On infosuasion, news framing and proximization: Integrating a cognitive perspective and corpus analysis

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Abstract

Given the well-established fact that news is not "facts" but an opinionated representation of events, individuals, and issues, and thus the subjective and infosuasive nature of news reporting, we need a deeper exploration of how media frame and construct narratives to shape public perception. In the present paper we depart from the assumption that journalists create context for the audience by proximizing (bringing cognitively and affectively closer) selected aspects of reality. In this process, which consists among others in providing frames of reference – highly stereotyped representations of specific situations – media influence the frames used by the audience when interpreting information about events and problems. Adopting a cognitive linguistic perspective and drawing on the insights from the Media Proximization Approach, the article investigates the way in which frames are cognitively and discursively "to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies" (Entman 1993: 52) when reporting on terrorism in Africa. The main questions addressed in the paper are as follows: (1) How is terrorism in East Africa brought closer to Western audiences? (2) How is the representation of terrorism manifested in keywords and word co-occurrence patterns? (3) How do the media frames potentially impact on the frames gene-rated by the

audience? The study combines quantitative and qualitative methods, demonstrating that keyword analysis, conducted with the tools provided by corpus linguistics, constitutes an important initial step in the investigation of the frame-building and frame-setting process, shedding light on the infosuasion dynamics and strategies. The analyzed corpus includes U.S. television (ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox News, MSNBC, and CNN) news transcripts on Garissa University College attack in Kenya in 2015.

Keywords

O infoperswazji, ramach medialnych i proksymizacji: Ujęcie kognitywne w połączeniu z analizą korpusową

Abstrakt

Przyjęcie, że wiadomości to nie tyle „fakty", co medialne przedstawienie wydarzeń, osób i problemów, a co za tymidzie, uznanie subiektywnego i infoperswazyjnego charakteru relacji dziennikarskich, stwarza potrzebę głębszej analizy procesu tworzenia narracji medialnych i ich wpływu na społeczne postrzeganie rzeczywistości. Niniejszy artykuł wychodzi z założenia, że dziennikarze tworzą kontekst dla odbiorców, proksymizując (przybliżając kognitywnie i emocjonalnie) wybrane aspekty rzeczywistości. W procesie tym, polegającym między innymi na tworzeniu ram medialnych – stereotypowych reprezentacji danych sytuacji – media wpływają na schematy myślowe używane przez odbiorców podczas interpretacji informacji o wydarzeniach i problemach. Przyjmując perspektywę językoznawstwa kognitywnego i w oparciu o podejście proksymizacji medialnej, artykuł bada, w jaki sposób ramy w wymiarze kognitywnym i dyskursywnym służą do „definiowania problemów, diagnozowania przyczyn, wydawania ocen moralnych i sugerowania rozwiązań" (Entman 1993: 52) w relacjach dziennikarskich na temat terroryzmu w Afryce. Główne pytania, na które staramy się odpowiedzieć w artykule są następujące: (1) Jak terroryzm w Afryce Wschodniej przybliżany jest zachodnim odbiorcom? (2) W jaki sposób medialna reprezentacja terroryzmu przejawia się w słowach

kluczowych i kontekstach ich występowania? (3) Jak ramy medialne potencjalnie wpływają na schematy myślowe u odbiorców? Badanie, które łączy metody ilościowe i jakościowe, pokazuje że analiza słów kluczowych, przeprowadzona przy pomocy narzędzi językoznawstwa korpusowego, może posłużyć jako pierwszy krok w analizie procesu konstruowania ram, rzucając tym samym światło na dynamikę i strategie infoperswazyjne. Analizowany korpus obejmuje wiadomości amerykańskich stacji telewizyjnych (ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox News, MSNBC i CNN) na temat ataku terrorystycznego w Garissa University College w Kenii w 2015 roku.

Słowa kluczowe

Afryka, ramy, infoperswazja, wiadomości, proksymizacja, terroryzm

1. Introduction

Over a century ago, Walter Lippmann saw the persuasive potential of the news media in their being the primary source of "pictures in our heads", shaping our perceptions of remote events and phenomena that are "out of reach, out of sight, out of mind" (1922: 29). The essence of this claim is that the elements prominent in these media images become cognitively and affectively salient in the audience's picture. What matters then is which elements of the distant reality are selected and brought closer – *proximized* – to the public. Importantly, it is not only the choice itself, but also the form of representing the events and phenomena in question, that is discursive strategies used. Berelson's (1949: 17) observation that "[s]ome kinds of communication, on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people, under some kinds of conditions, have some kinds of effects" highlights the importance of the "what" and "how", and "in which context" in this process. Communication research, in particular studies on media framing and agenda setting, indeed shows that the media can influence what issues people pay attention to, and shape their affective responses towards pro-

blems and phenomena presented, moral evaluations of these, and, possibly, behavioral actions. In addition to informing, the news media thus perform their persuasive function by strategically shaping narratives and framing stories in ways that influence public perception and opinion. This persuasive power extends beyond mere presentation of information; it involves constructing and reinforcing narratives that align with the audience's values and beliefs.

Examining the orientation of the European press during the war in Kosovo, Savarese (2000: 363) linked "infosuasion" with the use of figures of speech, other persuasive techniques, as well as narrative schemes. Kopytowska (2010), in turn, discussed it in connection with implicit meaning in news texts. The present article examines infosuasion from the perspective of the Media Proximization Approach (MPA, Kopytowska 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2018, 2022), seeing it as an effect of salience- and distance-related cognitive-discursive operations. In news media, such operations involve selecting and foregrounding particular facts, concepts, images, or narratives to capture and direct the audience's attention. The underlying mechanism is distance reduction, that is making selected entities cognitively and affectively closer to the audience. With technological affordances playing an important role (in line with McLuhan's "the medium is the message" claim), the process itself is not arbitrary, but guided by the media outlet's ideological stance, target audience, and intended impact. In other words, "media proximization" is technologically-enabled, ideologically-motivated, culturally-embedded, and strategic. Departing from this assumption, we will focus here on the role of frames as "proximization trigger", analyzing this role in the context of the U.S. television news coverage of the terrorist attack in Kenya. As East Africa is both physically and culturally distant to an American audience and the attack in question did not involve any U.S. citizens, we will examine which aspects of the event, and how, are made salient and potentially relevant for the viewers. In our analysis we will address the following research questions: (1) How is terrorism

in East Africa brought closer to Western audiences through the news frames used? (2) How is the representation of terrorism manifested in keywords and word co-occurrence patterns? (3) How do the media frames potentially impact on the frames generated by the audience? With the answers to the third question being highly speculative (as no reception studies methods are used here), we will nevertheless attempt to shed light on the individual frames-news frames interface, drawing on the insights from cognitive linguistics. As far as methodology is concerned, we will demonstrate how deductive framing method with the use of tools provided by corpus linguistics can be applied to identify frames functioning as proximization triggers (cf. Kopytowska 2008, 2009). Data analysis will be preceded by two theoretical sections. In the first of them a cognitive perspective on frames will be discussed, and tenets of the Media Proximization Approach presented. The latter will focus on the Western media representations of Africa along with possible motivations behind them.

2. Frames, conceptualization, and proximization

The same situation, as posited by cognitive linguistics, can be conceptualized and, subsequently, construed, in multiple ways. Flexibility and variability of human cognition in processing and interpreting information means that our mental frameworks and schemas, which are shaped by language and experience, influence how we perceive and articulate our reality. The notion of "conceptualization" defined as "the cognitive activity constituting our apprehension of the world" (Langacker 1990: 18) highlights this dynamic nature of our concepts and the process of constructing them. Additionally, since "[m]ost concepts presuppose other concepts and cannot be adequately defined except by reference to them, be it implicit or explicit" (Langacker 1987: 147), the meaning of linguistic expressions emerges dynamically in a specific conceptual environment, allowing us to access stored knowledge and experience. In cognitive linguistics

frames have been mostly defined as cognitive structures, based on prior knowledge and used to facilitate the thinking process, while framing has been referred to as a process of selectively using frames to evoke a particular image or idea. Since every word evokes a frame with certain background knowledge and a set of presuppositions, each framing implies something different. This general description highlights two dimensions of a frame: the "internal" one, corresponding to individual frames, mental schemata of interpretation, and the "external" one, concerning discursive patterns of presentation. Providing and repeating certain words and images, and embedding them in a particular context is likely to highlight some aspects of reality while obscuring others. Increased salience means greater probability that viewers will focus their attention on a given piece of information and then store it in their memory. This dual nature of the mechanism of framing explains why the mass media, a major source of definitions and images, have such a powerful effect on the audience's perception of events in the world, especially those to which the public has no direct access. News, as observed by Schramm (1949: 259), "exists in the minds of men. It is not an event; it is something perceived after the event". This mental image, we would argue, is the blend of the previously held knowledge and assumptions of an audience member and the "incoming" discursively constructed media representation.

Frames, along with their structure and impact, have been theorized and analyzed in sociology (cf. Goffman 1974), cognitive psychology (cf. Bartlett 1932), cognitive science and artificial intelligence (cf. Minsky 1975), linguistics (cf. Fillmore 1975, Lakoff 2004; Lakoff and Ferguson 2006), and media and political communication (cf. Entman 1991, 1993, 2003, 2004; Gitlin 1980; Gamson 1992; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Scheufele 1999, 2000, 2004; Pan and Kosicki 1993; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). While some of these approaches and scholars look for frames in individuals' minds (individual frames or audience frames), others believe they are to be found in political texts or media coverage (communication frames or media frames). The

former type of frames can be understood as "information-processing schemata" (Entman 1991: 7), composed of the interpretations enabling a person to understand the incoming information, to make "sense of relevant events" (Gamson and Modigliani 1989: 3), or, in the words of Goffman (1974: 22), to "locate, perceive, identify, and label". These frames are shaped by personal experiences, cultural background, education, and individual perceptions. Media or news frames refer to the ways in which news organizations and journalists structure and present information to the public. Being influenced by editorial policies, political ideologies, economic interests, and audience considerations they highlight certain aspects of a story while downplaying others and thus play a key role in agenda-setting, determining which issues are considered important and how they are discussed in the public sphere. Accordingly, de Vreese (2005: 51) links frames to salience of selected aspects of issues. Entman (1993: 52), in turn, identifies four functions of frames: to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. He also argues that "frames have at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture" (Entman 1993: 52), thus making a link between the two types of frames. For de Vreese (2005: 51-53), the communication process con-sists of "frame building" (constructing frames by media institutions and journalists), and "frame setting" (schema formation in individuals' minds). The former is influenced by internal (e.g. editorial policies and news values) and external factors, while the latter has impact on information processing, attitudes, and behaviour (de Vreese 2005: 51-53). The public is thus stimulated to adopt the frames constructed by the newsmakers and to view reality from the same perspective as they do. Discussing the typology of news frames de Vreese further divides news frames into "issue-specific frames" and "generic frames". While the former are tailored to particular events, topics, or issues, the latter are more universal and provide a general perspective that can be adapted to various contexts. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), for example,

identify five generic news frames: conflict (emphasizing conflict between individuals, groups, institutions or countries), human interest (bringing human face, individual perspective, or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem), attribution of responsibility (attributing responsibility for causing or solving a given problem to the government, an individual, or a group), morality (adding the moral dimension to the story, values, and norms), and economic consequences frame (focusing on the economic implications oof an event for the country, a certain group or an individual). How can these frames be identified in the news? Entman (1993: 52) associates them with "the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments", whereas Gamson and Modigliani (1989, cit. in de Vreese 2005: 54) point to metaphors, exemplars, depictions, and visual images as framing devices. Importantly, two approaches can be distinguished when it comes to identifying news frames, an inductive approach (analysing news stories without a priori defined news frames) and a deductive one (with frames defined prior to analysis).

Drawing on the insights from Chilton's Discourse Space Theory (2004, 2005, 2010; Deictic Space Theory in 2014) and Cap's (2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2017) STA model, the Media Proximization Approach (henceforth MPA) departs from the assumption that distance-related operations, which involve bringing closer (proximizing) selected aspects of reality, are bound to affect the perception of the audience members (Kopytowska 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2018, 2022). Its main tenet is the assumption that while language itself, with its performative potential, plays an important role in distance reduction, "technological affordances" (Hutchby 2001) of the media are equally important (Kopytowska 2022).

To understand this process, we need to refer first to both and Kaid and colleagues' (1991) typology of the socio-political reality and Searle's (1995, 2006, 2008) theory of social ontology.

Based on the former, three dimensions of the sociopolitical "reality" can be distinguished, namely (a) events as they actually occur, (b) events as they are perceived by powerful social actors, including journalists and other gate-keepers, and (c) events as they are covered by the media. The interface between these three dimensions has been partially captured in concepts like "gate-keeping" and agenda-setting (McCombs 2004), "media hegemony" (Altheide 1984), and power "in" and "behind" discourse (Fairclough 1989). As "[o]ur experience of events which take place in contexts that are spatially and temporally remote, from strikes and demonstrations to massacres and wars, is an experience largely mediated by the institutions of mass communication" (Thompson 1995: 216), by making some aspects of reality more salient than others, news media can influence what issues audience members pay attention to and how they perceive entities they have no direct access to. In the course of history, phenomena such as the CNN effect (or more recently Al-Jazeera effect), the media-generated "collective compassion", creation of "moral panics" and media-waged war on terror have demonstrated the impact of this process on public perception and policy. While initially agenda-setting focused on the influence of "issue" salience – telling us "what to think about", the interest within the second level agenda-setting research shifted to the impact of "attribute" salience – telling us "how to think about", the notion further developed by framing theory (Scheufele 1999, 2000, 2004; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007; D'Angelo and Kuypers 2009). Even though Scheufele (2000) claims that framing and agenda-setting are theoretically distinct, operating via different cognitive processes (accessibility vs. attribution), our argument is that *salience enhancement* in both cases is heavily contingent on distance reduction, that is proximizing selected aspects of reality both qualitatively and quantitatively. Drawing attention to some aspects of social reality at the expense of others, the media might promote certain evaluations and affective responses.

According to Searle, we see things as having a certain status, and in virtue of the "collective acceptance" of that status, they can perform various social functions that they could not perform otherwise (Searle, 1995, 2006, 2010). MPA claims that while the "assignment of functions" and "deontic powers" to certain phenomena, events, groups or individuals would not be possible without the symbolic nature and the constitutive potential of language, technological affordances of the media also play a crucial role in "X counts as Y in context C". Both of them enable distance-related work, encompassing several dimensions of distance: spatial, temporal, epistemic, axiological and emotional

It is assumed that operations within the spatiotemporal dimension are a prerequisite for other types of distance-related work as time and space constitute the "basic categories of human experience" (Harvey 1990: 201), or as Langacker (1987: 147–154) puts it, "basic domains", i.e. primitive representational fields. In news discourse recency and immediacy are "generated" and enhanced verbally, through deictic expressions as well as the use of tenses, progressive and perfective aspects, and other lexical expressions and visually, through camera techniques and editing (see Kopytowska 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2022). The epistemic distance concerns degrees of knowledge about the events and phenomena presented. It is thus related with the audience's experience-based cognitive schema of interpretation and gains particular prominence in the case of information concerning new and unfamiliar phenomena. As the easiest way to explain the unfamiliar is to link it to what (is assumed) viewers or readers already know journalists will often resort to stereotypical representations or familiar frames. Axiological distance is related to differences in cultural values, beliefs and practices and often involves the opposition of "us" versus "them", or "us" versus the Other. While both epistemic and axiological distance can be linked to Hester's (1973) concept of "cultural affinity" and Shoemaker at al.'s (1991) notion of "ethnic similarity", we posit that the axiological dimension of distance is, to a large extent,

contingent on the epistemic dimension as "knowledge precedes values in legitimation" process (Berger and Luckmann 1991 [1966]: 111). As the Self has a natural tendency to position itself vis-à-vis Others, the ingroup vs. outgroup representation becomes especially important in the situation of conflict (political, ethnic, cultural, religious, etc.). Cognitive-discursive operations within discourse as product can thus be characterized by three functions (see also Kopytowska 2015b): (1) establishing axiological status: "our" values/norms; (2) delineating axiological conflict: incompatibility of "our" values/norms with "their" values/norms; (3) conveying axiological urgency: responding to a threat posed (often by "their" actions) to "our" values/norms and accepting moral responsibility to act. Lastly, emotional distance concerns various degrees of affective involvement of media users. Not only words, but also sound and (moving) images will act as proximization triggers. Importantly, proximization within the emotional dimension of distance is often the effect of distance-related work within other dimensions, namely spatiotemporal, epistemic and axiological.

3. Africa, terrorism, and media coverage

Discussing the representation of Africa in the Western media several decades ago, Hawk (1992: 4). observed that "Africa is special because there is little common understanding between Africans and Americans to provide context for interpretation". An increasing global mobility and digital media have slightly bridged this gap by facilitating more direct exchanges and access to diverse perspectives (see Ogunyemi 2011 for the impact of gatewatching on the online coverage of the continent). Additionally, compared to earlier critiques by Hawk (1992), Benthall (1993), Biko et al. (2000), we can observe a steady rise in awareness among Western journalists about the importance of providing contextually-informed reporting. Yet, the portrayal of Africa in Western media often continues to be shaped by stereotypes and simplistic narratives (Wa'Njogu 2009; Bunce at al. 2016;

Akinbobola 2021; Chiluwa and Chiluwa 2022). The representations of the continent frequently emphasize poverty and conflict on the one hand, and romanticized exoticism on the other. Parachute journalism, where foreign correspondents with limited knowledge of the local context report on complex issues, leading to distorted representations (Erickson and Hamilton 2006; Musa and Yusha'u 2013) has clearly been a contributing factor here. Colonial and neo-colonial legacy with structural and institutional biases, historical power dynamics, and a Western-centric perspective have been at play too. So have political and economic factors, including demand for stories on Africa. Hence, analysing the coverage of African conflicts in American media, Cook (2013: 375) asks a pertinent question: "If we examine American news coverage of Africa from a supply and demand perspective, we have to ask ourselves: Who would consumers of African news be?"

Inevitably, Hawk was right. For most Western audiences (including an American public), Africa is a continent spatially, epistemically, and axiologically distant (cf. Kopytowska 2015c). The media economy, which is profit-driven, necessitates that journalists bridge this distance to make news about Africa both relevant and emotionally engaging for their audiences. The four unwritten rules behind the Western media coverage of Africa, viz. (a) national interest or "follow the flag", (b) ideological leaning, (c) historical factors, and (d) advertisers'/audiences' involvement, discussed by Ankomah (2000: 20) over two decades ago seem to be a response to this need. The relevance- and proximity-related "national interest" rule leads to preference for issues that directly impact Western countries, such as terrorism, migration, or conflict. It is the potential threat they pose to "us" in either physical (material) or axiological (norms and values) sense. Ideological leaning influences the narrative tone, with different media outlets emphasizing various aspects of a story to align with their political or ideological perspectives, which is the manifestation of epistemic and axiological proximization. The fact that historical factors (and narratives) tend to colour re-

presentations of Africa – often drawing on colonial-era stereo-types and simplifications – in order to present the new and un-familiar in terms of knowledge and assumptions that are al-ready there is also connected with epistemic proximization. Lastly, advertisers and audience preferences drive the need for captivating and sensational stories (emotional proximization be-ing the goal here), which can lead to the prioritization of dra-matic or negative news. A similar line of interpretation can be applied in the case of Styan's (1999: 289) argument that events from Africa which typically get covered fall into three categories: (a) stereotypical stories associated with preconceived images of the region, e.g. famine, (b) actual or threatened interstate vio-lence, and (c) stories concerning Westerners (e.g. kidnapping of white people). The first category aligns with epistemic proximi-zation. Drawing on long-standing narratives of Africa as a place of perpetual crisis and reinforcing pre-existing beliefs news nar-ratives make the unfamiliar appear familiar through well-worn tropes (cf. Kalyango 2011). In this way complex issues can get simplified into easily digestible narratives that fit within the au-dience's established mental frameworks. Violence- and conflict-related stories are framed to highlight potential threats to West-ern security and stability in line with the spatial and axiological proximization dynamics. These narratives suggest that conflicts in Africa may have direct consequences for Western nations, thereby justifying international attention and intervention. Ac-cordingly, discussing the results of their analysis of U.S. televi-sion networks' coverage of Africa over 30 years, Kalyango and Onyebadi (2012: 681) conclude that it was dominated by con-flicts and crises, and linked to a particular U.S. interest. Cover-age of incidents involving Westerners, such as kidnappings, is a clear example of emotional proximization. The stories are in-tended evoke strong emotional responses from Western audi-ences, making the distant and unfamiliar seem immediate and personally relevant. The focus on Western victims in African contexts serves to humanize the news and foster a sense of ur-gency and concern among the audience. In a similar way, this

emotional appeal will also determine the choice of stories fo-
cused on local victims of conflict and famine, meant to evoke
a sense of "collective compassion" (Fair 1993; Hagos 2000;
Sorenson 1991; Höijer 2004; Kopytowska 2014).

In the post-September 11 world, the phenomenon of terror-
ism has become one of the most topical issues in the media and
Western news coverage of terrorism in Africa exhibits several
main tendencies, often reflecting broader media dynamics and
socio-political interests (Nacos 2007; Freedman and Thussu
2012; Jackson and Sinclair 2012). Firstly, the media often high-
light the most violent and sensational aspects of terrorist activ-
ities, de-emphasizing the underlying causes and the broader so-
cio-political context. The use of graphic imagery and dramatic
language to describe terrorist is aimed at capturing audience
attention. For the same reason, human interest stories that
highlight the personal tragedies of terrorism victims are com-
mon, aiming to elicit emotional responses. Naturally, when
Westerners are victims of terrorist attacks in Africa, media cov-
erage intensifies, often overshadowing the experiences and suf-
fering of local populations. Secondly, the stories are frequently
told from a Western perspective, with limited input from local
journalists and analysts. Simplification, excessive stereotypi-
zation, and overemotionalization have thus become the norm.
Thirdly, there has been considerable imbalance in media atten-
tion and coverage depending on the occurrence of terrorist acts
(the West versus the rest), and if terrorism is physically distant,
Western media often emphasize the connections between Afri-
can terrorist groups and global terror networks like Al-Qaeda
and ISIS, framing terrorism in Africa as a threat to global secu-
rity (for the link between agenda-building and the coverage of
terrorism in Africa see Wanta and Kalyango 2007). The dis-
course of "clash of civilisations" and militant Islam (Thussu
2006: 6) with the accompanying us versus them construction is
often prevalent. As already mentioned, if there is no physical
threat to the audience, terrorism will have to be presented as
either a potential threat to Western values or at least a problem

which, due to its incompatibility with "our" values, constitutes axiological urgency, requiring at least our emotional response. This seems to be compatible with Nossek and Berkowitz's (2006) findings in their study of terrorism that if terrorism is culturally remote, cultural narratives (hence the epistemic and axiological dimension in our model) must be relied on more heavily in journalists' sense-making process; as a result, with distant events, as they claim (ibid.), the news is more mythically-laden and more tied to cultural references.

4. Framing the Garissa University attack

4.1. Background

The focus of the present study is on the Garissa University attack on April 2, 2015, which stands as one of the most brutal terrorist assaults in Kenya's recent history. The attack, executed by the Somali-based militant group Al-Shabaab, targeted Garissa University College, resulting in 148 deaths, including 142 students, 3 police officers, and 3 soldiers. The attackers stormed the university's dormitories, specifically targeting Christian students, took hostages and engaged in a prolonged gun battle with Kenyan security forces. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack, citing it as retaliation for Kenya's military involvement in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

4.2. Data and method

The corpus analyzed comprised news transcripts from major U.S. television broadcasters, viz. CNN, MSNBC, NBC, CBS, and Fox News. The transcripts were downloaded from Nexis Uni, using the search term "Garissa", and time frame 2nd April – 2nd May, 2015. The compiled corpus consisted of 83 news stories including 13 CBS stories, 7 NBC stories, 3 ABC stories, 1 Fox

News story, 2 MSNBC stories, and 57 CNN stories, aired between 2ⁿᵈ and 16ᵗʰ April, 2015.

Departing from the assumption that corpus linguistics, in particular when used in combination with qualitative approaches, can be a valuable tool for discourse analysis as it allows for the quantification of recurring linguistic features necessary to substantiate qualitative insights and for reliable generalizations concerning the effects of various linguistic choices (cf. Stubbs 1997: 107, 111; O'Keeffe 2006: 51) our study employed corpus tools to identify frames and proximization triggers in the news discourse examined. The SketchEngine software was used to compile and annotate the corpus, extract keywords, generate word sketches, and examine concordances. Given the fact that news texts tend to render a particular meaning system through key words combined in a specific form, a careful examination of word choices, the extent of their use in news coverage as well as their semantic associations was used to identify and describe news frames and proximization triggers (for keywords and framing see Kopytowska 2008, 2009; see also Touri and Koteyko 2014). The Open American National Corpus (OANC), including texts of all genres and transcripts of spoken data produced from 1990 onward was used as a reference corpus. The words reflecting the TV news discourse in general, such as *ABC*, *CNN*, *videotape*, *camera*, *unidentified*, *anchor* etc., and most proper names of places and public figures were filtered out.

By examining the most frequently occurring words and their collocations dominant themes and narrative structures within the news coverage were determined. Keywords were grouped thematically, and their semantic associations were analyzed to reveal how they contribute to specific frames. Word sketches and concordance lines also provided context for how these keywords were used. Subsequently, the frame-building lexicon was analyzed in terms of spatiotemporal, epistemic, axiological, and emotional proximization triggers. This level of analysis helped to identify the strategies used to make a distant event feel immediate and relevant, how knowledge and beliefs about the attack

were constructed, the values and moral judgments embedded in the coverage, and the methods used to elicit emotional responses from the audience. Frames were analyzed deductively with frames that occur commonly in the news being the point of reference (Neuman et al. 1992; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). These included: (1) the violence and conflict frame; [1] (2) the terrorism and security frame; (3) the attribution of responsibility frame;[2] (4) the human interest frame.

4.3. Analysis

4.3.1. The violence and conflict frame

The violence and conflict frame in the news coverage of the Garissa University attack emphasizes the brutal and chaotic nature of the event, focusing on the immediate impact and violent actions taken by the perpetrators. The frame employs dramatic and graphic language to highlight the severity of the situation, often invoking a sense of fear, horror, and urgency.

The event is referred to as "attack" (387 times), "massacre" (68 times), and "slaughter" (20 times). The first two are frequently modified by phrases denoting location, such as "university", "campus", "school", "Garissa University", or "Garissa University College attack". This specific use of location-based modifiers has a double function when it comes to triggering epistemic proximization. On the one hand, the attack is attributed to a certain geographical region of the world – remote enough to provide the viewers with an opportunity of "on-site witnessing" at a safe distance from the dramatic and threatening reality (the phenomenon referred to by Chouliaraki 2008 as the "spectatorship of suffering", see Kopytowska 2015b: 357). On the other

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[1] Neuman et al. (1992: 61-62) found that the media draw on a few central frames for reporting a range of issues and that conflict was the most common among the frames in U.S. news they identified.

[2] Neuman et al. (1992: 75) found this frame to be more common in the minds of audiences than in the content of news.

hand, however, these phrases are likely to evoke familiar frames of campus shootings or massacres in the U.S., instantly resonating with American news audience familiar with the reality of university shootings in their own country. In this way, epistemic proximization connects the distant event to a well-known and emotionally charged schema, making the violence in Kenya feel more immediate and relatable. Axiologically, these expressions invoke shared values and ethical concerns about the sanctity of educational spaces and the innocence of student victims, eliciting a similar emotional and ethical response. Additionally, adjectival modifiers like "bloody", "deadly", "horrific", "gruesome", "brutal", "horrible", and "terrible" intensify the perceived severity and brutality of the attack, evoking emotional responses from the audience. Similarly, "slaughter" is used in phrases "cold-blooded slaughter", and "vicious slaughter", which reinforce the sense of calculated, cold-hearted violence.

Words like "hostage", "target", "attacker", and "siege" further underscore the deliberate and targeted nature of the violence. Its lethal consequences are highlighted by "deadly siege", "deadly attack", and "deadly rampage". The last expression implies a period of intense and uncontrolled violence, suggesting that the perpetrators were acting wildly and without restraint, as in "Gunmen went on a rampage, killing indiscriminately". "Siege", used 29 times, is often modified with such adjectives as "bloody", "deadly", "terror", and "horrifying", as well as temporal descriptors like "15-hour", and "four-day". "Soft target" used with reference to the university campus is also likely to trigger familiar schemas of educational institutions and a collective desire to protect these vulnerable settings.

The verbs "kill" (used 204 times) and "shoot" (used 49 times) dominate the narrative, highlighting the lethal actions of the perpetrators. At the same time, "attack" is used as a verb 71 times, and "attacker" 53 times. Active voice constructions (e.g., "Gunmen stormed the campus") and present continuous tense (e.g., "Gunmen are currently inside the building"), often together with time markers ("this morning"), are employed to convey

immediacy and urgency (temporal proximization). Descriptions of gunmen "terrorizing the university", "taking hostages", "shooting indiscriminately", and engaging in "shooting sprees" depict the attackers as ruthless and relentless. The use of passive constructions with the verbs "slaughter" and "kill" (e.g., "students were slaughtered") adds additional focus on the victims, highlighting their vulnerability.

The nouns "gunshot" (used 30 times) and "gunfire" (used 16 times) are paired with verbs like "see" and "hear" to emphasize the drama and intensity of the attack, as in "We have been hearing the gunfire" and "Gunshots going on like fireworks". This vivid imagery contributes to the emotional proximization, drawing the audience into the chaotic scene. The term "chaos", used 16 times, conveys the extent of the disorder and panic caused by the attack, as in, e.g., "Scenes of panic overtook Garissa University when gunmen linked to al-Shabaab opened fire".

Cultural and religious conflict also emerges as part of the frame. The keyword "Christians" is used as an object with verbs such as "kill", "separate", "target", "execute", "shoot", "persecute", and "gun down" (e.g., "Christians were shot on the spot" and "Witnesses say the attackers were targeting Christians"), which highlights the targeted nature of the violence and the ideological motivations behind it. The use of morally charged language (e.g., "senseless violence", "attack on our way of life") embeds value judgments and emphasizes the ideological and ethical implications of the attack. A sense of axiological urgency (Kopytowska 2015c: 318) is thus evoked resulting from a threat posed by the Other – attackers, terrorists, Al-Shabaab.

4.3.2. The terrorism and security frame

The terrorism and security frame situates the Garissa University attack within the broader context of global terrorism and security threats, emphasizing the connection to international terror networks, the perpetrators' affiliations, and the immediate and long-term responses by security forces and government

authorities. The frame is manifested through the frequent use of keywords such as "terrorist" (used 130 times), "terror" (used 110 times), "attack" (used 458 times), "militant" (135 times), "extremist" (used 19 times), and "Al-Shabaab" (used 218 times), which are strategically placed to evoke strong emotional responses and highlight the severity of the threat.

As already mentioned, the event is referred to as "terror attack" (41 times) and "terrorist attack", featuring at the top of the list of 200 key multi-word terms. Apart from the previously discussed modifiers, the attack is characterized as "typical Al-Shabaab attack". Other phrases which can be found in the corpus include "the mall attack", "the Westgate mall attack", "the Westgate attack", or "a similar attack in 2013", being references to the terrorist attack which took place two years earlier at the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi. This attack resulted in the deaths of 67 people, including four Americans. These references in the news coverage of the Garissa University serve as epistemic proximization triggers by connecting the event to a well-known incident that the American audience is already familiar with. Not only does this strategy help the audience to better understand the severity and context of the Gar-issa attack, but it also evokes a shared memory of terrorism that transcends geographical boundaries. Axiologically, such references invoke shared values and ethical concerns about the fight against terrorism and its implications. Furthermore, by drawing parallels between the two events (and other terrorist incidents as manifested in phrases like "other attacks before", "recent Shabaab attacks", or "previous attacks") the frame reinforces the perception of a continuous and pervasive threat, prompting a unified moral and emotional response from the audience, reminded of the ongoing global struggle against terrorism.

The phrases "lone wolf ", "asymmetric", and "cross-border" used in the news coverage to modify the word "attack" carry significant implications and convey specific meanings about the nature of global terrorism, closely aligning with global and American political discourse on terrorism and the narrative of

the global war on terror. Implying that the perpetrators are individuals or small groups acting independently rather than as part of a larger, coordinated organization, the term "lone wolf attacks" highlights the unpredictability and difficulty in preventing such incidents. In the context of the American political discourse, the phrase resonates with concerns about domestic terrorism and radicalization within the country. It emphasizes the pervasive and decentralized nature of modern terrorism, suggesting that threats can emerge from virtually anywhere and anyone, thus heightening the sense of vulnerability and urgency. This also aligns with the global war on terror narrative by stressing the need for constant vigilance and enhanced surveillance to identify and prevent these isolated threats. Referring to the strategy where non-state actors or smaller forces use unconventional methods to combat more powerful opponents, the term "asymmetric attacks" highlights the tactical advantage that terrorists have by using surprise and the element of fear to compensate for their lack of conventional military strength. The suggestion that terrorist groups are adapting and evolving their methods to exploit weaknesses in security and create maximum impact with minimal resources is also deeply embedded in the global and American political discourse, which often highlights the resourcefulness and adaptability of terrorist organizations. It thus evokes the global war on terror narrative, legitimizing the need for flexible and adaptive military and intelligence strategies. "Cross-border attacks", in turn, imply that terrorism is not confined to one country and that militant groups operate across national boundaries. The term highlights the transnational nature of terrorism, where borders are porous and security threats ("porous" [used 18 times], "security" [used 86 times], and "threat" [used 41 times] being keywords in our corpus) can transcend national boundaries, thus requiring a united effort from the international community to effectively address and mitigate the threat. Aligning with the global war on terror narrative and American political discourse, this argument reinforces the justification for international military presence and

alliances, such as NATO, and, more generally, global partnerships and counterterrorist initiatives.

The word sketches of "terror" reveal a range of phrases that intensify the perceived threat and urgency of terrorist activities. For example, phrases like "absolute and complete terror" and "sheer terror" evoke strong emotional responses, emphasizing the fear and panic caused by terrorists' actions. When referring to the event itself, phrases such as "terror attack" and "terror siege" highlight its violent and invasive nature. Further, combinations like "terror threat", "terror tactics", "terror acts", "terror strategies", and "terror operations" emphasize the organized and strategic dimensions of terrorism, implying that terrorist groups are not only capable of random violence but also possess sophisticated plans and methods. The use of terms like "terror group", "terror network", "terror ties", "terror mastermind", and "terror suspect" focuses on the organizational aspects of terrorism, highlighting the existence of structured entities and networks behind terrorist acts and a certain level of coordination and support that extends beyond individual perpetrators.

The terms "terrorist" (used 90 times as a noun), "militant" (used 46 times as a noun), "terror group (used 30 times), and "terrorist group" (used 14 times), used with reference to the perpetrators of the attack are modified by "Al-Shabaab", "Islamist", Al-Quaeda", "Al-Quaeda-linked", "ISIS". The modifiers imply a direct connection to well-known and feared global terrorist organizations, highlighting the seriousness and organized nature of the threat. The use of "Al-Shabaab" directly links the attackers to the Somali-based terrorist group known for its violent insurgency and numerous attacks in the region. "Al-Shabaab" is used in the whole corpus 105 times. The term "Islamist" adds a religious dimension to the attackers' ideology, suggesting motivations rooted in radical interpretations of Islam, which resonates with global narratives on religious extremism. "Al-Qaeda" and "Al-Qaeda-linked" connect the attackers to the broader network of global jihadism responsible for the 9/11 attacks. This association heightens the perceived threat level by linking local

acts of terror to a worldwide campaign of violence. Finally, referencing "ISIS" ties the attackers to the terrorist group known for its brutal tactics and global reach, further intensifying the audience's sense of fear and urgency. The modifiers thus serve to frame the Garissa University attack within the larger context of global terrorism, reinforcing the idea that such acts are part of an international web of extremist violence. This framing not only emphasizes the global reach and coordination of terrorist activities but also justifies a worldwide counter-terrorism response, aligning with the narrative of the global war on terror.

The security frame is predominantly manifested in the frequent use of the word "security" (used 81 times) and related terms, highlighting the critical need for protective measures against potential threats. References to "security lapses" and statements that "security was not enough" suggest failures in existing measures. Terms such as "security checks", "security measures", "security responses", "security forces", and "security officers" indicate various strategies and personnel involved in maintaining safety. In addition to the focus on security measures, the term "mastermind" implies the presence of a central figure orchestrating the attack, keywords like "intelligence", "operation", "response", and "military" point to various actions taken by authorities to manage the crisis and prevent future incidents. Likewise, the term "troops" (used 15 times) modified by "African Union", "military", "Kenyan", "government", and "U.S". highlights a collective military effort to ensure regional and global security.

Both the regional implications and broader political context of the attack are evoked within the frame. Keywords such as "Kenya" (used 460 times), "Somalia" (used 132 times), "Africa" (used 35 times), and "border" (used 64 times) link the event to regional stability. Geographical and cultural tensions that contribute to regional instability are hinted at, as in, e.g., "Garissa sits on one of the longest religious fault lines in the world with largely Christians sub-Saharan Africa to the south and a largely Muslim population to the north". The news coverage also makes

numerous references to U.S. involvement and interests, linking the Garissa attack to American security concerns and policy. For example, "The U.S. has killed several al-Shabaab leaders in recent months. But the group still able to carry out this major attack" underscores the ongoing U.S. military efforts against al-Shabaab and the persistent threat despite these efforts, while "The U.S. strategy has been to assist the African forces. And U.S. troops Navy SEAL commandos drone attacks helicopter attacks over the last couple of years have gone into Somalia on several occasions to try and get to the Al-Shabaab leadership" highlights the direct involvement of U.S. military forces in combating terrorism in the region. Furthermore, in addition to the already mentioned references to the previous Westgate mall attack, the terrorist group's reach and the global nature of the threat are mentioned, as in, e.g., "In February an Al-Shabaab video threatened to attack the Mall of America and other U.S. targets". Also, the reference to "The Nairobi U.S. embassy attack of 1998, in which al-Qaeda operatives killed 213 people, including 12 Americans" provides historical context of terrorism targeting U.S. interests in Kenya, emphasizing the ongoing nature of the threat. The news transcripts feature statements of the U.S. officials, showing solidarity and concern over the attack or the U.S. commitment to supporting Kenya in its fight against terrorism as in "President Obama spoke yesterday with Kenya's president and assured him that he is still planning to visit Kenya in July when the two leaders will discuss counterterrorism". These references serve to proximize the Garissa attack to an American audience by linking it to familiar narratives of global terrorism and highlighting the direct implications for U.S. security. In this way the frame not only highlights the relevance of the event to American viewers but also legitimizes continued U.S. involvement in global counter-terrorism efforts. The use of dramatic language, combined with direct quotes from officials, eyewitnesses, and analysts enhances the narrative's impact, making the distant event feel potentially imminent and relevant to the American audience.

4.3.3. The attribution of responsibility frame

The attribution of responsibility frame in the news coverage of the Garissa University attack focuses on attributing blame and outlining the actions taken by both the perpetrators and the authorities in response to the event. This frame emphasizes who is responsible for the attack, the measures taken by security forces, and the broader implications for governmental and institutional accountability. By using keywords or multi-word terms, such as "Shabaab", "terrorist group", along with "claim" (used 34 times) and "responsibility" (used 24 times), the news discourse clearly identifies the attackers and links them to well-known terror networks (see previous section), e.g., "Authorities have identified the attackers as members of a known terror cell", "The Somalia-based militant group al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack" or "The Islamic militant group al-Shabaab is claiming responsibility for this attack" [Additionally, temporal proximization in these two examples is triggered by both perfective and progressive aspect]. The motivations behind the attack (and potential future attacks) are also mentioned, as in e.g., "Al-Shabaab's leaders have threatened more attacks in retaliation for Kenya's military presence in Somalia". By referencing Somalia, the news coverage connects the Garissa attack to a country that is already associated with significant instability and terrorism in the minds of many Americans (epistemic and axiological proximization). Somalia is frequently highlighted in global news for issues related to piracy, civil war, and terrorism, particularly involving the militant group al-Shabaab. This pre-existing knowledge provides a contextual backdrop that makes the events in Kenya more understandable and relatable for an American audience. Additionally, Somalia has been a focal point in international counter-terrorism efforts, including those led by the United States. References to Somalia thus bring to mind the historical involvement of U.S. military and diplomatic efforts in the region.

The use of "security", "police", and "government" keywords demonstrates both immediate (e.g., "Kenya's president sent in security forces to try and flush out the armed gunmen—all members of al-Shabaab the Somali-based militant Islamic group" or "The police are conducting a manhunt for the mastermind behind the attack") and long-term responses (e.g., "The police have increased their presence in the area to prevent further incidents") by the authorities, focusing on their efforts to manage the crisis and prevent future incidents. The frame, however, also raises questions about the preparedness (e.g., "The university administration had reportedly warned of a potential attack but took no additional security measures" or "Government officials are being held accountable for the security lapses that allowed the attackers to carry out their plan") and effectiveness of the authorities in dealing with such crises ("Kenya's elite anti-terrorist squad were notified a half hour after the killing spree began", "The security forces' delayed response has raised questions about preparedness" or "The government has been criticized for not doing enough to protect the students").

4.3.4. The human interest frame

The human-interest frame focuses on personal stories and emotional impact of the attack, highlighting the experiences and suffering of the victims, survivors, and their families. The frame relies on keywords such as "student" (used 211 times), "victim" (used 35 times), and "survivor" (used 29 times) to emphasize the human aspect of the tragedy.

The modifiers of students can be grouped into several categories, each with its own proximizing potential. The first category can be called institutional and geographic. The adjectives like "university", "college", "Kenyan" place the students within a specific educational and national context. The second category includes numerals and other quantity expressions, e.g. "nearly 150", "many", providing a sense of scale of the tragedy and its impact on the student community. The third category includes

modifiers describing age and vulnerability: "young", e.g., "Family members collapsing today as they continued to learn of the deaths of the young students at the hands of Al Shabaab, the Islamic extremist group from Somalia with links to al Qaeda", "She didn't know, she couldn't see what happened next but we spoke to one medic who went in shortly after the military who said that when those young students were made to lie on the floor, he said he saw gunshots to the back of the head", "defenseless", e.g., "Christians in Garissa, Kenya, returned to church for Easter Sunday services today, just days after jihadist gunmen attacked a local college and killed 147 people there, mostly defenseless Christian students". The former adjective evokes a strong emotional response by highlighting the tragedy of lost potential and the premature death, but also highlights the innocence of the students. The vivid description of young students being executed amplifies the brutality of the attack. Emphasizing the helplessness and vulnerability of the victims, the latter adjective evokes a sense of injustice and moral outrage. In both cases axiological and emotional proximization is triggered, invoking both empathy and a strong ethical res-ponse from the audience. Adjectives in the fourth category – emotional and situational – e.g., "unfortunate" ("more radical and more likely to strike like this at soft targets like these unfortunate students"), "fellow" ("This is one student describing how fellow students unknowingly ran toward the slaughter"), highlight the plight of students, evoking potential sympathy and solidarity towards the victims, as well as the shared experience and community among the students (and thus a sense of collective mourning). The last category – religious and cultural identity – highlights the ideological motivations behind the attack and the sectarian nature of the violence, as in "Separating Muslim and Christian students, killing the Christians". Further emphasizing this, verbs such as "single out", "target", "capture", "weed out", and "shoot" used in conjunction with "Christian students" paint a vivid picture of the deliberate and systematic nature of the attack, which is not only a general act of terror but also an act

of religious persecution. In addition to acting as emotional prox-
imization triggers, these linguistic choices have a strong axio-
logical potential connecting the tragedy of students in Garissa
to broader global issues of ideological and religious extremism
and thus evoking a sense of axiological urgency (our values, e.g.,
religious pluralism and tolerance, are under threat).

The phrase "shell-shocked victims" employs a powerful met-
aphor that evokes imagery from the First World War, where sol-
diers exposed to relentless artillery bombardment often suffered
from "shell shock", a term used to describe the psychological
trauma they experienced. In the context of the Garissa Univer-
sity attack, this metaphor extends beyond its original wartime
usage to epistemically and emotionally proximize the intensity
and suddenness of the attack along with the impact it had on
the victims. Associating the victims' experiences with well-
known and deeply empathetic images of wartime suffering (and
a collective understanding of war trauma) the metaphor is likely
to elicit a strong emotional response from the audience.

Personal stories with focus on the individuals affected by
events, highlighting their experiences, emotions, and personal
journeys also play a crucial role in the human-interest frame by
adding emotion and relatability to news coverage. In the context
of the Garissa University attack they have several functions.
Firstly, they transform abstract events into tangible, relatable
narratives, allowing audiences to connect emotionally with
those affected. This "humanization" makes the events more ac-
cessible and engaging (emotional proximization), as viewers can
see the impact on real people rather than just statistics or gen-
eralized reports, e.g., "One student told me she lay under her
bed for thirteen hours listening to gunmen shoot students who
were unable to recite the Quran". Secondly, tapping into univer-
sal human experiences such as fear, loss, and resilience they
are powerful tools for eliciting empathy and emotional responses
from the audience. "For four days Mary Nandwa has been look-
ing for her cousin Milton Mukhwana at the morgue" – narratives
like this one, for example, are likely to trigger an emotional

connection with the audience by personalizing suffering and uncertainty faced by the victims' families. Thirdly, such stories have an epistemic potential as they illustrate the consequences of the attack on individuals and communities. Lastly, their emotional appeal (along with an axiological dimension) lies in the fact that they highlight acts of heroism and resilience, providing inspirational elements for the audience, e.g., "I got my fellow students together, opened two windows, put chairs down to help us jump out".

Being are charged with strong connotations that evoke a range of emotional responses from the audience, keywords like "fear", "dead", "body", "witness", and "scene" also add drama and emotional intensity to the news coverage. By highlighting the fear experienced by the victims, the coverage draws the audience into the psychological and emotional state of those involved, making the event more relatable and urgent. "Witness" introduces an element of personal testimony and authenticity to the coverage (first-hand perspectives being considered compelling and credible). "Scene" (used 35 times) helps to set the stage and provide a visual context for the audience, trans-porting the viewers to the place where the events unfolded. In addition to "crime scene", other emotionally-loaded modifiers of this keyword include "grisly", "tragic", "chaotic", "emotional", "disturbing" "anguished", and "horrifying". Words like "chaos", and "trauma" convey the emotional turmoil and disorder caused by the event, e.g., "This is a town awash in tears and trauma" (water metaphor enhancing the emotionally proximizing potential of both words).

With all the above elements and strategies, the human interest frame engages the audience emotionally by bringing forward the deeply personal dimensions of the tragedy along with drama and moral evaluation. It bridges the gap between the audience and the victims, fostering a sense of solidarity and a call to action against the underlying issues of ideological extremism and violence (axiological urgency).

5. Conclusion

Even though, due to globalization, mobility, and digital media, there seem to be more opportunities for creating common understanding between Africans and Americans to provide context for interpretation than at the time when Hawk expressed his concern, Africa still remains physically and (to a large extent) culturally distant. Why then should the American audience be interested in an event that did not involve and affect any U.S. citizens? Examining the interface between agenda-building and terrorism, Wanta and Kalyango (2007) point to the importance of the terrorism frame in the media coverage of Africa. Indeed, our analysis demonstrated that linking the Garissa University attack to the global war on terror narrative effectively bridges this gap. By situating the event within a familiar framework of international terrorism, the coverage makes the distant incident more relevant and urgent to American audiences. Also, references to both well-known terrorist groups and previous incidents, like the Westgate mall attack (which did involve U.S. citizens), act as epistemic and axiological proximization triggers. Overall, such a strategy highlights the interconnectedness of global security issues, suggesting that threats in one part of the world can have implications everywhere and the global war on terror is still underway, thereby legitimizing attention and possible action.

The violence and conflict frame, prevalent in the media in general due to its inherent negativity, was also identified in our corpus. The fact that the attack took place on the university campus summons up familiar images of American university shootings, creating an immediate and relatable connection for the audience and evoking a sense of empathy and fear. Axiologically, it prompts the same moral reflections. Aligning with the broader narrative of global terrorism, the frame not only emphasizes the persistent, pervasive, and changing nature of such threats, but also adds an axiological layer to them. As already mentioned, the "clash of civilisations" and militant Islam (Thus-

su 2006: 6) discourse embeds terrorism with an ideological and religious dimension, framing it as a conflict between Western values and extremist Islamic ideologies. The axiological urgency resulting from a fundamental threat to societal values and cultural identity legitimizes counter-terrorism measures and policies. It also simplifies complex geopolitical dynamics into a binary opposition of us versus them.

Finally, the attribution of responsibility frame functions to identify and emphasize the accountability of specific actors for the violence, while the use of vivid, emotive language and personal stories not only humanizes the victims, but also evokes strong emotional responses, making the audience feel a personal connection to the tragedy.

The representation of terrorism in the analyzed news coverage is manifested through the use of keywords, often paired with modifiers and co-occurring phrases. As we have demonstrated, acting as proximization triggers, these linguistic choices contribute to constructing a narrative that is both relevant and emotionally-engaging for the audience. It thus seems methodologically substantiated to use corpus linguistics tools in frame identification and analysis whether an inductive or deductive approach is adopted (see de Vreese 2005: 53-54 for differences between these two; for an inductive approach see Touri and Koteyko 2014).

The selective emphasis on certain aspects of an event, through repeated use of specific keywords and phrases, directs the audience's attention to particular elements, making them more salient and thus cognitively and affectively accessible. Interacting with the audience's cognitive schemata of interpretation it may possibly contribute to schema formation and framing effects. It is thus not only what the audience thinks about but also how they think about it that potentially influences their attitudes, beliefs, and emotional responses. Even though the present paper did not provide empirical evidence for the info-suasion effects, it discussed proximization (along with its discursive manifestations) as a possible mechanism behind "making news

exist in the minds of men", to paraphrase Schramm's (1949: 259) already mentioned statement.

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