REVISITING NEWS VALUES IN POST-GALTUNG ERA:
A LINGUISTICS STUDY

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Abstract
News values, the set of criteria which makes news out of events, are widely studied in media research and journalism and are of pivotal importance theoretically and empirically. Two Norwegian researchers, Galtung and Ruge, proposed a set of News Values in 1965 and then after, as time went by, some various set of News Values or News Criteria are presented by researchers from different perspectives and stand points. In this paper after reviewing the literature of news values studies in Post Galtung era, we hypothesize a group of linguistic News Values based on Grice Maxims. The results of this study show that news as the written or spoken representation of Language in a specific context observes the four maxims of Grice co-operative principle which are Quality, Quantity, Manner and Relevance maxims and we can categorize many of the Post Galtungian News Values, presented in recent years, within the presented Linguistic News Values. While reviewing the pivotal concept of news values, representing the linguistic set of news values proves that Linguistics and its related concepts potentially have many common points with media and journalism studies and interdisciplinary studies shed light on this relationship.

KEYWORDS: Linguistics, media, news values, Grice Maxims, Galtung and Ruge

INTRODUCTION
Every event, which is reported in the news, goes through some kind of “Gate keeping process”. Since 1950s, both scholars and practitioners examining the gatekeeper function of the news media have sought to explain why some issues and events become newsworthy while others remain obscure (Albert Braun, 2009:1).

According to some media researchers, they refer to a set of so-called “News Values “ which enables them to determine whether a “ news story “ has followed up in the first place and whether it makes it into news, competing all other possible items.
News values sometimes called “news – criteria “are commonly held to be active at several stages in the gate keeping process.

First, they supposedly make a story or event more likely to be chosen as news (the “selection” hypothesis). Second, they’re said to be underscored, or even exaggerated when a news story is written (the “distortion” hypothesis), and finally, they are purportedly further emphasized as a news item passes through each stage of the production process (the “replication” hypothesis; Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Sande, 1971; Harcup & O’Neill, 2001). Moreover, it is commonly suggested that the more news values a given event possesses, the more likely it is to become news (the “additivity” hypothesis), and that an event that is lacking in one news value must make up for this absence by being particularly strong in one or more others (the “complementarity” hypothesis; Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Sande, 1971).

Yet, despite offering only an incomplete explanation of the processes at work in news journalism, the study of news values is regarded as an important area of exploration within journalism studies scholarship because it is a way of making more transparent a set of practices and judgments which are otherwise shrouded in opacity, as Stuart Hall (1973:181) argues:

“News values” are one of the most opaque structures of meaning in modern society […] Journalists speak of “the news” as if events select themselves. Further, they speak as if which is the “most significant” news story, and which “news angles” are most salient are divinely inspired. Yet of the millions of events which occur daily in the world, only a tiny proportion ever become visible as “potential news stories”: and of this proportion, only a small fraction are actually produced as the day’s news in the news media. We appear to be dealing, then, with a “deep structure” whose function as a selective device is un-transparent even to those who professionally most know how to operate it.” (Deirdre O’Neill & Tony Harcup, 2009:163)

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge were arguably the first to provide a systematic list of news values (Palmer, 1998:378) in a paper presented at the first Nordic Conference on Peace Research in Oslo in 1963, and published in 1965. More than four decades on Galtung and Ruge’s study remains the starting point for the discussion of news in numerous journalism textbooks. Their paper has long been regarded as the study of news values: Bell (1991:155) described the work as “the foundation study of news values,” McQuail (1994: 270) as the “most influential explanation” of news values, and Tunstall (1970: 20) believed it could be the classic answer to the question “what is news?” For Barbie Zelizer (2004:54), Galtung and Ruge were responsible for “perhaps the single piece of research that most cogently advanced a general understanding of news selection processes” that “remains even today one of the most influential pieces on news making.”

Their article critiqued the reporting of three major foreign crises in the Norwegian press, and proposed some alternative approaches to reporting conflict. As part of this process they asked, “How do events become news?” It was in an effort to answer this question that Galtung and Ruge
presented 12 factors (summarized below) that they intuitively identified as being important in the selection of news:

1-**Frequency:** An event that unfolds within a publication cycle of the news medium is more likely to be selected than a one that takes place over a long period of time.

2-**Threshold:** Events have to pass a threshold before being recorded at all; the greater the intensity (the more gruesome the murder or the more casualties in an accident), the greater the impact and the more likely it is to be selected.

3-**Unambiguity:** The more clearly an event can be understood and interpreted without multiple meanings, the more likely it is to be selected.

4-**Meaningfulness:** The culturally familiar is more likely to be selected.

5-**Consonance:** The news selector may be able to predict (due to experience) events that will be newsworthy, thus forming a “pre-image” of an event, which in turn increases its chances of becoming news.

6-**Unexpectedness:** Among events meaningful and/or consonant, the unexpected or rare event is more likely to be selected.

7-**Continuity:** An event already in the news has a good chance of remaining in the news (even if its impact has been reduced) because it has become familiar and easier to interpret.

8-**Composition:** An event may be included as news less because of its intrinsic news value than because it fits into the overall composition or balance of a newspaper or news broadcast.

9-**Reference to elite nations:** The actions of elite nations are seen as more consequential than the actions of other nations.

10-**Reference to elite people:** Again, the actions of elite people, likely to be famous, may be seen by news selectors as having more consequence than others, and news audiences may identify with them.

11-**Reference to persons:** News that can be presented in terms of individual people rather than abstractions is likely to be selected.

12-**Reference to something negative:** Bad events are generally unambiguous and newsworthy. (Deirdre O’Neill & Tony Harcup, 2009:165)

Although Galtung and Ruge paper was mainly about the news coverage of international crisis in Norwegian newspapers (not domestic ones), their list of factors was tested by some researchers in different parts of the world and their researches were not limited to foreign news only.
After briefing the long and fruitful history of news values studies in recent half century, Kheirabadi and Aghagolzadeh (2012.b) by studying a body of 100 news stories gathered from four international morning newspapers published in Iran in winter 2010 try to elicit the news values in Iran daily newspapers and concludes: "we studied Iranian newspapers within Galtung and Ruge's news values framework and found that reference to elite people (mostly top ranked politicians) and consonance are the most frequent news factors in Iran journalistic atmosphere. … We also found that while some classic news values such as continuity and threshold are not significantly crucial in Iranian newspapers, the role of some metalingual factors which have central position in CDA approach (such as ideology, competition and relations of power) is undeniable in news selectivity in Iran society."

Kheirabadi and Aghagolzadeh (2012.a) besides studying classical news values sets, suggest Grice cooperative maxims as tentative linguistic news criteria and state: "The lists of news values posited by various media and social science scholars seem endless and almost all researchers who have studied this concept may suggest a new set of news values based on the data and methodology chosen. … Regarding Grice maxims as linguistic set of news values not only shows the potentiality of expanding the Maxims to non conversational contexts but also makes a set of brief and rather concrete criteria available for the journalists and editors to evaluate the outcome of their production process."

DISCUSSIONS

News values in post-Galtung era

Since Galtung and Ruge wrote, other media academics have revisited their conclusions, and suggested amendments. Here we mention some more well-known list of news values presented by different scholars:

Denis MacShane (1979: 46) subdivided newsworthy events into the following categories:
1-Conflict
2-Hardship and danger to the community
3-Unusualness (oddity, novelty)
4-Scandal
5-Individualism

Harcup and O’Neill’s (2001) study of the printed press resulted in their attempt to revise and update Galtung and Ruge. They identified these headings:
1-Power élite
2-Celebrity
3-Entertainment
4-Surprise
5-Bad news
6-Good news
7-Magnitude
8-Relevance
Harrison (2006: 137) also lists a number of criteria by which news stories can be judged and listed:

1. Availability of pictures or film (for TV)
2. Short, dramatic occurrences (which can be sensationalised)
3. Novelty value
4. Capable of simple reporting
5. Grand scale
6. Negative (violence, crime, confrontation, catastrophe)
7. Unexpected or expected
8. Relevance/meaning
9. Similar events already in the news
10. Balanced programme
11. Elite people/nations
12. Personal or human interest framing

One of the most influential analysts of news values is Stuart Hall. In ‘The determination of news photographs’ (Cohen and Young, 1981), Hall specifically distinguishes between what he terms ‘formal’ news values (broadly the approach analysed in the last section, starting with Galtung and Ruge) and ‘ideological’ news values. His ‘formal’ news values are:

1. Linkage: Is the story linked, or capable of being linked, with a prior event, happening, occurrence?

2. Recency: Has it happened recently?

3. Newsworthiness of event/person: This criterion may be thought to pose or beg more questions than it answers! (Paul Brighton and Dennis Foy, 2007:7-10)

Gans enumerates the following news values:

4. Importance: Impact (e.g. on numbers of people). Past or future significance.


10-Competition: (Within the same industry). (Ibid:11)

Golding and Elliott suggested the following selection criteria):

1-Drama: This is often presented as conflict, commonly as opposing viewpoints.

2-Visual attractiveness: They discuss this in terms of images for television though, of course, images are also relevant to newspapers. “A story may be included simply because film is available or because of the dramatic qualities of the film”

3-Entertainment: In order to captivate as wide an audience as possible, news producers must take account of entertainment values that amuse or divert the audience. This includes “human interest” stories and the actors in these whimsical and bizarre events may be celebrities, children and animals.

4-Importance: This may mean the reported event is greatly significant for a large proportion of the audience, but it also explains the inclusion of items that might be omitted on the criteria of other audience-based news values.

5-Size: The more people involved in a disaster, or the bigger the “names” at an event, the more likely the item is to be on the news agenda.

6-Proximity: As with size, this derives partly from audience considerations and partly from accessibility since there is cultural and geographical proximity. The first depends on what is familiar and within the experience of journalists and their audience, while the second may depend on where correspondents are based. As a rule of thumb, nearby events take precedence over similar events at a distance.

7-Negativity: “Bad news is good news... News is about disruptions in the normal current of events [...] not the uneventful” (p. 120). Such news provides drama and shock value which attracts audiences.

8-Brevity: A story that is full of facts with little padding is preferred (particularly important for broadcast news).

9-Recency: Competition between news outlets puts a “premium” on exclusives and scoops. Also daily news production is within a daily time frame so that news events must normally occur within the 24 hours between bulletins (or newspaper editions) to merit inclusion.

10-Elites: Clearly big names attract audiences, but there is a circularity in that big names become famous by virtue of their exposure.
Allern presented a supplementary list of commercial news values:

1. The more resources it costs to follow up a story or expose an event/issue, the less likely it will become a news story.

2. The more journalistically a potential news item is prepared/formatted by the source or sender, the greater the likelihood that it will become news.

3. The more selectively a story is distributed to news organisations, the more likely it will become news.

4. The more a news medium’s strategy is based on sensationalist reporting in order to attract public attention and the greater the opportunity for accentuating these elements in a potential story, the more likely a story is to be used. (Ibid)

From the national newspapers examined, Harcup and O’Neill proposed a new set of news values. They found that news stories must generally satisfy one or more of the following requirements to be selected:

1. The Power Elite: Stories concerning powerful individuals, organizations or institutions.

2. Celebrity: Stories concerning people who are already famous.

3. Entertainment: Stories concerning sex, show business, human interest, animals, an unfolding drama, or offering opportunities for humorous treatment, entertaining photographs or witty headlines.

4. Surprise: Stories that have an element of surprise and/or contrast.

5. Bad News: Stories with particularly negative overtones, such as conflict or tragedy.

6. Good News: Stories with particularly positive overtones such as rescues and cures.

7. Magnitude: Stories that are perceived as sufficiently significant either in the numbers of people involved or in the potential impact.

8. Relevance: Stories about issues, groups and nations perceived to be relevant to the audience.


10. Newspaper Agenda: Stories that set or fit the news organization’s own agenda. (Ibid:167-168)
Linguistics approach to News Values

Linguists, especially Critical Discourse Analysts have paid attention to media studies and language of news in recent years. Language, as the main material of the news, is the main subject of linguistics so it is obvious that linguists are eager to work on process of broadcasting. Many linguists such as Noam Chomsky (1988), Roger Fowler (1991), van Dijk (1998), Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2003) Guy Cook (1992), Michael Hoey (2001) and so on have been working on this subject.

Here in the following we are to introduce a new set of news values which originally root from linguistics and definitely pragmatic concepts, in fact we suggest that the very long list of news values can be summarized by considering the essential elements of communication:

Grice Maxims
Paul Grice (1975) stated a principle with four sub-principles, called maxims, which is well-known as “cooperative principle”.

The Cooperative Principle: make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

1. Quantity
Make your contribution as informative as is required and do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Quality
Try to make your contribution one that is true. do not say what you believe to be false or that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Relation:
Be relevant

4. Manner
Avoid obsecurity of expression and ambiguity, be brief, be orderly. (Yule, 2000: 37)

Now let us see how clearly these four maxims can be considered as news values, in the following we classify the news values mentioned by different scholars under the four maxims of Paul Grice:

Quality
Facility (Bell, 1991; Gregory & Miller, 1998); Numbers (Hetherington, 1985); Voters, Survey Respondent, and other agreements (Gans, 1979)
Quantity
Brevity (Bell, 1991); Continuity (Galtung & Ruge, 1965); Follow-Up (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001); CO-Ootion (Bell, 1991; Gregory & Miller, 1998); Meaningless (Galtung & Ruge, 1965); Impact and Consequences (Herbert, 2000); Significance (Hetherington, 1985); Magnitude (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001); Impact On Large Numbers Of People (Gans, 1979); Threshold (Galtung & Ruge, 1965)

Relation
Composition (Galtung & Ruge, 1965); Political Balance (Warner, 1970); Consonance (Galtung & Ruge, 1965); Cultural Response (Ryan, 1991); National Ceremonies (Gans, 1979); Compatible With Institutional Routines (O’Sullivan et al., 1983); Naturalization (O’Sullivan et al., 1983); Consensus (O’Sullivan et al., 1983); Predictability And Routine (McQuail, 2000); Elite People (Galtung & Ruge, 1965); Celebrity (Ruehlmann, 1979); Personalities (Hetherington, 1985); Elitism (Gregory & Miller, 1998); Importance (Ryan, 1991); Prominence (MacDougall in Palmer, 1998; Herbert, 2000); Famous Faces (Ryan, 1991); Public Affairs (Ross Commission in Hetherington, 1985); Proximity (Ruehlmann, 1979; Hetherington, 1985; Ryan, 1991; MacDougall in Palmer, 1998; Herbert, 2000); Closeness (O’Sullivan et al., 1983; McQuail, 2000); Domestic Affairs (O’Sullivan et al., 1983); Location Of Events (McQuail, 2000); Proximity To The Audience Of People And Events In The News (McQuail, 2000); Relevance (O’Sullivan et al., 1983; Bell, 1991; Gregory & Miller, 1998; McQuail, 2000; Harcup & O’Neill, 2001)

Manner
Unambiguity (Galtung & Ruge, 1965); Clarity (Bell, 1991; CLARITY (McQuail, 2000); Common-Sensical (O’Sullivan et al., 1983),

Evidence of Grice maxims in news
There are certain kinds of expressions speakers use to mark that they may be in danger of not fully adhering to the principles. These kind of expressions are called “hedges”. (Yule, 2000:38) Here we mention some frequent hedges of English speakers:

*I am not sure if this is right...  
*As far as I know...  
*I guess...(Quality maxim)  
*I wont bore you with all the details,...  
*So, to cut a long story short,...  
*As you probably know...(Quantity maxim)  
*I don’t know if this is important,...  
*No to change the subject ,....  
*This may sound like a dumb question, but ...(Relation maxim)  
*This may be a bit confused, but ...  
*I am not sure if this makes sense, but ...  
*I don’t know if this is clear at all, but ...(Manner maxim) (Ibid)  
*We can observe many of such phrases and sentences in news stories too:  
*To sum up the story...
Grice also mentioned that in some situations speakers may intentionally violate these maxims. He believed that in this case the conversation would lead to “Implicature”, We also think that some newspapers may publish news stories in which these maxims are violated willingly because of various reasons. The implicature in news, its types and its reasons needs further studies.

CONCLUSION
In this article we studied the theoretical concept of “news values” and also introduced the post-Galtung achievements in this field. The lists of news values posited by various media and social science scholars seem endless and almost all researchers who have studied this concept suggested a new set of news values based on their own start point and methodology.

In this paper we hypothesized that the four maxims of Paul Grice can be considered as a set of (universal) news values which can summarize many news criteria of different lists. However, we are aware of this fact that news selection is a very sophisticated process in which many cultural, social, professional and cognitive factors are playing role.

REFERENCES


