

Today's lesson:
Working with the media +
Conveying meaning

Sport Journalism
Beijing Sport University

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1

Recap

- Sources: personal observation; primary (vital), secondary (addit.); material, behind-the-scenes
- Interviews offer information, reaction, emotion
 - Conduct multiple interviews, have multiple sources
- **Prepare:** Research, prepare 5 Qs
- **Do:** ask open-ended, follow-up Qs, observe
- **Don't:** make statements, ask leading Qs, waste time

2

Clarify: Avoiding obvious questions

- “How does it feel?”
 - *Somewhat acceptable as ice-breaker, or...*
 - “What went through your mind when you scored the second goal in the 85th minute?”
(After a 2-0 victory)
1. Be specific!
 2. Do not be lazy! (Athletes *hate* this!)

3

No Time to Prepare!

- A coach has just been fired (or, Yao Ming visits the school). You need to **improvise**: What do you ask?
- Ask the **who, what, where, when, why, how** questions; they will allow you to write a story

4



News conferences

- Share information simultaneously with a group of reporters
- More formal, organized than small group interviews
- The **source** (not the journalist) is in control:
 - Usually begins with opening statements from speaker(s)
 - Then, reporters ask questions
 - Speaker decides when to end

News conferences

- “Big” stories, events (attending takes time)
- Prominent individuals (media access)
- Proximity: Local issue
- React to crises, criticism, negative publicity

- More information, additional information, photo-op and video-op(portunity)

7



Photo credit Aleš Fevžer

Transcriptions and quote sheets

- Organizers often provide a transcription of the press conference. Read and decide:
 - Which quotations can make the story
 - Which should be **paraphrased**
 - Which do not contribute to reporting
- Alt.: Quote sheet (a partial transcription)
 - Not the best [incomplete], but sometimes the only option

9

Sport Information/Media Relations o.

- Organize news conferences
- Assist media by providing information, statistics, notes...
- Arrange interviews with athletes, coaches...
 - Usually requested min. 24 hrs in advance
- Prepare materials: [Media guides](#), press releases, game program...
- Ran (directed) by [sports information directors](#)

10

Request interviews, news conferences






- Through **public relations** (*or sports information*) o.:
 - “Contact the sports media relations department at least 24 hours in advance with the interview topic and request. Most reasonable requests, but not all, are granted” (University of Colorado Media Guide)
- Coaches usually set rules: **when, how** you may contact them, **policies** regarding athlete access
- Some people (e.g., professional athletes) prefer not talking to the media
- **On** the record, **off** the record (keep promises!)

11

News releases

- **Primary communication tool** of sports organizations
- **Inform the media**, hoping that they will relay information to the public (story ideas):
 - Events (games, tournaments...)
 - Personnel changes (coaches, players hired, fired...)
 - Promote good causes (partnership with charity...)
 - Build organization’s image (awards, promotions, excellence)

12

	   	<p>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6 July 2010</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wimbledon Semifinalist Kvitova Joins Janković and Schiavone in Portoroz Favorites Pool</p>
 <p>College of Educational Leadership WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY</p>	<p>PORTOROZ, SLOVENIA – Wimbledon Semifinalist Petra Kvitova announced today that she would play at the Banka Koper Slovenia Open later this month. Twenty-year-old Kvitova thus joins top seeds Jelena Janković and Francesca Schiavone in the circle of candidates for a top placement at the WTA Tour event in Portoroz.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Sport governance expert to speak at WSU <i>Guest is part of 2nd annual sport management speaker series</i></p> <p>PULLMAN, Wash. – An internationally acclaimed expert on transparency and good governance in sport will be the lecturer of Washington State University’s Gordon-Enberg Speaker Series. The lecture and debate will be open to the public, and will take place in Cleveland Hall 30W on Nov. 4 at 4 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">13</p> <p><i>Jens Seier Andersen is a journalist and founder of Play the Game (www.playthegame.com), an inter-</i></p>		

Review

- News conference
 - “Big” stories, people, local issue, reaction. Q&A, photo. Transcriptions and quote sheets.
- Sports Information/Media Relations assist media:
 - Provide information; **arrange interviews**; prepare materials; organize game-day activities
- News release: Primary tool. Attract media attn.
 - Event, personnel, good causes, build image

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15

Sports writing

- *Sports* have rules. *Writing—and talking—about sports* has rules, as well:
 - Grammar, punctuation, spelling
- Today: Choosing words, writing style
 - Relevance beyond (sports) journalism!
- Appeal to people with limited knowledge **and** not be boring/be interesting to experts
 - Informative and entertaining to casual fans;
accurate and technical for experts

16

Journalistic writing style

- Facts and information vs. opinion
- Short sentences: subject-verb-object
- Short paragraphs
- Quotations, paraphrases, and attributions

17

Why Do We Talk About This?

- Journalism: Facts, information, quotations
 - Information is gathered from sources or observed by the reporter. Quotes should be attributed to sources
- What is missing? **Opinion**
 - Belongs into columns, (websites,) not articles
- Purpose: convey **information**. The audience should be left to draw their own conclusions

18

Fact or opinion?

- Cristiano Ronaldo is the best soccer player in the world.
- Cristiano Ronaldo is the all-time top scorer in the UEFA Champions League.

19

Fact or opinion?

- The coach chose the wrong player to take the game-winning shot and the game went into overtime.
- The team missed the game-winning shot and the game went into overtime.

20

Fact or opinion?

- The player scored 27 goals last season; he joins the second-worst scoring team in the last championship.
- **Fact.**
- The player is a much-needed addition to the team.

21

Fact or opinion

- Facts are verifiable. Opinions are often expressed with **generalizations** and include **superlatives**: “Best ever,” “most famous,” “greatest play,” “legendary”
 - Since we said earlier that opinion **does not** belong into journalistic writing, we should avoid these expressions in our work!

22

Verify information

- **When in doubt, leave it out.**
 - Be accurate, never assume. Always verify by comparing information to a reliable source.
- **Is the Internet (as a source) reliable?**
 - **Depends** – on the website
 - General guideline: **Three independent** sources, then information *probably* accurate, publishable
 - If something *doesn't sound* right, follow your instinct and don't publish it

23

Verify information

- Best way to gather information: **Observe yourself**
 - Take notes
 - Confirm statistics (yours and official), spelling (names)

24

Subject-verb-object (you know this...)

- Basic sentence structure in English
- Also, preferred sentence organization pattern in journalistic writing:
 - **Easy to read** and understand
 - Makes the subject **do** the action (active)
 - Helps the reader **move through** the story quickly and easily.

25

Subject-verb-object

- Short sentences are easier to read and comprehend. **However**, sequences such as: “I woke up. I went to school. I learned a lot. I went home to do homework,” sound unnatural and are less comprehensible.
- **Mix of shorter and longer sentences is most interesting to read**
- Need to answer key questions: **who, what, where, when, why, how**

26

Subject-verb-object

- Also preferred sentence order in a broadcast: easy-to-say units that listeners can absorb while the sportscaster is speaking
 - Cannot re-read line or paragraph, cannot ask you to repeat
 - Correct despite apparently being conversational; Announcers should feel as if they are sitting next to you watching the game
- Easy-to-say, easy-to-understand information

27

Short paragraphs

- Short paragraphs: **One or two-sentence paragraphs are the norm**
 - **Topic sentence + 1-2 support sentences**
 - Quotes are standalone paragraphs.
 - Multiple entry (and exit) points give impression of a “fast read”
- Longer column paragraphs seem “black pillars” supporting the title (some readers skip them – **perceived** difficult to read)

28

Champions League: Cristiano Ronaldo '120% fit' for Real Madrid v Liverpool

Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo will be fit for the Champions League final against Liverpool in a week's time, says manager Zinedine Zidane. **ONE SENTENCE**

Ronaldo, 33, has not played since **spraining his ankle during the El Clasico** draw with Barcelona earlier this month but could feature against Villarreal in La Liga on Saturday. **ONE SENTENCE**

Real will attempt to win their third straight Champions League title when they meet Liverpool in Kiev on 26 May. **ONE SENTENCE**

"Right now he is 120%," said Zidane. **ONE SENTENCE; QUOTE**

"He is fine. If Cristiano is 120% that's fine with me." **TWO SENTENCES; QUOTE**

Long Paragraphs

Culture is a patterned behavioral response that develops over time as a result of imprinting the mind through social and religious structures and intellectual and artistic manifestations. Culture is also the result of acquired mechanisms that may have innate influences but are primarily affected by internal and external environmental stimuli. Culture is shaped by values, beliefs, norms, and practices that are shared by members of the same cultural group. Culture guides our thinking, doing, and being and becomes patterned expressions of who we are. These patterned expressions are passed down from one generation to the next. Other definitions of culture have been offered by Leininger (1985a, 1985b, 1991), Leininger and McFarland (2002), Spector (1996, 2000), and Andrews and Boyle (1996). According to Leininger (1985a, 1985b, 1991) and Leininger & McFarland (2002), culture is the values, beliefs, norms, and practices of a particular group that are learned and shared and that guide thinking, decisions, and actions in a patterned way. Spector (1996) contends that culture is a metacommunication system based on nonphysical traits such as values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, language, and behaviors that are shared by a group of people and are passed down from one generation to the next. According to Andrews and Boyle (1996, 2002), culture represents a unique way of perceiving, behaving, and evaluating the external environment and as such provides a blueprint for determining values, beliefs, and practices. Regardless of the definition chosen, the term *culture* implies a dynamic, ever-changing, active, or passive process.

Cultural values are unique expressions of a particular culture that have been accepted as appropriate over time. They guide actions and decision making that facilitate self-worth and self-esteem. Leininger (1985a) postulates that cultural values develop as a

Shorter Paragraphs

Outbreaks of herpes zoster, also called *shingles*, are caused by a reactivation of the varicella virus. After an initial outbreak of varicella (chickenpox), the varicella zoster virus incorporates itself into nerve cells and lies dormant after patients recover from the initial infection until it is reactivated years later. Between 600,000 and 1 million people develop shingles each year. About 50% of people who live to age 80 will have an outbreak at some time in their life. Persons at increased risk are those taking immunosuppressive medications and those with weakened immune systems, including elderly patients and those with AIDS, Hodgkin disease, or diabetes.

Symptoms of herpes zoster include unilateral distribution of herpetic vesicles along the affected **dermatome** (nerve pathway) of a few segments of spinal or cranial peripheral nerves. (See Figure 25-7.) These vesicles usually develop on the trunk or, sometimes, the face or head. Lesions are described as acutely painful and may burn or itch as well. Other symptoms may include fever, chills, headache, and malaise, depending on the dermatomes involved.

Diagnosis is based on characteristic appearance. Diagnosis may be confirmed by a culture of secretions or, more rarely, by the presence of antibodies in the blood.

Treatment for herpes zoster includes antiviral drugs, such as acyclovir, which reduce viral shedding and the severity and duration of the outbreak if administered within 3 days of onset. Other medications may include corticosteroids, analgesics, and antipruritics.

The duration of outbreaks may last from 10 days to 5 weeks. A potential complication of herpes zoster is postherpetic neuralgia, which is persistent nerve pain that lasts for months after lesions disappear. Fortunately, repeated outbreaks of shingles are uncommon.

Working With Quotes

- (Cont. from yesterday)
- The purpose of interviewing is to gather **information and quotes:**

31

Using quotations

- Add **flavor, detail, emotion, information.** Usually, readers or fans want quotes to provide **reaction** and **insight** (e.g., *Why were changes in tactics made?*)
- Allow the writer to **tell a story through sources** while remaining neutral. Quotes express opinions, thoughts that the writer cannot afford to say

32

Direct quotations

- **Direct quotations** are exact (word-for-word) accounts of what a person said. Enclosed in **quotation marks** and **attributed to the source**.
- Express a person's emotion or opinion; the more colorful, the better:
Bobby Knight, college basketball coach: "If the NBA were on channel 5 and a bunch of frogs making love were on channel 4, I'd watch the frogs, even if they were coming in fuzzy."

33

Direct quotations

- Not all quotes will be as colorful, but avoid clichés:
 - "Winning is so exciting"
 - "This was a total team effort."
- Not interesting, suggest the journalist has not really done their homework (ask about the game!)

34

Paraphrase

- **Summarizes** what a person said **without** changing the meaning
- Not word-for-word – no quotation marks
- Used to **shorten** a long quotation, or better explain a quotation that would otherwise be difficult to understand
 - Less colorful than the previous example
 - Also used with foreign athletes

35

Paraphrase?

- Mike Krzyzewski: “I think the reality of having been in those situations in the league, really in over half of our games, we have been losing or just about to lose. It is tough to simulate those types of situations and you have to experience them. So far this year we have experienced them in a positive way and again you’re experiencing them today. Our team turned out into something positive, which is good toughness on our part.”

36

Paraphrase

- Better:
Krzyzewski said his team has benefited from playing in many close conference games and has become tougher.
- 17 words over 76; space to provide details, other quotes, additional and noteworthy details



Quote vs. paraphrase

- Quote: Exact words as spoken by the source.
Use “quotation marks”
- Paraphrase: Change wording.
Do not use quotation marks

Attributive verbs

- Comments (direct quotations *and* paraphrases) **must always be attributed**: Credit a source for information, explain where information comes from
- **Said is the most appropriate verb**
 - Other verbs carry shades of meaning which *may or may not* be accurate
 - **Avoid**: Shout, state, assure, smile, mention, comment, etc.

39

Attribution

- Credits a source for information; explains where information comes from
- Direct quotations and paraphrases **must always be attributed**
- The preferred verb is “**said**”
 - Clear, concise, and neutral
 - Does not imply, does not offer opinion
 - Cannot be misinterpreted
- Other words can **change meaning** or **imply** a source’s emotion even when the actual emotion is not clear

40

Attributive verbs

- “You are always an injury or two away from being pretty average,” the coach cried.
 1. Cry: to utter inarticulate sounds, especially of lamentation, grief, or suffering, usually with tears
 2. To weep; shed tears, with or without sound
 3. To call loudly; shout; yell (sometimes followed by out)

41

Attributive verbs

- If necessary, describe **facial expressions** or other behavior made when speaking those words. Let the reader decide (content, context) how the speaker might have sounded:
 - “The play worked well for us,” the coach said.
 - “The play worked well for us,” the coach said, while smiling.
 - “The play worked well for us,” the coach said, nodding his head in approval.

42

Conveying emotions?

- Convey perceptions – **YES**. Make up content or exaggerate with them – **NO**.
- Support your descriptions with examples:
- You **don't know** how they **feel**. What you **do** know is what they **tell you**, what you **see**, how they **behave**.
 - “They are crying:” Tears of sadness, joy, relief, disbelief?

Review

- Writing: Attract casual fans, appeal to experts
- Facts and information vs. opinion
 - Facts are verifiable. Three sources, or leave it out.
- Short sentences: subject-verb-object
 - Easy to read (within reason). Also in broadcasting.
 - 5 x W and H
- Short paragraphs
 - One-two sentences, easy to read, access points
- Quotations, paraphrases and attributions: **said**