between both types of practitioners. During those focused interviews I tested the practical application of the 'production values' I previously formulated (Vandendaele, 2017), i.e. guidelines

that help them ensure accuracy and readability – and thus appeal and credibility – of their newspaper.

On the basis of these practitioners' input on their collaborative process, and their community of practice, I attempted to re(de)fine my original set of production values: (1) Get the language right (Accuracy of language), (2) Get your facts straight (Accuracy of facts and sourcing), (3) Flow (Graphic Flow ("Rhythm") in an article, and throughout the newspaper), (4) Structure (Structure within a sentence, an article's flow or structure: inverted pyramid), (5) Know your newspaper (Publication-specific Style/Language agreements, Publication-specific Design agreements/Graphic choices), (6) Style (Language choices, allowing individual Preferences), (7) Make it look good (Design and visual appeal, allowing individual preferences). Additionally, I was able to conclude that, although they are not always mentioned explicitly, the readers are the overarching production value.

My data further showed the significant impact design and the layout designers have on their newspaper. By bringing in the layout designers, I illustrated the collaborative character of the news production process, and especially their close association with the sub-editors during the sub-editing stage.

e. Conclusions

The order in which I presented my research questions, and approached my study, not only reflects the chronological evolution of my study, but also illustrates my move from practice to theory, to then come full circle by going back to practice. My research questions originated from my colleagues' and my own experiences in the newsroom, and kick-started the research process: I moved from the newsroom to the library, from empirical data to theoretical framework. Continuing to reflect on my process as both a researcher and a practitioner, and confronting practitioners with my research findings, allowed me to to develop new insights about the copy desk.

Due to the nature of their job, sub-editors tend to be not fully recognized for their knowledge, skills and know-how. Outside of the newsroom their existence is regretfully known to but a few. My research on the role of the sub-editors in the newspaper production process, and the impact of sub-editing on the newspaper article has shown that sub-editors are highly skilled journalists, who represent crucial yet often overlooked cogs in the newspaper production process.

Sub-editors are the first readers, who (ideally) occupy a central place in the newsroom. Sub-editors represent a new set of eyes looking at a news story. They are responsible for cutting copy to fit. They are mindful of spelling and grammar, and the proper appropriation of the in-house style. Sub-editors also check copy for potential libel and contempt. They ensure clarity, and also headlines, photo captions, streamers. Moreover, they contribute greatly to how an article is presented to the reader, which includes designing pages, and selecting images in consultation with the layout designer and picture editor.

Sub-editors are brand managers, and quality controllers who ensure the quality of their newspaper. They add journalistic value with their knowledge, expertise and experience. On top of this, they know what people read, and what people like. By making a great many (textual and graphic) alterations in each article they scrutinize, they also play an important part in 'selling' the newspaper. Labelling sub-editors 'marketeers', as I did before, somewhat undervalues the true value of their contribution. Ethnographic research methods such as interviews, thinkaloud protocol, and participant observation have all demonstrated that the sub-editors' main motivation to act is the reader. Although this often remains an unspoken truth among the sub-editors, it seems to be an underlying driving force for their work. In close collaboration with their layout design partners, the sub-editors 'produce' or 'stage' the news, by constructing an appealing, intriguing, and enticing piece of work out of otherwise flat text. Adding the furniture, i.e. the right headline, choosing the appropriate visual, cutting back superfluous text, and deciding to add an explanatory table, is the ultimate way to reach the newspaper's audience, as those 'building blocks' of an article is what is read most. True, the reader appeal they are largely responsible for, will translate into sales, but is It would be more correct to label sub-editors their newspaper's number one brand ambassadors. It is they who represent their brand best inside of the newsroom, but also far beyond those walls. Demonstrating how much of an impact sub-editors have on the final news product, underlines how valuable their contributions are.

In sum, sub-editors represent their newspaper's identity, and guarantee credibility. The sub-editors' role as quality controllers generates reader trust, and the appealing way they present news text helps sell the newspaper. The conclusions I reached in this study confirm what I had already experienced as I worked – and continue to work – as a sub-editor: sub-editors play a crucial and valuable role in the newsroom, and during the production of a newspaper. They are at the centre of the news production process, summarizing what is important, and discarding the rest, all in the name of their readers. Sub-editors are truly their newspapers' last line of defence. This being said, the future of the sub-editor remains uncertain. Below, I will discuss this in more detail, and share my views on their future. First, however, I will cast more light on my split identity during this study.

6.2. A dual perspective

I became increasingly aware of the lack of knowledge about and recognition of the sub-editor as, for over eight years, I have been working as a freelance sub-editor a large quality broadsheet in Flanders. My own experience had given me insight into the impact sub-editing has on the final news product, i.e. the article, both on its formal features, and on its content. It led me to take a closer look at existing research into news media and news production processes. In this section, I reflect on how being a freelance newspaper sub-editor helped inform my various research avenues, and brought forth a continuous to and fro between the academic's desk and the news desk.

Admittedly, my status of sub-editor/researcher brought along with it some advantages, concerning access and credibility. Furthermore, it was the main driver behind this study. However, there were also some disadvantages, as my status led to confusion in the newsroom and for myself. Both the perks and my personal hurdles, as well as how I attempted to overcome them, will be addressed here. This section is concluded with an insight into my personal approach to the sub-editor as a research topic.

a. Insider advantages

Giddens (1982) stated that valid descriptions of social activities presume that researchers possess those skills necessary to participate in the activities described.

> "I have accepted that it is right to say that the condition of generating descriptions of social activity is being able in principle to participate in it. It involves 'mutual knowledge,' shared by observer and participants whose action constitutes and reconstitutes the social world." (Giddens 1982: 15)

As I already had this 'mutual knowledge', the validity of an ethnographic approach was not up for discussion. Although immersing oneself in a field is an intense undertaking and takes time, the advantages were that I would gain a deeper and more encompassing understanding of the sub-editors' habitus than would be possible on the basis of interviews or short episodes of participant observation. (Velthuis, 2006) Being in situ, in the newsroom, and partaking in the sub-editing process seemed the only way to go for the purposes of my research. As an ethnographic researcher who already worked in the newsroom I had the luxury of time to explore my subject. Through longer periods of participant observation I could, in the words of Cottle (2007), 'make the invisible visible', or lay bare the intricacies of the sub-editing process. Owing to additional interviews, I could fully immerse myself in the surrounding newsroom(s) to get to grip with the social interaction there. The data was able to gather were rich, dense and detailed. Furthermore, being in the field allowed me to adapt and alter my research foci based on personal experiences, in other words: the reality of day-to-day life helped determine my study.

Clearly, when doing ethnographic research into the social activities in a newsroom, one is not supposed to be a neutral observer. Rather, ethnographers are expected to be very much part of the research process (Lønsmann, 2014). Being a sub-editor myself, meant I went one step further: I possessed the skills allowing me to participate to the highest degree, allowing me to – quite often – completely blend in. Having 'insider knowledge' is clearly beneficial.

However, research into journalism has been predominantly characterized by the work of scholars who are not practitioners themselves. Zelizer (2004) argues that journalism scholars have remained too entrenched within their own disciplinary areas, which has resulted in isolated bodies of scholarship in fields such as sociology, history, language studies, political science, and cultural. As they are not part and parcel of the journalistic realm, these scholars are forced to study news products and practices from the outside. Probably as a consequence, states Niblock (2007), a range of territories remains uncharted. She mentions how journalism routines, team-working and news judgement may actually best be illuminated by those who have close working knowledge of journalism practice – at the outset at least.

Throughout my study of the sub-editor I have adhered to a dual perspective, combining a practitioner's outlook with that of an academic. More precisely: I label myself as a practitioner, i.e. sub-editor, first. This kind of 'mutual knowledge' goes beyond a (brief) stint in the newsroom, during which you can participate in, but will never 'live' the daily practices. I want to stress therefore that in my PhD I did not merely 'take on the role' of the sub-editor. Rather: I was a sub-editor, I am a sub-editor, and have remained one throughout the process. I follow in the footsteps of such scholars as "journalist-turned-academic" (2004: ix) Zelizer, Bell, Cotter, Niblock and Velthuis. Similar to what they have done in their research, I aim to highlight practice. A number of important advantages are tied in with this stance, and I reflect on them below, focusing on this study in particular.

a.1. Access

First, as a practitioner-academic, or more precisely 'sub-editor-turned-academic', access proved to be almost a given. Because of

my professional link with a Belgian newspaper, I was quickly allowed to enter the various newsrooms abroad as a participant observer. The all-important issue of access for this type of media research, and the necessary level of trust, was a given, since I was regarded a 'fellow practitioner'.

I remember at least four distinct cases, at various newspapers in the UK, and one in the Netherlands, where I was introduced by the chief sub-editor as a 'colleague from Belgium', who was here "to have a look at the way we do things", long before they mentioned academic research. The way I was (jokingly) introduced as a 'Belgian spy' turned out to be the most powerful icebreaker. The way in which I and the other sub-editors were able to then easily compare notes on personal linguistic bug-bears, pay checks, the commute, or even the quality of coffee beans in the coffee machines, all meant I was accepted almost without hesitation as "one of them". Consequently, discussing their practices was never experienced as threatening, but rather a discussion of methods among equals. Looking back, I am very much aware that this has been a luxury for this PhD, but a necessary one, nevertheless.

a.2. Credibility

Second, when conducting research from within the newsroom, the level of credibility one gets tends to be higher when the 'hacks' on 'the beat' realise you share a professional background. To put it more bluntly: shared gripes, annoyances and frustrations create important common ground. The knowledge and experiences I shared with my colleagues/informants even before I had started my study, could mean that I now I might move towards a closer integration of theory and practice. In other words; a practitioner's point of view can be especially valuable when it comes to the possible ensuing dissemination of research results. In fact, speaking from personal experience, feeding back insights and recommendations from journalism research and media linguistics are greeted with more enthusiasm when you have (at one point) been active in the newsroom without the 'academia'-label. Zelizer discusses how journalists may have reservations concerning theoretical contributions, for e.g. the training of professional journalists, from academic research (Zelizer, 2004). After all, the ways in which journalists discuss journalism is quite different to those of academics. Although journalists and educators share a commitment to improve upon practice, "their respective employment contexts frequently prevent a shared discourse" (Niblock, 2007: 22). Can the practice of journalism and its associated body of theory actually be reconciled? Based on my experiences, I believe that comments, questions, and suggestions will be met with much more interest when they come from a colleague than from an academic, who is completely foreign to the newsroom.

Niblock (2007) commented on the interesting rise of the "practitioner-academic", and refers to higher education institutions' growing preference for hiring professionals as teaching staff, and staff members' desire to conduct research combined with their practice. She clearly recognises the benefits from the other perspective as well: Scholars and students of journalism will also appreciate a 'lived' perspective more, than that of someone who has merely 'visited'.

a.3. Personal drive

Third, the professional background I shared with the sub-editors throughout my study greatly influenced my personal drive to conduct this kind of research. Being a media practitioner and researcher at once provided me with first-hand experience of a lack of knowledge of the sub-editor job's contents beyond the newsroom. Moreover, the current turning point in the world of journalism, and the possible extinction of sub-editors, made me fully understand the urgency of research into sub-editing: How will the danger of extinction of the profession, and the upcoming centralized and automated editing impact on sub-editors?

From day one, I felt strengthened by the belief I would be doing something, however small, for the recognition of 'our craft', both in the newsroom and beyond. One may frame this as an 'activist' stance, yet I would rather label it an intrinsic motivation, which is being continually fed by additional dimensions of knowledge, understanding, and 'feeling' for the topic at hand. In my opinion, when reading the work of Niblock, Cotter, Velthuis and the like, a similar connection to their research topic can be felt.

b.
Insider challenges

Taking part in the research process as an ethnographer implies a number of difficulties in any case (Thomas, 1993; Welch et al, 2002). Ethnographic research into the news media brings along additional challenges. Research into the news media is made even more difficult because of the continuous deadlines, workload, spatial layout, technical constraints, and confidentiality – all of which are characteristics that are needed to understand the process and the product. Moreover, the news production process is never final. What I mean is it is a continuously evolving, transient process due to changing technology, changing staff, changing organisational structures, changing locations, and changing management. During the course of this study, I came across several changes that complicated, or even temporarily halted my research process. On a number of occasions, the editor(s)-in-chief stepped down voluntary, or were let go, and replaced. At the very start of this PhD I was given a lot

of access, and a great deal of confidence. I was even allowed to attend and record meetings with the editor-in-chief and senior staff on breaking news stories, or when errors and/or interviewee complaints were being discussed. But, due to changing editorial control, I found myself having to renegotiate conditions on a few occasions, or even losing some of my previous privileges. I quickly understood that the best way of gaining back trust and access, was to (temporarily) retreat to my role as practitioner full-time. Another major alteration in the course of this PhD was the physical move of the newsroom to the outskirts of Brussels. Not only did this have an impact on the simple fact of being able to get there, it changed the newsroom dynamics in quite a significant way. It is therefore necessary to note that chapter 2 was written before the actual move. The growing importance of the online platform in relation to print will present a future challenge, but this will be discussed later. Also, after visiting newsrooms in Flanders, the Netherlands and the UK it is apparent that there is no single way of sub-editing. By looking closely into the process at a number of newspapers, you only become more aware of how different things are done in each newsroom (Sheridan Burns, 2011).

For the most part, being a researcher with a journalistic background proved to be beneficial for this study. It is clear that in my case the boundaries of practice and academia have been blurred from the start. A double identity within this strand of research in particular is not always the gift media scholars believe it to be. Below I will discuss some hurdles I had to overcome, both from a newsroom perspective, and from my own, as a practitioner-academic.

b.1. Confusion in the newsroom

When I arrived in the newsroom to do research, I soon discovered many colleagues were confused. This could be partly explained because of initial unclear communication about my position from the editor-in-chief towards colleagues. After a while the situation improved, although on a few occasions, misunderstandings arose. I was for instance reprimanded by a fellow sub-editor when, after having been in the newsroom all day purely to do research, I got up to leave for the day. The sub-editor in question thought I simply wanted to leave before my shift was over. There was another occasion, during the US elections in 2012, when I was asked by the chief sub-editor to sub-edit the American newspaper featured as a daily bonus, "as I was there anyway".

Being granted access for academic purposes should not be treated lightly in these economically challenging times for news media. As mentioned before, the newspaper publishing industry is currently under threat since competition from other forms of media is increasingly limiting its market. One of the newspapers we used for our fieldwork was facing similar problems, forcing its (ever-changing) editorial board into taking radical decisions, in order to constantly stay one step ahead of the game, and to keep the paper looking 'fresh' and appealing to a dwindling readership.

As I switched from an employee to an observer role, confusion arose about my role. I was repeatedly faced with limitations to a once quasi-unlimited degree of access and with varying degrees of trust. For instance: At the start of my study I was allowed to attend and record numerous editorial meetings and conduct interviews with a great variety of news workers, ranging from layout-editors to the former editor-in-chief. Unfortunately, growing job insecurity, increasing threat of mass lay-offs and the newspaper's continuous attempts to reach the diminishing readership put strains on the tentative and carefully built relationship.

I noticed how the added external economic pressure on the newsroom significantly impacts not only the newsroom dynamics, but also the 'insider' attitude towards 'outsiders', and the threat they pose. Gaining and continuing a relationship of trust and constantly negotiating my position and access therefore made for a treacherous journey, influencing (and inhibiting) data collection, but simultaneously providing a valuable insight into a present-day newsroom.

b.2. Confusion as an academic

Could a dual perspective like mine become problematic, one can wonder. The answer is a clear "yes", as it could in some cases cloud academic observation, and objective judgement. One could for instance be tempted to 'go native' (Malinowski, 1922), i.e. identify so completely with the group being studied that one is unable to be objective. There are, however, strategies to avoid this. For one, the practitioner-academic should address this kind of entanglement with a research topic openly from the get-go. I have always been open about my background. Moreover, in my experience, the best way to counter any potential bias is time. When enough time is allowed to think in detail about one's observations, actions and practices, a practitioner-academic will be able to filter out any preconceptions, or tendentious ideas. Two terms are crucial here: 'reflection' and 'reflexivity'. This struggle has been an important part of my PhD-process, but has not been given serious consideration. I would therefore like to take the opportunity here to discuss some of the ways I dealt with my 'split personality'.

b.2.1. Reflection

It is possible to describe the tacit knowledge implicit in our actions through a process of observation and reflection: 'Reflection-in-action' could be used by professionals as a tool to actually improve their practice (Schön, 1983, 1987). The need to reflect on the self as a means of self-development puts forward the notion that reflection is a critical underpinning of growth

and learning. (Dewey, 1934). Niblock mentions that in the journalism lexicon too the term "reflective" is omnipresent today, denoting "a different way of thinking about the practices of reporters, feature writers and all involved with the editorial process" (Niblock, 2007: 20). In fact, according to her journalism practice "is inherently reflective", (2007: 26). The increasing importance of the readers' editor (see for example *the Observer* readers' editor Stephen Pritchard, who writes a much-read weekly column about the media, and the well-loved weekly contribution of Tom Naegels in *De Standaard*, the former ombudsman of the newspaper, in which he "he holds up a mirror" to his newspaper) is proof that the quality press wants to be seen as a medium which can be held accountable for their choices and decisions, and wants to engage with their readership about them. She further describes how the growing urge to be 'reflective' can be felt in both journalism practice and in theory. However, there is a lack of any clear consensual definitions of "reflective" shared by journalism and the academy, which according to Niblock continues the perceived "schism" between journalism practice and theory (2007: 22).

In my opinion, being reflective is the ability to notice why things are the way they are, and in particular your part in it. In an attempt to counter one of the key risks of immersing oneself – the inability to distance oneself from the research object resulting in a conflation of the emic (insider's) and etic (external) perspective (Velthuis 2016: 903) – I noted reflections on my research down in a fieldwork journal, in various (e-)notes and in a daily planner. It was also helpful to regularly discuss my experiences as a sub-editor with my academic colleagues (Kanuha, 2000). Keeping the aforementioned records was both motivational, as I gained deeper insights from scrutinizing my own practices and those of my colleagues, and a testament to how I myself at times struggled with my two identities.

b.2.2. Reflexivity

The aforementioned fieldwork journal also helped me to notice patterns. By reading my 'reflection-on-action' notes, I learned more about the sub-editing process as a whole, and my own practices. Consequently, while working in the newsroom, I became personally 'reflexive'. I relate my position to Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, which denotes recognition of one's own beliefs, assumptions, and biases in the act of sense-making (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Reflexivity implies "an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining "outside of"' one's subject matter while conducting research" (Niblock, 2007: 29). This means I describe the relationship I share with the people and the surroundings I am studying (Hannerz, 1998; Nader, 1972). Reflexivity thus occupies an important place in my research. It also refers to the capacity to reflect upon one's actions and values while doing research, when producing data and writing accounts and to view the beliefs we hold in the same way that we view the beliefs of others (Seale, 1998; Gouldner, 1972). According to Brewer (1994), reflexivity is a characteristic of the ethnographic imagination and establishes the researchers' integrity, which is part of good ethnographic practice.

Reflexivity is not identical to reflection, says Qualley (1997), although they are often part of the same recursive and hermeneutical process:

> "When we reflect, we fix our thoughts on a subject; we carefully consider it, meditate upon it. Self-reflection assumes that individuals can access the contents of their own mind independently of others. Reflexivity, on the other hand, does not originate at the self but always occurs in response to a person's critical engagement with an "other'." (Qualley, 1997: 11)

The reflexive process involves a kind of 'interactive introspection', a deep inward gaze into every interaction (Ryan, 2007), in order to improve my practices and study my thoughts, feelings and behaviour. I considered my mental state, emotions and motives within the particular context of the newsroom and the university. So, as I became introspective during my workday in the newsroom, I started "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research'" (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999: 228). As I would often write this down, I was in fact partly involved in 'auto-ethnography', in which researchers' own thoughts and perspectives from their social interactions form the central element of a study (Reed-Danahay, 1997).

b.2.3. Triangulation

Collecting empirical evidence and additional materials from the newsroom, being able to observe newsroom interactions, participating in the day-to-day journalistic practices and being part of the newswriting process helped me to gain insights I could never have attained otherwise. When looking at media (discourse), clearly, an ethnographic approach brings along the added advantage of being able to find out where the community's priorities lie, rather than the linguists'.

However, using an ethnographic method to collect data could raise questions concerning "both the quality of how empirical material is gathered and the degree of generalization" (Steensen, 2009b: 707) made possible by it. Paterson notes that the people being studied might be disturbed by the researcher's observations, that the researcher's prejudice might influence the study, that it is difficult to set down everything the researcher witnesses

(2008: 5). And, crucially in today's newsrooms, most often communication happens through digital means, instead of face-to-face interaction (Puijk, 2008).

Given my method, the generalizability of my findings may be limited. Indeed, from fieldwork in three countries, I learned how subediting is practiced slightly differently in each newsroom, and is prone to change. This means that, although by and large the process is comparable, some of the findings may be specific to Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, and broadsheet newspapers. Securing access for a sufficient period of time is therefore crucial, "so that situations and actions can be understood properly and in their right context" (Steensen, 2009b: 707). In order to avoid other methodological pitfalls, it is important to secure different perspectives on the same subject and data. This can be done through triangulation.

Ethnographers commonly triangulate, meaning they carry out a variety of measurements from various perspectives (Teunissen, 1985). The main goal of triangulation is to find common ground between the results of those diverse research methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The notions of 'perception' and 'meaning' (Harinck, 2007) are crucial here. To ensure optimal results, observations should be accompanied with interviews and document analysis.

Throughout this study I have employed triangulation as a method (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999; Carter et al, 2014) to gain better understanding of the investigated phenomenon, i.e. the sub-editors and their practices (. Albeit time-consuming, triangulation, i.e. relying on insights from various aspects from various standpoints, helped to increase the validity of my research. The first type of triangulation I used was data triangulation, which involves using different sources of information to increase the validity of a study. By conducting in-depth interviews with different groups of newsworkers ranging from sub-editors, reporters and layout designers I was able to compare and contrast their views on the matter at hand. Secondly, it was necessary to compare and contrast the textual output with interview and observation methods, as what people say about their behaviour can often contrast with their actual actions. This is termed methodological triangulation. On this, Hymes said: "Some social research seems incredibly to assume that what there is to find out can be found out by asking" (Hymes, 1975: 18). Blommaert and Dong agree: "Asking is indeed very often the worst possible way of trying to find out" (Blommaert & Dong, 2010: 3). Moreover, I utilised investigator triangulation, which involves using several different investigators in the analysis process. This was the case specifically when delineating the types of interventions that happen in the sub-editing stage (cf. chapter 3) whereby Prof Ellen Van Praet and myself co-coded a corpus of news articles in order to reach consensus about the typology.

In sum, when openly conducting research as a practitioner-academic, or 'practitioner-turned-academic', the tacit knowledge shared with your informants/colleagues should be seen as valuable support, and a powerful driving force for research, especially into complex newswriting processes. However, in order to more clearly identify the decision-making, questioning, and daily routines in the newsroom, a "reflexive interrogation of the everyday practice and routines within journalism" (Niblock 2007: 29) is crucial. Still, difficulties might occur while conducting research with a dual identity, and in the following section I will address my approach.

c.
My approach: Up, down and sideways

Interviews and textual analysis are definitely important to my work, but in this dissertation my fieldwork in three countries, and experiences 'on the shop floor', i.e. the newsroom and the copy desk, are crucial. After all, reporters, sub-editors and layout designers act and interact for the most part without any self-reflection, with a lack of 'active' awareness. Consequently, they might not have a clear opinion on those (inter)actions, and this is therefore almost impossible to capture in research. Going into the newsroom allowed me to capture issues, opinions and actions that are not considered of importance by the people under observation, but rather part of their daily routine. However, my dual position of being an insider (practitioner) looking out, to the world of academia versus that of an outsider (researcher), looking in, into the newsroom, brings with it a great deal of tension during this process, as I illustrated in the sections above. I believe the three-way approach anthropologist Laura Nader (2008) suggested can be of great value to researchers going into the field of media, either being full-time academics or as those with a 'double identity'. Nader claimed that researchers should study 'up, down and sideways simultaneously'. In what follows, I shall briefly illustrate how this helped shape my research. Continuing to wear both the practitioner's and the academic's hats, my goal is to provide budding media researchers who choose a praxis-oriented perspective on their 'subjects'/'colleagues' with a few helpful guidelines.

It has been argued that journalism researchers have focused on 'studying up' or engaged in 'elite research' (Conti & O'Neil, 2007), by 'paying a disproportionate amount of attention to elite individuals, news organizations and texts' (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009: 12). This is illustrated by myriad studies of news organizations, which have mainly focused on journalism produced in large (national) television and newspaper newsrooms in elite nations. Based on the choice of newsrooms, it could be argued

that I too have been susceptible to this tendency, and that I have been studying 'up'. The newsrooms selected as my preferred research loci belong to large, fairly (internationally) renowned, quality broadsheets. However, as it is in the big, highly-tuned newspapers that the craft of subbing is "developed to the highest degree" (Sellers, 1968: 15), for the purposes of my study, this seemed a valid choice.

'Studying down', then, refers to "the trend in social science to study and locate problems within groups and individuals in positions of lower social status and power" (Beddoes, 2017: 91). The danger herein lies in the fact that those in positions of higher social status and power remain challenged, or seem to be accepted as the norm. In focusing on the sub-editor, "labouring anonymously" (Keith, 2000: 43) at "the peripheries of the newsroom" (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009: 12), I am in a way 'studying down'. By acknowledging a generally overlooked contributor to the news production chain within a quality broadsheet newsroom, I am both studying 'up' and 'down'.

Finally, 'studying sideways' is an integral part of my research stance: I procured 'insider knowledge' as both a sub-editor and as a researcher. This way, I simultaneously observe my sub-editor colleagues as a researcher, and should be fully aware of the (possible) intrusiveness of an onlooker as a professional. In fact, all investigations into journalism can be seen as 'studying sideways' as we, researchers in journalism studies or media linguistics, are looking into a craft not that different from our own. This stance could be a way of slowly bridging the gap between the separate worlds of news media studies, media linguistics and the media.

In hindsight, I can relate the approaches during my study to Goffman's (1981) notion of footing. Studying up, down and sideways can be seen as a strategic way of frame the conversation, and my way of –subtly – attempting to exert control over the situation, in order to gain insight and information from my informants/colleagues. Still, combining a professional sub-editor identity with that of an academic has been a personal struggle throughout this study. I initially started from my position of sub-editor (practitioner), and began to think about my own practice. My original aim was to analyse the work of the sub-editor and at the same time stand up for the sub-editing craft. Therefore, I moved beyond looking at my own situation. I started conducting reflexive research and did – and continue to – engage in reflective practice. Difficulties did arise related to my 'double identity' in the newsroom, yet by simultaneously studying 'up, down and sideways' I was able to continue, and gain results, which I would not have attained otherwise. Albeit a struggle at times, I am convinced that ethnographic research from a dual practitioner-academic perspective is extremely valuable for this kind of linguistically-oriented research into the news from within the newsroom. In combination with close text analysis, it contributes greatly to a better interpretation and understanding of the news professionals' communicative interactions. Moreover, I agree wholeheartedly with Niblock that journalism practitioners and scholars, who increasingly are one and the same person, need to

> "provide critical, reflexive accounts of contemporary editorial practice and decision-making. This will serve to bridge some of the perceived gaps between theory and practice, and will for the practitioner provide a critical vocabulary through which to identify, exemplify and document innovative autonomous practice-as-research." (Niblock 2007: 30)

Bringing 'reflection' and 'reflexivity' into the centre of an understanding of what media professionals, in this case newspaper sub-editors, do, will engender a closer dialogue between academia and the journalistic industry.

6.3. Thoughts on the future of the sub-editor and sub-editing

It has now become generally accepted that mainstream journalism must "adapt or die" (Smolkin, 2006: 18). The competitive environment the newspaper industry finds itself in, combined with the economic challenges it faces, requires the business to look at itself in a radically different way than it has done in the past.

Newspapers no longer bring news to the reader, as a multitude of other (online and mobile) platforms take care of that. Newspaper companies' strategy of choice for survival in a challenging future is increasingly to view "their trademark print product as the engine driving a diverse 'portfolio' that embraces other 'platforms' such as Web sites and niche publications" (Smolkin, 2006: 17).

Globally, the newspaper industry is growing increasingly unstable even as the economy as a whole makes modest gains. In today's increasingly digitalized world, newspaper circulation continues to fall. The growing digital news sector and sharp losses in print advertising pose a threat to print: To survive a newspaper has to realize at least 50 per cent of its revenue from advertising, and newspapers that drop below the advertisement threshold of 35-40 per cent find themselves in financial difficulty. (De Bens et al, 2016: 20). As newspaper revenue

declines, so does the industry's employment. Mass layoffs, offshoring and outsourcing buyouts and restructuring are no longer isolated events, but have become "standard managerial practice" (Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009: 555). Sweeping layoffs have inevitably affected editorial staff, e.g. US newsroom employment has fallen 33 per cent from 2006 pre-recession peak according to the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Newsroom Employment Census. (ASNE, 2014). A similar situation can be noted in Europe. According to recent data, both regional and national newspapers in the Netherlands employed considerably less journalists in 2014, then they did some twenty years ago. Hundreds of journalists have been let go over the past few years (Bakker, 2015: 85). In Belgium, the Flemish association for professional journalists (Vlaamse Vereniging van Journalisten (VVJ)) is expressing increasing concern about the measures Flemish media concerns are taking, especially related to mass newsroom firings (Knack.be, 2011). The post-2008 media downturn saw a rapid drop in the number of UK journalists, according to a Labour Force Survey, with the total number falling from 67,000 that year to 58,000 in 2009. The government statistics suggest the number of employed journalists has declined by 6,000 from a peak of 70,000 in 2013. The latest figures suggest that despite the strengthening UK economy, the journalism jobs market remains uncertain (Ponsford, 2015). Many newspapers have either gone under or moved completely online. In the UK, for instance, more than 300 UK local newspapers have gone in last ten years, according to research by former regional editor Keith Perch (Ponsford, 2016). However, more than half of the readership (56 per cent) still prefers to read newspaper content in print only (Pew, State of the News Media, 2015). Since those willing to part with cash for a newspaper understandably demand a qualitative one, a paper's quality has become more important than ever. Liz Spayd, The New York Times' public editor, wrote:

> "The New York Times has a reputation for impeccable editing. Not just because it can turn one particular story into a showpiece, but because it achieves a high level of consistency and polish across the entire report. It's part of what readers pay for, and what they've come to expect (...). (Spayd, 2017)"

It comes as no surprise that the print industry is wondering which job(s) remain(s) indispensable in this economically challenged news media landscape. Newspaper reporters have had to adapt, but how about the sub-editors? Can the sub-editing stage of the production process be upheld in the realm of journalism, which is constantly evolving, and today is faced with ever-greater challenges? Northern Irish media executive and former *News of the World* editor David Montgomery said that he sees far less need for sub-editing in today's newspapers (Ponsford, 2007). Montgomery looks upon sub-editing as "a twilight world, checking things you don't really need to check". Fletcher termed sub-editors "a breed doomed to extinction" and continued:

> There are too many of them and they get in the way. They have an old-fashioned idea of the way things should be done. They prevent the reporter making that direct communication with the audience that they crave and which, being cheaper, media businesses would like too." (Fletcher, 2006)

But what happens if the reporter is not 'prevented' from making a direct communication with the audience, and mistakes get published? And what the will replace the sub-editors' layer in the news production process, should they be removed from the newsroom? After having explored the role of sub-editors and their sub-editing process in this study, I take the opportunity in this section to reflect on the future of the sub-editor in the continuously evolving newspaper industry. First I will discuss newspaper accuracy the consequences of errors in newspapers succinctly, and I will then move on to a discussion of a number of suggested alternatives for the newspaper sub-editor.

a. Accuracy

A newspaper has a degree of authority over its readership. Errors in newspapers will trigger a reaction from the readers: in fact, getting numbers, names and/or locations wrong remain the most eye-catching mistakes, and will generally not be taken lightly. A newspaper "should know better". This is believed to be true, in the opinion of the vast majority of newspaper readers, not in the least when it comes to the correct use of language (Taalpeil, 2012-2013: 1). However, a newspaper does not always get it absolutely right.

Newspaper accuracy research in the United States (Charnley, 1936; Meyer, 1988, 2004, 2005; Maier 2005, 2007), Ireland (Fox et al., 2009), the German-speaking world (Baerns, 1999; Breiden, 2002), Italy and Switzerland (Porlezza et al, 2012; and more recently Bleyenberg (forthcoming) shows that 'the press' frequently errs. Generally, observant readers find errors – ranging from sloppy spelling to misquotations and inaccurate headlines – in at least every other news article. It is quite sobering to realise that almost half of the articles published by daily newspapers in the US contain one or more (factual) errors, and less than two per cent end up being corrected (Maier, 2007).

Newspaper errors might be considered unfortunate typos, or innocent oversights – Easy mistakes to make considering the urgency of a news event. Journalism is after all a fast-paced field riddled with deadlines, and therefore vul-

nerable to errors. When faced with such a linguistic or factual eyesore, the educated reader will raise an eyebrow, but rarely will (s)he be prevented from grasping the gist of a story. Yet, the increase in errors causes trust in news media to remain poor, and consequently, sales to dwindle even further.

The abovementioned studies show that newspaper inaccuracy has a corrosive effect on source willingness to cooperate on an article, media credibility, and ultimately on a newspaper's position in the market. As accuracy is the foundation of media credibility (Maier, 2002), getting it right should remain a priority. After all, credibility means trust, a precious commodity in today's world littered with dubious half-truths and 'alternative facts' (Van Praet et al, 2014). It is agreed that the trust of the reader is a prerequisite for a newspaper's success (Fletcher, 2006). With the newspaper industry currently under threat, the consequences of dwindling trust can be quite far-reaching, not only when it comes to the bottom-line. Canadian journalist Craig Silverman writes:

> "Media errors exert an untold – and, of course, unchecked – amount of power in our world (...) When the press makes mistakes, especially egregious ones, it gives ammunition to those who would curtail its power through increased regulation or legislation that could potentially restrict press freedom and have a corollary effect on freedom of speech (...) When the seemingly powerful media cannot exercise its freedom, average citizens naturally suffer the impact." (Silverman, 2007: 8)

Journalism researchers Newhagen and Nass (1988) found newspaper credibility was most accounted for by confidence in the institution. The reader usually holds the reporter responsible for errors. (S)he, or the publication as a whole, will have to bear the brunt of the readers' dismay after encountering a mistake. To prevent a further fall from grace, newspapers could consider increasing the space allotted to corrections, or reporters could start triple-checking all they write.

The reporters themselves agree: In the Pew Research Center's annual analysis of the state of the news media in America, the Project for Excellence in Journalism found in 2008 that more than two-thirds of all US journalists feel that "increased bottom-line pressure is seriously hurting the quality of news coverage, rather than just changing the way news organizations operate (Pew, State of the News Media, 2008). Whether poor coverage is the result of noticeable cuts in newsroom budgets, as many reporters complain, or not, it remains that journalism today is often inaccurate. Clearly, in a time when newspapers sales keep recording losses, safeguarding quality becomes increasingly important.

b. Outsourcing and centralizing

Over the last decade the fact that internationally sub-editing operations were being centralized and outsourced has regularly made the news. Newspaper publishers around the world have been centralizing and also outsourcing their sub-editing operations to cut costs. So-called 'sub-hubs' are popping up, bringing together sometimes more than 100 sub-editors and layout designers to provide editing, layout and design for several publications at once. Transferring 'production jobs' to so-called (overseas) 'sub-hubs' actually makes perfect sense from a management point of view the move: newspapers feel the pressure to cut costs from the highly competitive media environment. Even though production outsourcing is the way ahead for some, entrusting sub-editing practices to 'subbing factories' brings with it a number of potential pitfalls.

For one, there is a distinct loss of newsroom interaction between sub-editors and reporters, and other newsroom staff. Moreover, those remote subbing operations are usually staffed by people who are unfamiliar with a newspaper's style or identity. A possible consequence is a loss of connection with the publication's style. Furthermore, there might be a distinct lack of local knowledge – a sub-editor who is located overseas cannot be expected to know the correct spelling of a certain local street name. Therefore, local and regional specificity can be lost in favour of a globalized take on events.

c. The age of the multi-skilled multimedia reporter

Over the last two decades newspapers have developed a "portfolio" of ways to offer content, from weekly magazines aimed at women, bi-monthly city magazines aimed at youngsters, seasonal food magazines, et cetera. The main addendum is of course the newspaper's website, offering video and audio, as well as text. The newsrooms have had to adapt and evolve together with the emergence of these new media. Some may mourn the fact that instead of stories and readers, we are now faced with "content" and "audience", and that newspapers and their sister publications are "products" (Smolkin, 2006: 18). However, the convergence newsroom, in which different media industries and products come together (Pool, 1983; Negroponte, 1995), is here to stay.

As the newsroom transitions from print world to a digital one in a process of production convergence, it is time for a 'new journalist' (Robinson, 2011) to arise. Taking into account the elimination of the sub-editors (and other production journalists), the working practic-

es of journalists (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008; Balcytiene et al, 2011) will be affected greatly. They will be responsible for writing news and features; sub-editing and designing pages; taking pictures; working the new content management system; blogging and writing news stories online; processing pictures for print and for the web; looking after trainees et cetera. However, the rise of the multimedia journalist, reporting the news in more than one medium in formerly single-medium organizations, is seen as a unique opportunity by some. In fact, according to certain professionals in the newspaper business, it is print journalists who can look forward to a long-term future, (Posford, 2007), as long as they adapt.

The eradication of certain layers in the production process would imply that the reporters will be able reach out to their audience without intervention. In a 2,200-word missive to his staff at *Local World Ltd,* the large regional newspaper publisher which he formed in 2012, Montgomery wrote:

> "The journalist will embody all the traditional skills of reporter, sub-editor, editor-in-chief, as well as online agility and basic design ability, acquired partly in training but in the case of on-screen capability this is expected as a basic entry qualification as it is now generally present in most 12-year-olds.The content harvesting process is a mix of interpersonal and managerial skills. Journalists have always prided themselves on their foot in the door ability so this just needs to be updated and matched by organisational ability" (Axegrinder, 2013)

In this view, reporters are trusted to communicate directly with their audience, without any barriers. A much-cited example here are TV journalists, or 'one-man camera crews, who are not sub-edited for live reports, and take care of research, audio, video, interviewing and editing themselves. When it comes to accuracy of language, there are plenty of software options for reporters to consider (Grammarly, PerfectIt, Tansa, the AP's StyleGuard and Lingofy, i.e. automated sub-editing subscription services), which means "journalists can be freed from humdrum roles and the sub-editing culture can break down" (Montgomery, cited in Ponsford, 2007). News organizations increasingly perceive these new automated editing tools as adequate replacements for human sub-editors, and act accordingly.

We cannot escape the fact that the role of the journalist is undergoing substantial change. The changes to the business model are ushering in dramatic changes for print reporters, making ever-more "demands on their time, compelling new skills and requiring a new way of thinking about their jobs". (Smolkin, 2006: 21). The combination of mastering newsgathering and storytelling techniques in all media formats (so-called 'multi-skilling'), as well as the integration of digital network technologies coupled with a rethinking of the news producer-consumer relationship tends to be seen as one of the biggest challenges facing journalism studies and education in the 21st century (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001; Pavlik et al., 2001; Teoh Kheng Yau & Al-Hawamdeh, 2001). While new skills are added to the professional role of journalists, "traditional skills might be altered or even discarded" (Steensen, 2009: 702). The traditional skills such as specialized, investigative beat reporting and deadline sensitivity have been downplayed and replaced by immediacy in reporting, multiskilling and multitasking, copy-paste mentality and 24/7 deadlines (Paterson and Domingo, 2008). It is an enormous challenge to help today's newspaper production staff make the transition to these new roles: From management this requires a commitment to provide training and space to learn these new skills, and from the people in the newsroom it requires a genuine willingness to re-learn the craft, sometimes giving up cherished roles and practices.

It is suggested that the demands of the marketplace (for news and news labour) can be met by reporters and editors "if they perform a more flexible, adaptive, multi-skilled, mixed, or even 'liquid' occupational role and professional identity" (Deuze & Marjoribanks, 2009: 557-558). One could argue that as sub-editors already master a myriad of skills, ranging from editing, fact-checking, storytelling, to design, that the sub-editor is in fact best-suited to become the new multi-skilled multimedia reporter. I, however, agree with Ashton when he warns that the practice of multiskilling, "where media workers do take on a variety of tasks across platforms and departmental divides", can lead to the decline of the specialist, and can affect quality of output "to the extent that journalists produce work which is merely acceptable rather than excellent" (Ashton, 1997). Where can the sub-editor feature best in the future?

d.
The age of the sub-editor

The multiplatform approach has become a reality for nearly every player in the newspaper industry. However, more platforms do not entail more jobs. Philip Meyer, author of *The Vanishing Newspaper: Saving Journalism in the Information Age*, is actually "dismayed that newspapers are increasing workloads instead of increasing staff". Furthermore, in his opinion they are ignoring what he sees as an opportunity to invest in the news workers' futures (Smolkin, 2006: 22-23). Experts also believe that because of the multitude of platforms, the output in print will diminish. Clearly, it is no longer a question whether the sub-editing ranks will be diminished, but rather how soon, how and by how much? Based on the results of my study, I believe, that it is here, in the small-

er convergence newsrooms that "subs matter" (McKane, 2006: 143).

d.1. Less print, more quality

Although it might become an occasional luxury item, "a weekend product" (Meyer, cited in Smolkin, 2006: 23), appearing possibly less than daily, the newspaper will survive in some form. I would argue that precisely in this new reality of less print, and online journalism, is where the sub-editor is needed.

It is true that newspapers now no longer bring us the news. In this new type of 'media ecology' traditional journalistic practices and routines face a considerable challenge (Deprez et al, 2015). Reporters will have to focus more on bringing background stories, analyses, in-depth interviews, critiques and long-reads. If the printed newspaper becomes a luxury item, quality control and appeal are the two key items that can make the difference. Publishers will have to continue to "modify their newspapers in a creative and innovative way so that they appeal to their readers' new life trends" (De Bens et al, 2016: 23). In my opinion, it is here that sub-editors can and will shine. As I have demonstrated, excellent sub-editing guarantees a stronger journalistic product, even though it does not deal with breaking news. Moreover: unseen is unsold. Far more content is created now than could ever be read, and journalism has to work harder to get noticed. The sub-editors' role as marketeer, as the one who 'sells' the newspaper –be it through clever design, or strong headlines, is crucial here. Increasing – or maintaining – readership is crucial today, and the sub-editor can help accomplish this. After all, every reporter wants to be read.

In order to establish which newsroom jobs cannot be lost in the current economically challenged news media landscape, determining what captures readers' attention holds great value. Eye-tracking studies found that readers do not really 'read' but rather 'scan' newspapers (Holmqvist & Wartenberg, 2005). Therefore, they have defined newspaper design as the task 'to give readers material that is worthy of their scan, that makes them stop scanning and start reading' (Garcia & Stark, 1991: 67). When it comes to newspapers, what is seen is sold. Consequently, whoever is responsible for drawing the reader in is of great value for the newspaper business. After all: Those who create the aforementioned 'eye catchers' eventually attract readers. One can rightfully wonder: Who is responsible for an article's 'furniture', as sub-editor Charlotte Baxter wrote on *The Guardian* website (Baxter, 2012). Who makes dry material vibrant? Who basically 'sells' the newspaper?

d.2. Subbing for the web

Using multiple platforms to spread news and related content in a variety of forms, means using the web site to its fullest potential. It is not enough to take what you have in print and put it up on the web, but instead you should use and take advantage of what this medium allows you to do with that content. Basically, similarly to the newspaper, the website should be regarded as a fundamental product of the newsroom. It is a tool, a different way of telling a story. Therefore, the job of the sub-editor remains the same, i.e. to make a story is read. This means presenting copy and images to the reader in a correct, attractive way, and where necessary enhanced for sense, legality, clarity, writing style, spelling and grammar. The importance of sub-editors in a digital world is emphasised by Fletcher:

> "There are many writers who have won awards for the cleverness of their subs and few who have not been rescued from disaster by them. For that reason it is impossible to conceive a new-media world that does not offer a powerful role for sub-editors. They have the opportunity to reinvent themselves, being perfectly qualified to embrace the multi-tasking that everyone says is the future. Who else, for instance, is going to take a piece of journalism – let us hold out against that grim word "content" – and repurpose it for the different platforms the world envisages?" (Fletcher, 2006).

Additionally, the sub-editors, who are fully aware of their newspaper's brand, can make sure the content emanates the same newspaper identity. After all: you cannot instruct all reporters writing for one publication, with various media outlets, to think alike.

Reporters cannot be expected to do everything I mentioned above, for the simple reason they lack the time. Without the benefit of a second pair of eyes on their material, they are not going to produce work of the professional standard that is required. (Fletcher 2006) As anyone can blog, and have their voice be heard online, the need for professional journalism involving editing and fact-checking, has never been greater. Obviously, in a world where only those media organisations that are trusted have a change to succeed, the sub-editors' presence is required. That will be the strength they bring to their newspapers' electronic media.

The sub-editors' role should be no different in today's world of dwindling newspaper sales and increasing prominence of online news. To ensure the much-needed journalistic quality on various platforms, I believe sub-editors should be trained to learn new media. This will require flexibility on the part of the sub-editors, as well as an eagerness to learn. The industry will have to be prepared to invest –it might even mean creating additional jobs instead of eliminating them. However, keeping them at the heart of the news production process, and therefore openly valuing sub-editing as a craft in itself, will help safeguard the quality of journalism in the 21st century. In doing so, I am confident that newspapers the world over will be able to marry the speed of online

journalism with good sub-editing. After all, an "extra set of eyeballs on a story could make all the difference" (García, 2017).

6.4. Avenues for future research

News production processes are interesting and elaborate processes, in which several actors contribute to the finished news product. As most research executed in the field of newswriting has skimped over the stages prior to the end result of the process, I took a closer look at the sub-editing phase. From the previous chapters, it has become quite clear that additional academic research into sub-editing should be encouraged.

Media practitioners have been known to claim they get little in return for the access they grant to academics to interpret their world. Moreover, they feel that the research that has been done is rarely of any practical use. By focusing on the disappearing craft of newspaper sub-editing as a researcher with a practitioner background, I aim to counter this view, and help build a bridge between academic media and journalism on the one hand, and media and journalism practitioners on the other.

The aim of my research into this particular part of the news production process has been to contribute to the academic discipline of media linguistics, as well as to be useful to (part of the) journalism industry and to those willing to work in it. I will therefore suggest four further avenues for research, of which I hope the insights will lend added value to journalism studies and media linguistics, as well as to journalism education and practice.

a. Research avenue 1

From a linguistic perspective more research can be done into the micro-discursive practices of the sub-editor. First of all, my original typology of Transformations in the sub-editing stage can be refined. What are the different types of Replacements, Additions, Deletions and Translocations that can be distinguished, and to what extent do they alter meaning? Through analysis of a corpus of articles before and after sub-editing, various textual and graphic subcategories can be set up. This would provide yet more insight into what the sub-editor does during the sub-editing phase, as well as map out any recurring types of Interventions. Further ethnographic research could be considered to provide answers as to why those Interventions are done at all.

Additionally, I would make a plea for a case study approach, in which the 'story of a story', from conception to publication, is analysed. Moving beyond the final phase (the sub-editing stage), and capturing the complete newswriting process; including interplay between the context of the newsroom, the sub-edited article in its various versions, newsroom observations, and the sub-editors, could allow for valuable insights into the genesis of news text. Moreover, through additional ethnographic research, links could be established between certain choices, that is Replacements, Additions, Deletions and Translocations, and reasoning, or choice of production values. Finally, the rhetorical impact of these interventions can be studied: What effects do certain (linguistic) changes have on the reader when a news text is "recontextualized" (Oddo, 2013)?

b. Research avenue 2

This second avenue for research actually builds on the first one. The newsroom is a relational space, as it embodies relationships among reporters, between reporters and news managers, news sources and other extraneous entities (Harvey, 2006). The complexity of newsroom dynamics was initially recognised in the early 1970s (Tunstall, 1971; Epstein, 1973; Sigal, 1973; Sigelman, 1973), when

> "media organisation began to be regarded as a domain in which occupational behaviour, professional beliefs and organisational values merge, opening the door to potential tensions and conflicts." (de Bruin, 2014: 42)

Scholars studying news work have widely regarded the media "the key arena in which [the] struggle over symbolic power is played out" (Thompson, 2000: 105-6); People and issues both inside and outside of the newsroom are involved in a perpetual tug of war, constantly vying for attention, publicity, and recognition.

A number of researchers have described the newsroom as a "battleground" (Zaman, 2013), often based upon the journalists' own descriptions of their newsrooms, in which they allude to themes of chaos (Wallace, 2012), power hierarchy (Robinson, 2011), conflict, and contestation. Crises of various natures can make these themes more evident, although "many remain hidden beneath the surface of daily mundane routines of news work" (Zaman, 2013: 7). For many academics, the main purpose of news production studies has been to determine who exerts more influence on news production and content in the newsroom:

> Put succinctly, who gets "on" or "in" the news is important – very important indeed. Whose voices and viewpoints structure and inform news discourses go to the heart of

> democratic views of, and radical concerns about, the news media. (Cottle, 2000: 33)

This means that in order to unravel the complexities of the news media, every voice and viewpoint should be taken into consideration, even – or especially – those who have been previously ignored. In this study, rather than focus on the people outside of the newsroom fighting for a correct reflection of themselves in the world's press, I focused on a selected group of people inside the newsroom, equally struggling for recognition: the newspaper sub-editors.

Sub-editors pride themselves on being 'the first reader'. During this study they recounted time and time again how they should approach a reporter when in doubt and to fix some unclarity, factual error, or vagueness they had encountered in an article. They accompanied this with illustrative anecdotes, but always hinted at the hidden boundaries and how difficult they are to cross. The tension I noticed is one between visible expertise and invisible expertise, an on-going battle in an arena of contest, the newsroom. The tension/divide between the (senior) reporter and the sub-editor is enhanced by a divide/distance in three ways: It is not only a matter of hierarchy, where the reporters are the ones whose work is most visibly on display to the outside world, and the work of the sub-editors remains largely unnoticed and un(der)recognized. There is also a divide in terms of workflow, as reporters and sub-editors work different shifts. The reporters tend to hand down their articles to the sub-editors early in the afternoon to sometime before the final deadline late at night. Finally, the divide is a spatial one: In this study, I showed how sub-editors and reporters are often stationed at opposite ends of the newsroom, separated in the middle by the central news desk.

Reporters and sub-editors clearly occupy different symbolic positions in the social space in the newsroom, referencing their different dispositions in daily news work. However, their different collaborative voices form layers. By uncovering the voices' identities, by peeling back the layers, I want to look at how this layered construction of expertise takes shape, and what the sub-editors' part in it is. By looking whose expertise is reflected in which ways in the construction of an article, I could link this to existing power relations in the newsroom.

One way of achieving this would be to single out the editorial, a high-stakes article, which is being 'sold' to the reader as uncontestably containing and displaying the voice of an expert. Here expertise is presented, or 'sold', to the reader visibly, by including the author's picture, a by-line, their contact details, and a streamer. Charting the production process of those editorials, 'measuring' the interventions by reporters and sub-editors (and layout designers) by tracking the textual changes, and interviewing the newsworkers involved, could provide insights about issues such as identity (whether they be the sub-editor, reporter, editor-in-chief, desk chief, layout designer)and power of the decision makers behind the changes. Furthermore, links between sub-editor profile (junior/senior, full-time/freelance) and the number and type of Interventions, could be established, as powerful differences can be detected between novices and experts in revision (Myhill & Jones, 2007).

c. Research avenue 3

The growing prominence, and even dominance, of online media, has brought about a shift in newsroom culture, infrastructure, technology, roles and practices. The digital revolution has radically changed sub-editing. The role of sub-editor is therefore also changing. As I discussed above, the sub-editors have fallen upon harsh times because of this. Their place, in my opinion, is still at the heart of the (convergence) newsroom. In the introduction I mentioned how *The Times'* former senior news revise sub-editor McKane advised aspiring journalists to look carefully at how their article had been sub-edited, and to learn from the alterations that had been made. He continues: "Learn from the online version too – almost all papers have an online section and the approach to subbing and presentation will be different from the printed version". (McKane, cited in McKane, 2006: 144). In order to chart the on-going digital evolution and how it impacts sub-editing, I propose investigating various aspects of the online sub-editing process.

First of all, the complete online sub-editing process should be captured, from story conception to publication. This study into digital sub-editing will be aimed at answering questions like: Who is responsible, where does it happen, and how close is the interaction between other newsroom professionals, be it online or in real-life? More fine-grained foci could be: What is the maximum speed at which a story should travel from a reporter to the website? And what is the minimum number of editors who should see copy before it is put online?

Secondly, prominent newsrooms will need to (re)train sub-editors to carry out their jobs in the digital realm. As technology changes and newsrooms refine their missions, certain (previously instilled) truths might no longer hold true and certain skills might become obsolete. Questions we might ask ourselves are: Do editorial goals change across the various platforms, and 'How are sub-editors trained to deal with this, both from an editorial and from a technological perspective?

Thirdly, when it comes to the actual changes sub-editors make in an article, are they different from what would happen in print? If so, why? In order to track this it would be interesting to do comparative research in the convergence newsroom, focusing on the same content for online and print publication.

d.
Research avenue 4

During my three-month research stay in London in summer 2015, I was able to visit various newsrooms. Most of them belonged to well-established broadsheets, but I was also allowed to spend an evening in *The Sun's* newsroom with one of the chief sub-editors. Moreover, I was given the opportunity to interview a former reporter for *The Daily Express*. From those practitioners I learned how the sub-editing process at so-called tabloids was quite different from what I had become used to at their broadsheet colleagues' publications. Apart from coming up with the characteristic 'sensational' headlines, they will also construct a story from various sources, thus in effect playing a significant role in the actual genesis of the complete story. They therefore have an even larger part in the actual structuring of the news story. Sub-editing departments at British tabloids like, for instance, *The Sun*, one of the daily newspapers that sells more than any other, continue to thrive. Is this a mere coincidence or does a commitment to the quality of the words and headlines have a direct link to sales? This, I feel, needs to be explored further. Research objectives range from capturing the complete sub-editing process at these newspapers, to doing comparative research with a broadsheet based on the treatment of a story in a same-source case study.

Epilogue

> "A newspaper, as I'm sure you know, is a collection of supposedly true stories written down by writers who either saw them happen or talked to people who did. These writers are called journalists, and like telephone operators, butchers, ballerinas, and people who clean up after horses, journalists can sometimes make mistakes."
>
> (Lemony Snicket, *A Series of Unfortunate Events – The Vile Village*, 2001)

You might have come across the old saying *"De krant is een meneer"*, originally from the French expression "*le journal est un monsieur*". In other words: a newspaper, like any gentleman – or lady for that matter – , has a degree of authority. Errors in newspapers will always trigger a reaction from the readers. After all, a newspaper should know better. On closer scrutiny, a newspaper, however noble an institution it may be, does not always get it absolutely right. The people who make it are fallible. As Lemony Snicket points out in the quote above: "journalists", the writers who fill the newspaper pages, "can sometimes make mistakes".

Fortunately, buried deep in the trenches of the warzone the newsroom can be, a team of nameless, eagle-eyed soldiers lie in wait, ready to take out any error, irregularity or libellous misrepresentation threatening to soil the newspaper page with a single well-aimed shot: the sub-editors. Those sub-editors are the skilled journalists who make the newspaper readable, accurate and attractive. By entering the 'killing fields' of the newsroom, and identifying the (linguistic) contributions the sub-

editors make to the final news article, this study shows the sub-editors incontestably deserve to be recognised for their work as the *last line of defence* before the newspaper reaches the reader.

Although the public seems to appreciate little of their role, and too few reporters take the trouble to understand or to acknowledge the huge contribution they make, I have cast them as the leads in this PhD. I aimed to investigate the role they play in the production process. My study illustrated how the sub-editors are there to weed out any mistakes. It is the sub-editors who sell stories as well as entice people to read. Their job is production-oriented and technical and, as well as creative. Sub-editors know the audience, the language, know how to use reference books, are numerate, know the law, know the house style, and have an underlying respect for the author. So, in fact: they are at the very centre of the production process. True, choosing to be a sub-editor may mean choosing a relatively anonymous role in the newsroom, but subbing remains a truly "honourable craft" (McKane, cited in McKane, 2006: 143). My PhD shows that sub-editors are crucial yet often overlooked cogs in the newspaper production process, and highly skilled journalists in their own right, bringing reader appeal, credibility and journalistic value to their newspapers.

Lately, news about the sub-editors' imminent death, exile or centralisation has been making headlines in journalism circles, but I want to end this study on a high note: Every publication, be it online or in print, which cites credibility, accuracy and appeal as crucial journalistic values will need these highly skilled journalists, in one form or another. The sub-editors' impact on the final news article reveals that in the ever-evolving news media world there continues to be a need for the sub-editors as 'the newsroom's last line of defence'. *The sub-editor is dead, long live the sub-editor!*

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Summary

In this PhD I shed light on the role of newspaper sub-editors, the often "forgotten stepchildren of the newsroom" (Wizda, 1997: 38) in the newspaper production process. The main goal of this study is to gain insight into the sub-editors, their craft, their community of practice, and their impact on the news article. Being a sub-editor myself allowed me to investigate the sub-editing process from a dual practitioner/researcher perspective. In order to closely examine newspaper sub-editing in all its aspects I take a linguistic ethnographic approach. By analysing the sub-editors' physical placement in the newsroom, the (textual) changes they bring about in the creation of a newspaper article, and their underlying motivations for intervening, I aim for a deeper understanding of the sub-editor as a genuine 'newspaperman' (Gieber, 1964), and of newsmaking practice as a whole.

My dissertation is structured in six chapters. In chapter 1 of this study I discuss the sub-editors and their 'craft'. I argue that what appears in tomorrow's newspaper and in which form depends largely on the decisions of the sub-editors, and outline how they make the newspaper readable, accurate and attractive to the readership. I continue by identifying my split position between the worlds of journalistic practice and of academia, and how that tension between being an insider looking out (practitioner) and an outsider looking in (academic) motivated me to drive this study forward. That drive is actually twofold: On the one hand, the sub-editors remain anonymous to the reader, are underrecognized among their colleagues within the newsroom, and understudied in academia. On the other hand, as new technology has made the existing newspaper model less viable, sub-

editors are being forced to change their practices, or are being eliminated altogether. This makes analysis of the previously understudied newspaper sub-editors and their practice in its current form a pressing undertaking.

Next, I highlight my main research objectives, i.e. to explore the role of the sub-editor in the newspaper production process, and what the impact of sub-editing is on the final newspaper article. I then discuss the theoretical framework I lean on throughout my work. In keeping with my hybrid identity as a researcher and practitioner, the academic disciplines that helped shape this study are equally heterogeneous in origin. In this section I explain which three key research traditions lie at the heart of my PhD, i.e. journalism studies, media linguistics and writing studies. After that, I consider this PhD's methodology, characterized by corpus-based discourse analytic research and a strong ethnographic component, with fieldwork in three countries, i.e. Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK. I focus on my production-oriented, ethnographically supported approach to this dissertation, as well as how I collected the necessary data through fieldwork, interviews and focus groups. At the end of this first chapter, I introduce chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, which together make up the core of my dissertation, by highlighting these chapters' various foci and how they are related to one another.

In chapter 2 I chart the sub-editing process in the sub-editors' natural habitat, i.e. the physical environment of the newsroom. I scrutinize their interactions with e.g. reporters, layout designers, and picture editors, aiming to find out whether the sub-editors' placement in the newsroom influences their practices. Moreover, by comparing newsrooms in Belgium and the Netherlands, I detect differences in the way they work. Although the same newsroom model is in place in both newsrooms, the spatial setting, division of workload and the sub-editor's profile impact on the sub-editor's ability to intervene in the news production process.

In chapter 3 I focus on the sub-editors' micro-discursive linguistic practices in the final stage of an article's production. By uncovering what exactly happens

during the sub-editing stage, i.e. which transformations – linguistic or graphic – take place, I show the impact of the sub-editor's 'silent' voice on the final article. I find that contrary to popular belief that sub-editors mainly "hack away" at news stories additions actually prevail. Secondly, I uncover how most interventions occur in high profile articles. Thirdly, I discover that the largest number of interventions occurs in the "entry points" of an article, that is, where—according to eye-tracking research—readers stop scanning and start reading. I conclude that sub-editors contribute a considerable amount to how an article is presented to the reader, thus influencing the way readers are drawn into the story. Their role as 'marketeers' of a print newspaper is therefore an important one in a time in which their ranks keep diminishing.

Then, in chapter 4, I aim to find out what the underlying motivations of the sub-editors for those interventions are. Based on their daily practices, and by closely monitoring their treatment of an article, I compile an initial list of reasons for a sub-editor to intervene. Based on this initial set of 'production values', and from experiences in the field, I claim that in fact "reader appeal" is the ultimate production value. The sub-editor as intermediary between reader and his/her newspaper needs to maintain a high standard of editorial quality to protect the publication's credibility. The sub-editor is therefore not only the reader representative in the newsroom, but also his/her newspaper's strongest brand ambassador in the real world, adding journalistic value with every alteration.

In the following chapter, chapter 5, I introduce the graphic designer as an important part of the sub-editing process. In order to gain more insight into the sub-editors' reasoning, and to adjust initial results where necessary, I organise three focused groups consisting of both sub-editors' and layout designers, and confront them with their own practices. The main goal is to find out whether the previously defined typology of underlying reasons for intervening in a text, still holds true when put into practice. On the basis of the

practitioners' input on their collaborative process, and their community of practice, I am able to re(de)fine my original set of production values.

Chapter 6 serves as this dissertation's closing section. I first link the main conclusions of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 to my original research objectives. In doing so I demonstrate how, while researching this PhD, I moved from practice to theory, to come back to practice. Next, I reflect on my dual perspective of practitioner and researcher, and how it affected my research proceedings. I discuss both the advantages (access, credibility and drive) and difficulties (confusion in the newsroom, and as a researcher) which this particular stance has brought with it. Furthermore, I expand on how I have tried to overcome the various hurdles by being both reflective and reflexive, and studying 'up, down, and sideways'. Next, I discuss my thoughts on the future of the newspaper sub-editor, keeping the current economic climate in mind. The effects of newspaper (in)accuracy are discussed briefly, followed by the various alternatives (outsourcing, centralising, multi-skilled multimedia journalist) that have been put into practice to (partly) replace the sub-editor. I then suggest two ways in which the newspaper sub-editor can shine today and in the future, in both the production of print and online news. I conclude this final chapter with four avenues for further research, pertaining to closer scrutiny of the sub-editors' micro-discursive practices, issues of expertise and power in the newsroom, online sub-editing, and sub-editing at a tabloid newspaper.

My PhD shows that sub-editors are crucial yet often overlooked cogs in the newspaper production process, and highly skilled journalists in their own right, bringing reader appeal, credibility and journalistic value to their newspapers. Their impact on the final news article reveals that in the ever-evolving news media world there will still be room (and need) for the sub-editors as 'the newsroom's last line of defence', in one form or another.

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A linguistic ethnographic investigation