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NARRATIVE CONTEXT OF TELEVISION SPORTS COMMENTARY

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ABSTRACT

The discourse of television sport commentary is a compound form. It functions as a multi-material message, which is incomplete as it collaborates with screen fragments. Narration of the sports commentary includes descriptive elements, which strictly register live action and those constituting retrospective feedback explaining what is happening. The description concerns objects and situations. Actions and activities are subject to narration. The sequence representing the above cognitive orders often alternates, and description and narration blend into each other. The first aspect of television sports commentary is construction of the narrative line (reference to situations which are connected chronologically, by reason or teleologically), followed by development of narration. In sports commentary three types of discourses can be distinguished: (a) descriptive, which enriches the area of knowledge; (b) narrative, which puts action and events in order; and (c) argumentative, which seeks acceptance or provides opinions on certain ideas or beliefs.

Television as a stream of programmes is, in a broad sense, a narrative, i.e. a global story consisting of fragments of narrative text which altogether create a complete television discourse (of a day, week, month year etc.). The discourse exists in the form of a series of linearly ordered texts and their concentric surroundings. The reading of each separate text and its sequence takes place in the presence of the texts which have already been produced, and involves the receiver's attitude towards those texts [11: 157-170]. It means that television discourse creates communication situations in the form of narrative situations: every single television text constitutes a significant part of television discourse; however, only their sequence (as part of a discursive system) serves narrative functions. As such "the narrative discourse consists of [...] narrative declarative sentences [sequences] which are linked to one another and follow in

succession" [6: 4, 214], and which due to the choice and particular ordering create a sort of argumentation with the persuasive function which is overseen by the controller.

Unlike the press, television as a system and each text separately is also, and probably first of all, a show – an audiovisual text with all the ensuing consequences which are inherent in a (television) communication situation [14: 55].

The narrative text, as any other type of text, can be treated as a semantic unit of language in use [12]. As a semantic unit the spoken text is encoded in utterances which are treated as transmission of information in a social situation, and is accomplished in the pragmatic aspect of an utterance. The utterances are constructed as part of a larger whole with a particular structure, that is as part of discourse. The discourse structure is superior to the information structure of component utterances

(steps, segments, sequences of utterances), and it determines the type of text that is created (specific convention of the utterance).

Utterances which constitute the discourse are not only updates of sentences but also speech acts, whose particular configurations (sets) determine the specific autonomy of the utterance. Text as a semantic language unit is realized in discourse utterances which are conditioned thematically, deictically and modally. The discourse is considered a pragmatic language unit.

The text of sports commentary is a complex type of text. It functions as part of multi-material statement: in this sense it is an incomplete text associated with the screen context [mutual authenticating and referring to visual (pictorial) and specifically linguistic (verbal) information]. In the narrative layer it contains elements which are truly registering (descriptive and reactive) as well as reflective, including the commenting elements (assessing, explanatory, justifying, argumentative, bearing marks of a deliberation etc.).

The creation of particular sequences of the narrative text commentary occurs in the process of narrative discourse (of multi-material character). There appears a possibility of television (co)narration research in several areas:

- a) textual (semantic), that is the content of what is being talked of – the reference to cultural facts (in our case – the inauguration ceremony of the XVIII Winter Olympic Games in Nagano including the Olympic ceremonial as a cultural text);
- b) visual (TV broadcast of that event);
- c) discursive (pragmatic), i.e. 1) how the reference is encoded (more or less thoroughly redundantly or not, adequately or inadequately) in utterances which constitute the discourse; 2) whether the reference is encoded in the utterances of one or of many of the participants of the discourse (in our case of two commentators who complement each other); 3) which participant of the interactive discourse (image-word) initiates a new reference (the performer of the program) and which performs formal operations on the visual information of the partner (commentator); 4) whether and which participant of the discourse in his utterances opens new informative categories for successively (linearly) introduced new content (developing the narration), or initiating new references which complement the already

monitored narration field with elements surpassing visual information on the TV screen. See below a fragment of utterance by Polish TV commentator Włodzimierz Szaranowicz, hereinafter referred to as W.Sz.

“Let us remember that today’s ceremony is broadcast by a few dozen national TV stations from all around the world for the global audience of – in fact – a symbolic global village... One and a half billion is a huge, probably the biggest audience in the world... much fewer countries broadcast the previous Olympic Games in Japan; however, the money which was spent by the TV stations was incomparable then – only 8 million. Now, it is 513 million most of which was paid by the American CBS station – 375 million... less known teams, but the Dutch are going to appear in a moment, a great power especially due to their ice-skating successes... then it is New Zealand, Norway, North Korea... Poland with its standard-bearer Jan Ziemiąnin... they do not have such a wonderful... at the moment they do not have such wonderful skaters as once but undoubtedly they will be among those fighting for medals at the current Olympics...”

Significant differences (or similarities) of the television commentary text (including the contrastive approach) may be observed in the proportion between steps and segments created in the landscape of action (LA) which thoroughly register and develop narration and the reflective, retrospective fragments which are not directly related to the dramaturgy “here” and “now” of the show being broadcast (broadening what is referred to as “narration field”) and which take place in the landscape of consciousness (LC) of the commentator [3; 21: 109-124].

In the sequences of utterance which take place in the landscape of action or consciousness there can be distinguished segments which represent: argumentative, narrative or descriptive fragments of the utterance. It is important to pay attention to the reciprocal penetration of steps, segments and sequences representing the above mentioned modes of cognitive organization of the utterance:

[W.Sz.] “... unfortunately we do not have successes in winter games... the four medals... Fortuna’s gold, Pilejczykowa’s silver... I’m sorry... Iza Seroczyńska’s silver, Pilejczykowa’s bronze and earlier Franek Groń’s medal... that is all we have... certainly we had many outstanding winter sports people... [LC1] and now the Polish team... please

pay attention... presents itself very attractive [LA1]... in Lillehammer we were given gold medals for apparel... that was the greatest achievement of our Olympic team... let's hope that the looks will [LC2], as you can see [LA2]... play an important role... now we should contribute some sports achievements too...[LC3]..."

In the changing reality of a television show, particular situations of reference are transformed into other ones (close in time and space). The transformations of a situation are characteristic of *events*. The situations of reference – at least two of them – linked chronologically following the cause and effect rule represent an *event*. A series of events whose course – as a result of actions of one of the speaking subjects – is directed towards changing the starting point builds *episodes* [25], please see below:

[W.Sz.] "... the Sunset Suits company did a good job, as did the company from Kętrzyn, we can see Mikeska... this is the firm which dressed our players in casual clothes..."

In text chains representing episodes, the connections between situations of reference are teleological in character. Compare the utterances of a Polish commentator below, who explains successive shots of the producer of the programme:

"... in a few seconds we will be taken by the panorama of Nagano, a 350 thousand city, to the Minami Nagano Sports Park..."

...all around a beautiful panorama of the Japanese Alps... ...21 flower petals is a modern symbol of a sporting object... unprecedented... it will be partially pulled down after the Olympics...

Situations of reference which are connected only chronologically or causatively and teleologically form the so-called *narrative line* [26: 53]. It represents a chain of successive changes in reality, which is the subject of discussion in narrative discourse (in our case – concerned with the enactment of the script of the show – the Winter Olympics opening ceremony). The construction of the narrative text is not only about developing the narrative line. Commentators do not always proceed from the reference time (tn) to the time reality state (tn + 1). Sometimes, in order to tell the time reality state (tn + 1) the narrator (commentator) introduces into the text chain two or more reference situations which present reference reality states and take into account different subjects co-present in the area which the commentator "controlled" (observed), or which they imagined.

Please, see below the following part of the commentary given by the Polish commentator:

[P.B.] "... today 50,000 spectators will be watching the first moment when Japan meets the rest of the world, it is probably worth mentioning that the Olympics are held in Japan for the third time... Tokyo, 1964, Sapporo, 1972..."

The two reference situations represent what was happening in a given time in the reference reality area considered important by the commentator. These situations represent the so-called *narrative field*. Constructing the text of narrative commentary amounts not only to developing the narrative line, but it also broadens the narrative field [3: 136]. Developing the narrative line is closely connected with the scripts of the TV show. Reflections on the topics not directly related to the course of events which take place in front of the commentator will be discussed in more detail below in the narrative field section.

Situations of reference, which develop the narrative line or broaden the narrative field, may occur in one or more utterances which are part of the narrative discourse. The situation of the subject-speaker who speaks during the (tn) time, which is part of the narrative line, or is beyond the narrative line, may be defined by:

- a) external activity state of the speaker and the object (conceptualization), directly perceptible; such a situation of reference would match Bruner's definition of 'landscape of action';
- b) internal (mental) activity state of the commentator which is not perceptible directly but is inferred by the narrator (such a situation of reference would match Bruner's idea of 'landscape of consciousness') [5].

The sequences representing the two cognitive orders of constructing the narrative commentary of the text (reporting, visualizing and retrospective, reflective) permeate each other. It becomes evident in a peculiar modulation of the 'landscape of action' and 'landscape of consciousness' segments on the part of the commentator:

"... Japan, a country faithful to its tradition, isolating itself from the world, existing in 'splendid isolation' is calling on the young to take part in the last Olympics of the Century, the athletes began it all in 1924 in Chamonix [LC]... today they are meeting for the 18th time at the Olympic stadium, 72 national teams including the Polish team of 41 members as you can see... the stadium is already

full... [LA] that is probably the greatest event in the history of the city established in the Edo age in 1876 [LC], the bell died away, the sounds from the heart of the shrine faded...”

Bearing in mind E. Benveniste’s grammar of the narrative utterance (analysis of the tenses in French), an observation can be made that *event* and *narration* imply each other. The paradigm can be divided into two complementary systems used in two types of utterance: historical utterance (*enonciation historique*) and discourse (*discours*). The latter is defined as any utterance which “assumes there is a speaker and a listener and that the speaker intends to influence the listener in one way or another” or “[an utterance] in which someone addresses someone else uttering words as a speaker and organizing what is spoken in the category of a person” [2: 238-242].

The subject of more detailed deliberations (including the contrastive approach) could be the data concerning proportions of steps, segments numbered among descriptive, narrative, on the one hand, and argumentative fragments of utterance functioning within the audiovisual sequence referred to as *episode* or *editing phrase*.

Human motor actions and behaviour are registered by television by means of an iconic-cinematographic code. The editing phrase is a unit which reveals the collectivity of interaction, mainly the esthetic cooperation between image, sound and words and their mutual rhythm. This is a collection of moving views (one longer or a few shorter shots), which creates a comprehensible whole when combined with the elements of other layers (whispers, words, music, natural sounds of the show). It is about a visual-sound-verbal combination which co-creates the smallest, indivisible element of action or a fragment of film (television) argument. This is about the equivalent of a *scene*, a little sequence also called *episode* [17: 8].

The *descriptive* segments of linguistic utterance serve enriching knowledge. Their control centres are objects (units of meaning of solid identity and structure) or situations (configurations of mutually present objects in their current states). They reflect conceptual relations such as properties, states, specimens and specifications (the relation between hyperclass and subclass, restricting the characteristic of the latter) [7: 135]. Please see below a fragment of an English commentator’s speech:

[David Goldsmith in the Eurosport TV, English broadcasting version; Goldsmith is hereinafter referred to as D.G.]

“... fifty thousand packed-in to this baseball stadium, as it will be after this game are completed for a... two hour ceremony bringing together family of the sport the winter sports athletes, officials and a whole house to dignitaries from around the world, presidents and prime ministers... this is the biggest ever games, seventy two countries represented two thousand three hundred and thirty nine athletes and these proceedings taking you right around the world...”

Narrative segments, being in a narrower sense a component of the TV discourse, serve ordering action and events in a particular sequence, most common relations of ideas, cause, source of the phenomenon, reason, when a specific action takes place as a rational reaction to a previous event), intention, enabling (when an action taken by X has sufficient, but not necessary, conditions for action X, that is the action is possible but not necessary) [7: 22]. Please, see below a fragment of a German commentator’s speech:

[Sigi Heinrich, in German broadcasting version of TV Eurosport; hereinafter referred to as S.H.]

“... it is unusual to launch the Olympics in daytime at 11 o’clock... there are no light effect. It is simply impossible, however, I think it will be compensated by the program... we had a closer look at it during the test opening... there are a few surprises... tickets were bought out weeks ago but as always they can be purchased from ticket touts...”

Narrative segments serve eliciting acceptance or assessment of certain ideas or convictions as true or false, positive or negative, e.g. common relations of ideas like reasons and significance of a phenomenon (importance, symbolic meaning attributed to an individual, attribution of values and opposition). Superficial texts are characterized by different coherence mechanisms, and mechanisms of ‘emphasis’ of the content (prominence and stress), for instance, through recurrence (returning to the content already mentioned in the text), parallelism, paraphrase, etc. The most commonly used global model is the persuasion plan. Please, see below an English commentator’s speech:

[D.G.] “...the game’s open this morning at around 7 a.m. and that means not a lot to you back at home so what’s that about the two o’clock in the morning in Great Britain but thanks for waking up and the hope you’ll enjoy this with us not so much this time

but more the spirit of the Japanese people and look at that magnificent sight...”

Descriptive segments like other elementary forms of speech rarely build independent types. Most often they occur as components of complex heterogenic text structures including journalist genres such as report or TV commentary.

The description consists of utterance units which attribute certain characteristics to an object. Therefore, it is a text whose subject speaks only about the characteristics of X: the inherent characteristics and the characteristics of X in relation to Y [29: 197-210]. Please, see below steps and descriptive segments in the fragment of a German commentator’s speech:

[S.H.] “... forty thousand spectators during the inauguration at this stadium... eleven o’clock... very fine weather as was expected, and the atmosphere full of expectation, and the athletes’ mood probably similar to the one in your houses...”

Commentator’s intentions during the act of describing are different. It can be the wish to inform the recipient about X, influencing the recipient’s emotions: the speaker wants to impress the recipient by describing X because in this way he demonstrates that he knows a lot about X [29: 198].

The text of the description is built through utterances (or parts of utterances), which decide the structure and attributes of the object under observation. The category of attribute (characteristic) is updated in commentary descriptions mostly by means of evaluative properties. Please, see below the sequence of utterance by an English commentator:

[Simon Reed in Eurosport TV, English broadcast; hereinafter referred to as S.R.]

“... the mountains surrounding the stadium here in Nagano in the valley floor. It’s really spectacular when you sit or stand look out from the commentator’s position and all around you the mountains surrounding, it’s a... quite a special sight...”

In the descriptive fragments of the commentary attention is drawn by the dominance of evaluative words, which are often very intensive and connected to emotive elements. The cooperation of the categories of values, intensity and gradation leads to hyperbolization (characteristic of, for instance, advertising). Please, see below the final fragment of the German commentary:

[Dirk Thiele, hereinafter D.T., in German language Eurosport TV]

“... the peak of artistic and technical skills... most of all the compensation of the two six seconds by means of most modern satellite technology is something exceptional... it was our intention to withdraw the commentary... that was too beautiful... the combination of a particular kind opens these Olympics the eighteenth...”

The phenomenon of hyperbolization may be entangled in the structure of the story which is most often presented as an opposition to the ‘anarchic’ description because of the ordering (most frequently cause-and-effect) of the chain of events, and such a form of linear sequencing as to draw the recipient’s attention to the final point of journalistic argument.

The commentator has to change the order of events which are told, summarize some of them, expand others and add a considerable number of less significant elements. They can also leave the decision concerning the ending of the narrated story to the reader (listener). Please, see below the closing fragments of the English commentary:

[D.G.] “... the Nagano Winter Orchestra and the global chorus and the leadership is Seji Ozawa uniting the people from five continents...”

[S.R.] “... and you mentioned the feat of technology and it really was fantastic cause when you go, think you normally four or five seconds delay over the five continents but they eliminated that with the substitute delay look at this flying past in the five colours of the rainbow symbolizing the five continents which just about bring us to the end of the...magnificent opening ceremony and I hope you can enjoy all rest of it, all rest of the games here on our extensive unrivalled coverage, here on Eurosport...”

The description of an object takes place most often by giving its name (its own name or a name that would include it into a wider class category), enumerating its components, defining spatial relationships and their mutual relations, naming and valorizing the properties of the object and its parts [28: 19-30].

In the reflection upon description that was currently formulated, there crystallized a stance according to which the boundaries of description in the text are not defined by the type of the perceived object but ‘lexicographic consciousness’ of the subject conducting observation or the specific attitude of the narrator towards description as a form of speech or writing [10].

The complete model of object description (topic-title), which includes the background (temporal and spatial locator), properties (colour, smell, shape, size, appearance, etc.), components (spatial relations between the parts and the whole, properties, components of X1, X2 etc.) in specific text realizations, may be redundant to a larger or smaller extent. Please, see below the fragment of Polish TV commentary by Przemysław Babiarczyk, hereinafter referred to as P.B.:

“... and this is a special dance which is always performed before the competition... the dance which is supposed to ward off evil spirits, purification, you have probably paid attention to the rigashi outfit, they came here dressed in a traditional way despite the cold weather, something around 2 degrees Celsius here in Nagano, but the cold apparently does impress them at all and keszo mawasza is the band hanging round the hips... the band is a few metres long and is said to be worth over a million yen...”

In the context of TV sports commentary discourse three text categories can be distinguished: argumentative, expository and instructive [13: 155]. From that perspective narrative and descriptive texts are treated as two essential variants of exposition. The difference between the two is the fact that in the case of descriptive texts one deals with objects and situations, whereas in the narrative ones the emphasis is upon events and actions (what happened). The basic differences between strictly registering (reporting) and reflective segments may be associated with a different perspective of obtaining and processing information. That perspective is linked with the interpretation of an event as:

- a) what is happening;
- b) what is happening and lasting in front of my eyes;
- c) what is going to happen in a moment (inferring from visual information);
- d) what has just happened [in the landscape of action];
- e) what happened in the distant past (in the landscape of consciousness) [15: 73].

Texts and segments/units of information, which record those temporary aspects, can adjoin within a larger sequence of a TV commentary:

[P.B.] “And now we are back, here, on Nagaro stadion...” [PA1]

[W.Sz.] “Ladies and Gentlemen, the producer of today’s ceremony Kaito Asari, who gained his

popularity and recognition mainly due to his staging of world famous musicals in Japan like Jesus Christ Super Star, West Side Story, Cats... [PS1]... has just proposed today an extremely rough show [PA2]...the comments were made by our guest Mr Bohdan Tomaszewski, who has attended the Olympic Games twice, that experience enabled him to comment on the way the ceremonies has changed through the years...[PS2]...The Japanese emphasised the importance of the ceremonial, the moment when the Olympic fire was lit, turning up of athletes demonstrating sumo bouts and the majority of the regional and local traditions [PA3]... obviously common in Japanese symbolism, but what most certainly we can say now is that it will be the ceremony, which will be outstanding and different than those mentioned: Calgary or Albertville...[PS3]...it is a stunning spectacle created by a young visionary Daniela de Couplein...[PA4]...”

The primary aim of the exposition is to depict more or less objective view of reality, i.e. reconstruction of a situation by pointing at its numerous aspects. Thus, the more there is of a typically argumentative text, the more the expository text informs us about a complex nature of a given subject. A starting point in the argumentative structure is determined by the ‘tone’, reason, right, element, for which the explanation should be found in the discourse. The expository text is, however, being defined by the ‘scene’, that should be developed while extending the text. An independent instructive or appellative type can be noticed in the attitude towards shaping future behaviors [9: 206-213]. Compare the ending of a Polish commentary sequence:

[P.B.] “... besides, that day in which...those days in which ski jumping contest will be held Japan will most certainly celebrate... they are counting on their players and twenty years ago we played a trick on them by Wojtek Fortuna’s victory in Sapporo...here, before the Olympics, but not in Sapporo however, the ski jumping contest took place. Surprisingly, it was Wojciech Skupień who overcame all four of Japanese ski jumpers...we would have nothing against such a replay, at some Olympics, during some of the contests...”

Thanks to the supplementary role of a screen context, the commentator’s statement (despite the official situation of communication) fulfills some of the requirements of an utterance ‘to somebody’. Communicative limitations resulting from the lack

of 'feedback' between the sender and the potential receiver imply, what is called, drama and its scenery, which means reference to a construction of public speaking: WE (ME + YOU = AUDITORIUM, Ladies and Gentlemen) – HERE (on the TV screen) – NOW (during the TV programme). The situation acts in favour of keeping contact and dialog [15].

The typically overused rhetoric element *Ladies and Gentlemen* is a signal which aims at maintaining contact on the sender's side, emphasizes the role of the commentator, who is presented here as an active observer of a sport performance. In spite of the fact that the dialogue between the commentator and the auditorium of a television show is virtually impossible, the commentator, without even knowing the real store of listeners' information and knowledge, refers to the shared visual sensations (*as You can SEE*).

Fragments of commentary analyzed above, which are typical for multi-material statement, function due to the visual codes that are transmitted (for instance, close-ups of shots, details) within an audio-visual message. They require separate research procedures [24: 53] In that case, what has proved to be helpful, are linguistic notions of *steering* and *monitoring* of the situation.

Discursive action, which is to change a situation, is directed on a *plane* (a global pattern of events and states, which leads to achieving a final goal) always, when the speaker (commentator) tries to follow his aims. Such a situation is called *steering of a situation*, whereas an ordinary reaction to a given situation – description on the basis of available information, is referred to as *monitoring of a situation*. In other words, if a dominant function of a text is a relatively direct presentation of a model of a situation, *monitoring* can be experienced. However, if the aim of the same text is to satisfy the demands of the author – manipulating the text for his/her own purposes, *steering* can be observed [7: 214]. Nevertheless, in reality, both operations are interrelated and co-exist with each other.

Not only does the text of a commentary present facts (judgments, which are considered to be real in an actual, physical world), but it also interprets and analyze or even polemicize with other interpretations. Thus, there can be found a place for text components defined as *considerations* [20: 7-18]. -The consideration constitutes a comment to the issues that have been discussed

(in that case the importance of the visual information in the TV broadcast). The comment is being implied explicitly (through a different type of sub-codes). It also illustrates, explains, develops (visual information), generalizes and objectivizes the sense of presented (in the selected segments of the text - audio-visual in TV) notions. Thus, all the presented material shows different methods of both structuralising and incorporating into a text whole by means of multi-material message. Compare supplementary comments made by two different Polish commentators:

[P.B.] "... and finally the ceremony begins. It usually takes place simultaneously to onbashira festivals... that is how that festivals are called ugh... here in the Suva province in the Nagano province once in seven years time, through four gates from four sites of the world colourfully clothed people are entering the stadium, in a moment they will perfo... perform... the upheaval of pillars will begin... [superior segment of the text directly connected with visual information] onbashira, it is nothing more than holy pillar, or maybe...pillars, which originate, which were made out of trees that cover Nagano province slopes, they have two tons and are twelve meters high and will be carried and lifted by more or less... one thousand people, thousand people is... all in all ugh...that...such a belief exists in Japan that deity...deities, especially those connected to Shinto religion...one out of two biggest religions in Japan... the other one is obviously Buddhism...they live in trees...that is why trees have a special symbolism, they represent longevity, in that case it has to do with pillars...what is the pillar then? Anthropologists teach us, that it is some kind of center of the world...sacred place of great importance and it is through lifting those pillars that we can feel that sense of sanctity of the Olympic Stadium...[proper comment inter-wounded in the context of consi-deration]; IF [ritual Japanese singing for about a minute];

[P.B.] "... now we can hear a song which is to synchronize and rhythmize the effort of those people who are lifting the pillars...but apart from that literal meaning, the symbolic, orient-originated one can be inferred, symbolism that lies in four gates as we have got four sites of the world, four seasons and also four phases of human being existence..." [comment, which aims at explaining symbolism hidden between the lines of a material presented in the TV broadcast].

The quoted fragment of commentary's considerations and analysis, fits its supplementary function, and defines visual phenomena, events or situations presented in the information in a variety of ways. It also determines the rhythm of audio-visual narration.

The commentator stops his speech at some point for the sake of observing events and celebrations that are held. The commentator uses the interval to select fragments that are worth commenting on, illustrating, justifying, or those pieces that are problematic and have some symbolic meaning.

Scrutiny of the fragments allows noticing that 'meta' and 'we' usage indicate the reflective nature of statements made by the commentator. It is worth pointing out that the text takes the form of monologue and rhetoric questions – questions that the author asks himself to provoke the recipient. Those questions, however, imply some value judgments, which aim at spreading beliefs and ideas – here popularizing by the anthropologists [4: 147-175]. A remarkable usage of the inclusive 'we' form enables the 'mass auditorium' to share commentator's reflections, agree with that or quite the contrary – polemicize, for example: *We* have to do with...; *Anthropologists teach us...* [16: 278].

If the narration in the commentary text is to make the data concerning visual information objective, then its components should be reliable and accessible for the auditorium. The 'mass' is to be offered clear and comprehensive version. Thus, in the structure of reflection (consideration), there can be found both elements that subjectivize a given statement, and elements that strengthen contact with the receiver. Putting himself in the position of a presenter only, the commentator takes the position of a judge who notices the importance of the present day that is influenced and marked by the truthfulness of the TV broadcast. It can be observed in the sequences concerning explanations of symbolic meanings of a comment:

[P.B.] "... several such symbolic myths will appear and will be mentioned today, during that opening ceremony...we have spoken about five...five Olympic circles five continents...it is exactly here where the 'four' symbolism, symbolism of four sites of the world will dominate...besides, that tradition reaches back two hundred years, ugh...it is not very extraordinary for translators or commentators because similar rituals take place in

Mexico, can be observed in Thailand and are connected with Vedic temples in India..."

What is especially important here are the fragments of considerations of the comment where the tendencies of generalizing one's judgment and formulating general, cultural, and psychological rules are expressed; a situation in which all the presented facts are being submitted to TV broadcast, for example:

[P.B.] "... starting from the sound of a sacred bell at the beginning, through that ritual during...[lifting of the first pillar] through the next, which you can see in a moment, the idea of the performance is to 'clear the air' and surrounding space, creating some extraordinary, sacred place out of that stadium..."

In this way the sport commentary is being constructed as a polyphonic structure. This particular structure enables solving problems for different types of texts (descriptive, narrative, argumentative), for instance, in the context of reflection or argument, and even impersonal fragments characteristic for scientific register.

It has been M. Bakhtin [1], who became interested in the phenomenon of permeating genres by other functional styles (the sphere of other usage and contexts). It was him who introduced the notion of a 'derivative type of speech', which stipulated that that apart from genetic relations, relational ones are of the same, or even greater importance. The relational relations result from the meta-text character of some kinds of the texts.

Text structures are to feature their independent character, but also their role as components of different genres (story, description, reflective writing, argument), which are culturally determined to a great extent. These are typical manifestations in terms of stylistics as well as in the process of incorporating one text model and structure to the other. Different types of interference also constitute an interesting research problem [8: 125-143].

However, characteristics of a given genre cannot be restricted to the description of its structure. It must include a full range of information concerning its function, 'situational context' and pragmatic background, meaning exemplary circumstances of usage and institutional connections. A change in the situational context is nothing more than a change of pragmatic parameters which define circumstances typical and appropriate for the usage of a given genre. Those parameters change in the course of time and follow the evolution in the

social sphere of life. Thus, the changes affect an institution itself and the communication system. Progress revolutionizes those parameters.

To describe a given genre one should, first of all, identify pragmatic parameters of its typical usage and define its text structure as well as its position within the genre in relation to determined functional styles. In the course of mass information, a direct TV broadcast (audio-visual transmission) carries the most complex information and is most demanding (concerning various forms to be used). Reporter's (commentator's) speech can be treated then as an integral component of an information and mobile picture (visual sensations, configuration of plans, shots, close-ups, music, singing and noises of an authentic performance) which is verbalized (sound effects, verbal text). All of it defines and characterizes the convention of a report and commentary. Sports commentary in reference to visual picture available during TV broadcast, has a number of functions, which can project onto the genre structure of the statement:

- a) elementary – commenting (in narrow respect): judging (evaluative), opinion-forming (directing TV viewer's attitude towards presented material);
- b) commenting (in broader sense) and further-clarifying (supplement, specification, expanding, generalization, synthesizing, debating, valorizing);
- c) invoking (directing, focusing attention on the parts of a picture, pointing out and highlighting information that are included in the picture);
- d) imitating (adjusting the pace of the speech to the situation and emotional engagement of both the commentator and the auditorium);
- e) contrasting (implementing and presenting things that do not comply with what can actually be seen);
- f) dynamic (emphasizing rhythm and movement in the TV picture, reaction to the kinetics on the TV screen; compare R. Spottiswoode) [27]).

The images supply information which enable trans-coding in the region of text and verbal conceptualization. However, they indicate only what they mean (show); whereas words (discourse) are directly connected with the pragmatic background, which sets the rhythm of narration itself ('story' about the meaning of the signs). The basis of analogy, correlation and transposition comprises:

- a) shared for different semiotic operations the rule of knot-events-developing moments ('knot-like

moments of development'); (level of narrative code);

- b) the notion of 'importance' and 'decisive fragment' (recognizing the subject matter) assigned to 'verbal copy' [19: 251], on the level of warning and identification codes. That correlation does not run simultaneously; however, two elements which form it are 'simultaneous' in a sense of their importance (one determines the other). Correlation can be described as a simultaneous flow of narrative codes realized on two (or many) different materials [24: 42-54].

The above analysis has been based on both Polish and English written commentaries on the opening of the Winter Olympic Games. It shows that the fragment of the narrative surrounded by language elements (words, expressions, sentences) is crucial for the understanding of the primary unit and for its purpose of use. Narrative, argumentative and descriptive segments supplement one another and form altogether an accurate and vivid message. Moreover, they influence the receiver's emotions and broaden his/her knowledge. It is important here to mention the role of the image, which is extremely important in collaborative language – frequent during live commentary – as well as sound effects, which are an integrated part of the informative unit.

All quoted comments and utterances in this article were taken from Polish TV (TVP), and German and English language broadcasts of Eurosport. All of them were recorded during the 1998 Winter Olympic Games in Nagano.

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