



This is a contribution from *CULTUS : the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication* 2010 :3. © Iconesoft Edizioni – Gruppo Eurosan Italia s.r.l. TERNI- Italy

This electronic file may not be altered in any way.  
The author(s) of this article is/are allowed to use this PDF file to generate printed copies to be used by way of offprints, for their personal use only.

---

---

---

# *Cultus*

THE JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL  
MEDIATION AND COMMUNICATION

---

IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION 2010, Volume 3

Iconesoft Edizioni  
Terni - Italy

---

Registrazione al Tribunale di Terni  
n. 11 del 24.09.2007

Direttore Responsabile Agostino Quero  
Editore Iconesoft Edizioni  
Finito di stampare da Tipografia Vighi & Rizzoli - Bologna  
nel mese di dicembre 2010  
ISSN 2035-3111

© *Iconesoft Edizioni – Gruppo Eurosan Italia srl*  
*via Garibaldi 89 – 05100 Terni*

La realizzazione di questo volume è stata resa possibile grazie al  
contributo dei *Monti dei Paschi di Siena* in collaborazione con  
*l'Università del Salento*



---

# CULTUS

*the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication*

2010, Volume 3

IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION

*Editors*

*David Katan*

*University of Salento and University of Trieste*

*Elena Manca*

*University of Salento*

*Cinzia Spinzi*

*University of Bologna*

ICONESOFTE EDIZIONI

TERNI

---

# CULTUS

*the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication*

## Editorial Board

Michael Agar

*Ethknoworks LLC and University of Maryland, College Park, USA*

Patrick Boylan

*University of Roma 3 and SIETAR*

Andrew Chesterman

*University of Helsinki, Finland*

Delia Chiaro

*University of Bologna (SSLMIT), Forlì, Italy*

Nigel Ewington

*WorldWork Ltd, Cambridge, England*

Maria Grazia Guido

*University of Salento, Italy*

Raffaella Merlini

*University of Macerata, Italy*

Robert O'Dowd

*IALIC and University of León, Spain.*

Anthony Pym

*Intercultural Studies Group, Universidad Rovira I Virgili, Tarragona, Spain*

Helen Spencer-Oatey

*University of Warwick, England*

---

Federica Scarpa  
*University of Trieste*

Christopher Taylor  
*AICLU and University of Trieste, Italy*

David Trickey  
*TCO s.r.l., International Diversity Management, Bologna, Italy*

Margherita Ulrych  
*University of Milan, Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy*



---

## Table of Contents

Foreword	8
To be or to be perceived? Identity and Integration: an Introduction <i>Cinzia Spinzi</i>	9
A conversation on cultural identity and integration <i>Milton Bennett interviewed by Patrick Boylan</i>	17
A Bourdieusian Perspective on Identity and its Role in Second Language Acquisition <i>Niamh Kelly</i>	45
<i>Habitus</i> , self-identity, and positioning: The multifarious nature of study abroad <i>Jane Jackson</i>	65
Subliminal Messaging in Multimodal Newspaper Editing The case of the 2008 US Presidential Election on the Front Pages of the <i>New York Times</i> and the <i>Washington Post</i> <i>Anna Bianco</i>	79
MEDIATING Italy: the construction of Silvio Berlusconi's identity <i>M. Cristina Caimotto</i>	99
Negotiating LBGT identities in Italy: an intercultural perspective <i>Franco Zappettini</i>	115
Hofstede's cultural dimensions: Italian national identity in ELF usage <i>Costanza Cucchi</i>	137
Notes on contributors	159
Guidelines for contributors	163



## Subliminal Messaging in Multimodal Newspaper Editing

The Case of the 2008 US Presidential Election on the Front Pages  
of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*

Anna Bianco

### *Abstract*

*The front page of a newspaper generally contains what its editor considers to be the most important “news of the day”. The front page is known to be a multimodal setting for a whole series of headings, subtitles, articles, reports, news flashes, photographs and other images that are placed together in apparently random fashion. The readership knows little about this layout structure that goes much beyond a general awareness that the most important news is “carried” in a top/central position on the page with large-print headlines, whereas the less important topics are below to one side (and sometimes centrally) in a smaller type size.*

*Specialists in news reading and writing, for their part, know that there is much more to a page and that the multimodal choice of similar topics and related structures also constitute what is known as “newsworthiness”.*

*A few other studies have also looked at the “less important” items reported on the front page and have shown that even unrelated items are actually carriers of the same message or theme as the main items, though without the readers being consciously aware of what is going on. These “unrelated” news items or “implicit topics” are in fact non-casual subliminal messages chosen and designed by the editorial staff as an intrinsic part of the theme of the page as a whole.*

*This paper therefore intends to explore how subliminal messaging was actually used by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* during the US Presidential election campaign 2008. The conclusions to be drawn about this sort of editorial manipulation and subjective reporting, especially during key ideological*

---

*moments like political elections, will hopefully enhance our critical awareness and further debate.*

## 1. Introduction

Most textbooks and manuals that deal with journalism (Hartley 1982, Faustini 1995) agree that the news published in newspapers is selected according to specific criteria. The basis for this choice is often referred to as “newsworthiness” or “news-value” (first mentioned in 1973 by Galtung and Ruge) but, as Fowler rightly points out, “there is always a feeling, in reading newspaper materials [...], that the specific texts are ‘about’ something else” (1991: 170).

When Fowler stated this, however, he was referring to individual articles, whereas Calabrese and Violi (1984), Violi (2004) and Bianco (forthcoming) have shown that on each page of a newspaper (“Corriere della Sera”, “Repubblica”, “The Guardian”, “The Times”) the various items of news, even those seemingly different, are actually linked together by a common ‘theme’ or “topic” (Eco 1979). Hence the aim of this work to analyse and to verify if this device or ‘frame’ may also be found in American newspapers.

So, how is it exactly that the reader of a newspaper can grasp the theme or themes that are suggested by the newspaper? Studies in cognitive psychology are helpful. They state that “the semantic association between words is automatic” and operates both at the conscious and subconscious level (Falvo 2003). Indeed, it is claimed that “considerable evidence suggests that subliminal presentations can influence the recognition of semantically-related words” (Epley 2005; see also Falvo 2003). They also state that the closer the relationship between words and images, the quicker the semantic association is made” (Falvo 2003, Epley 2005).

Similarly, another study has shown through a “technique known as *conceptual priming* that the effect of this priming is achieved through exposure to a concept, a category, a personality trait or a stereotype which, in a successive moment (or context), apparently unconnected to the first, can unknowingly influence the way we assess and judge it socially” (Falvo 2003: 22).

On the basis of the above premises, this paper will attempt to show that a single page or several pages of a newspaper can automatically

create a whole series of semantic associations, concepts and consequently value judgements. In order to do this, the newspapers themselves use many words that are in some way connected between themselves as a means to giving emphasis to one particular concept or *theme* rather than another.

## 2. Methodology

In this paper, two US daily newspapers are analysed, namely the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Their front pages are examined to show how a theme is constructed through a stylistic analysis that takes into account all of the components of a page, from the words to the photographs. To make it easier for the reader of this paper to understand a newspaper text creating associations for the American reader, a familiar topic has been chosen, namely the American presidential election campaign.

For the sake of clarity and in order to avoid possible misunderstandings or misinterpretations, it should be stressed that, even though the journalists who were writing and collaborating within the same newspaper may have been of different political orientations, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* themselves were pro-Democratic. Indeed, the former clearly supported Hillary Clinton with a public endorsement on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, whereas the latter officially came out on the side of Barack Obama on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

Only the front pages of these two newspapers<sup>1</sup> are examined – those of the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2008. They have been specifically chosen because they were published the day after the Primaries in Ohio, Rhode Island, Texas and Vermont (and the caucus in Texas as well). This had been an interesting day, not only because it saw the announcement of the last three front-runners in the presidential race (Clinton, McCain, Obama), but also because, and above all, it did not see the Democratic

---

<sup>1</sup> In order for the reader to make reference to these front pages, two links (kindly authorised by [www.newseum.com](http://www.newseum.com)) have been inserted:

[http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/hr\\_archive.asp?fpVname=NY\\_NYT&ref\\_pge=gal&b\\_pge=1](http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/hr_archive.asp?fpVname=NY_NYT&ref_pge=gal&b_pge=1) and

[http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/hr\\_archive.asp?fpVname=DC\\_WP&ref\\_pge=gal&b\\_pge=2](http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/hr_archive.asp?fpVname=DC_WP&ref_pge=gal&b_pge=2)

---

nomination of Barack Obama. The breaking news of the day was that Hillary Clinton had won after 11 consecutive defeats.

# THE NEW YORK TIMES (A)

Step by s Step, ... (5a)  
Broader U.S. Role(6a)

(2a) CLINTON TAKES OHIO ...

EASILY;  
McCAIN

G.O.P. NOMINATION TO ...



P1a

CLOSE TEXAS  
RACE  
(3a)

Fight Against  
Obama  
Will Continue  
Huckabee Out  
(4a)

Senator John McCain, at a rally Tuesday night in Dallas, claimed the Republican nomination (1a)

Easily Overlooked Lesions Tied To  
Colon Cancer, Study Finds  
(9a)



In 2 Battlegrounds  
Voters Say, Not Yet  
(8a)

P2a

Hillary Rodham Clinton,  
triumphant in Ohio (7a)

THE 2008 CAMPAIGN

## INSIDE

(13a) Abbas Rebuffs U.S. on Talks



P3a

Chávez Employs  
Colombia Feud  
As Flashpoint  
for Feud With U.S.  
(12a)

(Ruth Lopez gives her student Abigail  
Ortega... 10a)

Next Question: Can Students Be Paid  
to Excel? (11a)

### 3. Analysis: the *New York Times*

Beginning with the *New York Times*, the analysis starts with the key components of a page, that is to say “the three elements that arrest eye movement in a newspaper (...) photographs, graphics and headlines” (Hodgson 1987: 44). First of all, in the upper section of the page, we have a large photograph (P1a), which is of Sen. John McCain, with the following caption: “Senator John McCain, at a rally Tuesday night in Dallas, claimed the Republican nomination” (1a). This is preceded by the main headline “Clinton Takes Ohio Easily; G.O.P. Nomination To McCain” (2a), with two subtitles on its right “Close Texas Race” (3a) and “Fight Against Obama Will Continue – Huckabee Out” (4a). There is a further headline to the left “Step by Step, Bush and Fed Move on Mortgage Rescue” (5a), followed by its subtitle “Broader U.S. Role Is Seen in Aiding Rescue” (6a).

In the central section of the page, there is a smaller photograph (P2a), directly under picture (P1a), showing Hillary Clinton with the caption “Hillary Rodham Clinton, triumphant in Ohio” (7a). On the right-hand side, there is the political column “News Analysis” with the title “In 2 Battlegrounds, Voters Say, Not Yet” (8a), whereas on the left there is the headline “Easily Overlooked Lesions Tied To Colon Cancer, Study Finds” (9a).

In the lower section of the page, finally, there is a third photograph (P3a) that is the same size as picture (P1a), showing a classroom in a school with a woman teacher and two girl pupils in the foreground. The caption reads “Ruth Lopez gives her student Abigail Ortega a certificate showing her earnings from test scores” (10a), followed by its headline “Next Question: Can Students Be Paid to Excel?” (11a). There is another headline to the right “Chavez Employs Colombia Feud As Flashpoint for Feud With U.S.” (12a) and, lastly, at the bottom left of the page, 5 news flashes in the “Inside” column.

Roland Barthes, at the beginning of his book (1985: 5) notes that “in newspapers, the photograph is a message” and “the text *guides* the reader between the meanings of the image, making him avoid some and perceive others; by means of an often subtle *dispatching*, he is guided as if by remote control towards a meaning that had been chosen a priori” (1985: 30).

So, having briefly seen the photographs (P1a, P2a) and the related captions (1a, 7a), one word stands out notably for its strong connotation,

which is the word “triumphant” placed under Hillary Clinton’s picture, automatically *guiding* the reader to stop and look at the Senator of New York State more carefully. The same thing happens with John McCain, in that in picture (P1a) the reader is ‘led’ in a certain sense to note the Republican candidate’s smile and pose by means of his supporters’ out-of-focus placards on the right of the photograph *pointing* directly at his face.

In this way, the reader is induced to compare and notice the more spontaneous smile of the Senator from New York State, her gaze towards the left of the picture and her open right hand placed on her heart. Equally the reader notes the rather contained smile of the Republican Senator John McCain (similar to the one on the balloon above his head), his gaze directed at his viewers and the same right hand, this time stretched out with his palm faced downwards towards the public, in the same direction as the readers.

As far as pictures are concerned in general terms, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 122, 123) distinguish between “demand images” and “offer images”. Demand images are those in which, on an imaginary level, “the participant’s gaze (and the gesture, if present) demands something from the viewer”, whereas with offer images “the viewer is not object, but subject of the look, and the picture ‘offers’ [sic] the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, object of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case” (1996: 124).

In the light of these considerations and on the basis of the order according to which the *New York Times* displays the main headlines from the top of the page “Clinton Takes Ohio Easily; G.O.P. Nomination to McCain” (2a), “Close Texas Race” (3a), “Fight Against Obama will Continue – Huckabee Out” (4a), “In 2 Battlegrounds, Voters Say, Not Yet” (8a), the newspaper clearly aims to show both Hillary Clinton’s and McCain’s emotional response after the news of their respective victories and, of course, how they feel about their chances as they “continue [their] fight against Obama”.

More precisely, in picture (P1a) McCain seems to be ‘allowing’ himself a somewhat more contained expression than that of his adversary on the page (P2a), as if he were already planning his next step. As such, he is ‘demanding’ his public/his potential readers to “continue” to support him till the very last “nomination” – as president this time. In contrast, Hillary Clinton seems to be enjoying the moment and has

stopped to thank *heartily* all her electors for an unprecedented day in every sense, since it allows her and her supporters to share a personal and a collective *triumph* all together.

Also, if attention is focussed on the headlines (2a), (3a), (4a), (8a), and if the newspaper only alludes to Hillary Clinton's percentage obtained in Texas versus McCain's in the subtitle (3a), the readers may also infer a certain lack of importance. Even vaguer results are given later on in "in 2 battlegrounds..., Not Yet", (8a), the word "Ohio" next to the adverb "easily" in the *first* line of the opening headline, all of which do convey the importance of the news item but, at the same time, it enables the newspaper both typographically and metaphorically to play down the news of her victory in Texas. Not for the reason that her victory in Texas was unimportant; quite the contrary, it was rather to play down, or indeed hide – as in (8a) too – the news that Texas had not actually been the overwhelming victory that everyone had expected and, consequently, there was not very much to be happy about.

Upon closer inspection, however, the subtitle "Close Texas race" (3a) refers to Hillary's and Obama's results but, at the same time, the message remains the same. It is surely not mere coincidence, rather, that the pro-Clinton newspaper does not print – as the *Washington Post* does – the graphics showing the results for each candidate clearly listed.

The omission of Hillary Clinton's results in Texas against Obama in the main headline also helps the readers/newspaper focus on another important 'news of the day' item, which seems to echo Hillary Clinton's message at a rally in Ohio the day before the polling. It is repeated over and over throughout the first four paragraphs of the main article (2a): "No candidate in recent history – Democratic or Republican – has won the White House without winning the Ohio primary".

Consequently, the adverb "easily" in the opening headline (2a) and the expression "not yet" (8a) aim to underline that her time to leave the presidential race has not "yet" come. Quite the contrary. It recalls that US history points to her as the likely winner over Obama.

The headline in (9a) "Easily Overlooked Lesions Tied To Colon Cancer...", which appears on the left, repeats the adverb "easily", thus linking it to the main headline of Clinton's taking Ohio and taking away the attention from headline (3a) about Texas. Throughout the article (9a), from the introduction where the expression "easily overlooked" first appears, all the paragraphs repeat the same concept over and over,



in an attempt to make the readership think that Hillary's chances were underestimated and that she is a real threat to Obama.

If we take articles (9a) and (8a), respectively to the left and right of Hillary Clinton's photograph/article, characterised by strong concepts like "death" and "not yet", the reader's eyes inevitably focus on the central photograph and the emotion shown by the Democratic candidate in picture (P2a): a mixture of tenderness and happiness together, a feeling of 'having made it'.

The two headlines (5a) and (6a) are linked to another two on the page, "Chavez Employs Colombia Feud As Flashpoint for Feud With U.S." (12a) and the first headline of the "Inside" column "Abbas Rebuffs U.S. on Talks" (13a), in that they 'share' certain words, like the "U.S.", "Bush", and "Washington". Furthermore, beyond the words, the three headlines deal with the same theme, namely successful "agreement" and unsuccessful "talks" with Bush as always the common component.

The repetition of the word "feud" in the headline (12a) and the repeated use of synonyms implying action like the verbs "to employ" and "to use" guide the reader towards this article to help him "see" what else Bush has actually done, compared to the slowness ("Steps by steps...", 5a) of his measures against the mortgage crisis which is *diametrically* opposed in terms of positioning on the page:

"He [Bush] used the diplomatic crisis *to push* [my italics] the Congress to approve a Colombia trade deal that has languished for more than a year because of concerns among senior Democrats over human rights abuses there." (12a)

"However much they might oppose it on ideological grounds, the Bush administration and the Federal Reserve are *inching* [my italics] closer toward a government rescue of distressed homeowners and mortgage lenders." (5a)

At this point, (5a), as it is to the left and running along the opening picture (P1a) with the headline "G.O.P. Nomination/McCain" (2a), clashes with McCain's *quick* smile and plans on how to continue his campaign without losing his supporters. At the same time, the newspaper also leads the readers to interpret the upper part of the *New York Times* in terms of the opposition between what is "the Given" and what is the "New relation" (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 181-192),

whereby “the left is the side of the ‘already given’, something the reader is assumed to know already, as part of the culture, or at least as part of the culture of the magazine, [image, newspaper...].” The aim then of the pro-Clinton newspaper is once again to remind the electors/readers of what the incumbent president Bush has done and, on the right, what another potential Republican candidate for the presidential “nomination” (McCain) could do.

Between articles (12a) and (13a), as already mentioned above, there is the third photograph (P3a) that *focuses* on three females (a teacher and two students) who have clearly Hispanic names and traits (its caption says “Ruth Lopez gives her student Abigail Ortega a certificate...”, 10a), and, more precisely, on a smiling student who is looking at her teacher while she is about to receive her “certificate showing her earnings from test scores” (10a).

As the photograph is placed close to words like “Texas”, “Bush” (who as we know is from Texas), “Chavez” and “Colombia”, the reader might easily think that the photograph had been taken in a school in Texas or south of the border. In fact, surprisingly, it is a school in the State of New York which, surely not by chance, is where Hillary Clinton is Senator:

“New York City, with the largest public school system in the country, is the forefront of this movement, with more than 200 schools experimenting with one incentive or another. In more than a dozen schools, students, teachers and principals are all eligible for extra money, based on students’ performance on standardized tests”.

In the above quotation, both the semantics and syntax of the verb “experimenting”, together with the use of the present tense in the caption and in the photograph, seem to convey the idea that a woman represents not only the future (“Next Question”) but is already a *present* and tangible reality for the American people. This concept is further enhanced by the use once again of the right hand (as in pictures P1a and P2a) being used by the woman to hand over education and well-being to future generations.

The fact, then, that the third picture (P3a) is placed between the headline “Abbas Rebuffs U.S. on Talks” (13a) and the headline “Chavez Employs Colombia Feud As Flashpoint For Feud with U.S.” (12a) implies (see Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 216, 217) that it is a woman who will be dealing with the problems of the world: on the left, there is

the real and tangible “Next Question” on how to mediate between Palestine and Israel (13a), whereas, on the right, there is the “Next Question” of how to deal with the Chavez-Bush crisis (12a).

**THE WASHINGTON POST (B)**

(2b) Clinton Beats Obama in Texas and Ohio;  
McCain Clinches Republican Nomination

Huckabee  
Leaves Race  
(3b)



(P1b)

Democrats Now  
Look to  
Pennsylvania  
(4b)

“The contest begins tonight,” Sen John McCain, with his wife, Cindy,  
told supporters in Dallas after clinching the Republican nomination  
(1b)

OBAMA: Setback Could Mean  
Costly Battle with Two Opponents (6b)

CLINTON: Back Against the Wall,  
Former Front-Runner Pushes On (7b)



P2b

Her arms raised in victory.... Last night gave her a much-needed boost (5b)

No. of growth reports	CLINTON	OBAMA	HUCKABEE	McCain
TEXAS	36%	51%	47%	36%
OHIO	80%	55%	43%	32%
RHODE ISLAND	57%	58%	41%	22%
VERMONT	47%	38%	60%	14%

**CAMPAIGN 2008**

**CANDIDATE SLOOPS:** In turbulent times, the Clinton campaign hangs on in Ohio. *Dana Milbank's Campaign Sketch*, A11

**NO COUNTRY FOR DEMOCRATS:** Why do Ohio's farmers favor Republicans? There are many answers in the voices of voters. *Style*, C1

**LATE RETURNS:** Results, analysis and discussions all day on [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

**INSIDE**

Cancer Risk Stays After Hormone Therapy (9b)



P3b

Packers' Brett Favre Calls It  
Quits(8b)

Drop in Applications Test D.C. Area Private Schools  
(10b)

#### 4. Analysis: the *Washington Post*

The *Washington Post*, like the pro-Clinton *New York Times*, prints three photographs on its front page, the first two of which are very similar: in the top centre position there is a photograph of John McCain (picture P1b) – smaller than the *New York Times*’ – with the following caption: “‘The contest begins tonight,’ Sen. John McCain, with his wife Cindy, told supporters in Dallas after clinching the Republican nomination” (1b). Both are under the main headline “Clinton Beats Obama in Texas and Ohio; McCain Clinches Republican Nomination” (2b) with two straplines on either side (to the left, “Huckabee Leaves Race”, 3b, and to the right “Democrats Now Look to Pennsylvania, 4b).

The centre page is likewise dominated by a photograph (P2b) of Hillary Clinton – interestingly, much more extended than the *New York Times*’ – with the caption: “Her arms raised in victory, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton faces an adoring crowd in Columbus, Ohio. Among those onstage with her, from the left, are daughter Chelsea, Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-Ohio), former senator John Glenn, and Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland. Last night gave her a much-needed boost” (5b). The photograph is under two other headlines – separated by a vertical line – one set to the left which reads “Obama: Setback Could Mean Costly Battle With Two Opponents” (6b), the other to the right “Clinton: Back Against the Wall, Former Front-Runner Pushes On” (7b). (As already mentioned in the previous analysis, under the central picture (P2b), there is on the left a graphics with the electoral percentage the poll in the four states for each of the three final candidates).

The lower section of the page has a small photograph to the centre left of an American football player (P3b), the “quarterback” Brett Favre. It has the heading “Packers’ Brett Favre Calls It Quits” (8b), which itself is under the standing line “Sports”. On the other side, at the same height, there is the news item “Cancer Risk Stays After Hormone Therapy” (9b), under which can be found the last article “Drop in Applications Tests D.C. Area Private Schools” (10b).

As in the *New York Times*, the first association of ideas that is conveyed is strong and juxtaposed in the main captions as well as in both pictures (P1b, P2b): “The contest begins tonight” (1b) and “...Last night gave her a much-needed boost” (5b).

The “offer image” (P1b) displaying McCain, this time, suggests, as in the previous newspaper, that the Republican candidate is ‘allowing’ himself a more relaxed smile for the satisfactory result, being aware though that a harder campaign (“contest”) was still there waiting for him to “begin” (“tonight”, “...after clinching the Republican nomination”, 1b). On the other hand, even though the “demand picture” (P2b) shows Hillary Clinton in a more *triumphant* mood than in the *New York Times*, the focus is still much more on the past (“last night/gave/much-needed boost”).

Moving on for a moment to the opening headline (2b), the reader cannot help noticing that, unlike the pro-Clinton paper, the *Washington Post* does not omit the news about Hillary Clinton’s “tight” victory in Texas. On the contrary, it inserts it in the foreground, that is to say, in the first line of the opening news before her “decisive” victory in Ohio. In this way, a greater contrast between the “slim” victory in Texas and the more important one in Ohio is created.

The contrast is even more noticeable when the reader notes that, in the second line of the leading paragraph in (4b), under the main headline (2b), the word order of the names of the two states is inverted (“Ohio and Texas”), as it is on two other occasions in (7b). In the graphics just below picture (P2b), on the other hand, it remains unchanged, coming first in the list of the four states. Furthermore, by means of bold capital letters and blue and red circles for the Democratic and the Republican party respectively, the graphics also draw the reader’s attention to the fact that, in contrast to McCain’s four red-circled wins, the only missing blue is actually ‘in’ Texas. The effect here is clearly to play down the news of Hillary Clinton’s unexpected and more important victory in Ohio (picture P2b). In this way, picture (P2b) shows that Clinton’s victories, though “needed” and clearly displayed at an emotional level (by her eye contact with the viewers, her open smile, her raised hands), were not enough to give her a sufficient number of delegates to hope to “beat” Obama. Thus, the exaltation shown in the photograph actually disguises what the victory really means. In other words, the newspaper invites the reader to keep picture (P2b) in the right perspective, which is clearly disproportionate if compared to McCain’s picture (and his victory) in (P1b) and even more to both McCain’s and Hillary Clinton’s pictures on the front page of the pro-Clinton newspaper (P1a, P2a).

The size of picture (P2b), more so than (P1b) and both pictures in the *New York Times*, also enables the *Washington Post* to include more than one participant, thus leading the viewer to *also* notice, on the extreme left, Clinton's daughter Chelsea, and thereafter to look for husband Bill on the right of the picture, corresponding to picture (P1b) which has McCain's wife on the right of the photograph. This device helps the reader note the former President's quite predominant 'presence' in the picture, as well as his weight in Hillary' campaign (his name is also mentioned in 4b).

In headlines (6b) and (7b), similar words and expressions are repeated such as "setback", "back against the wall", creating a link to the "quarterback" in the third photograph (P3b). This photograph clearly gives an idea of sport and provides a key to understanding the juxtaposition of elements in the rest of the page: there is the Republican team led by McCain (Huckabee at this point has been sent off, 3b); then there is the Democratic team with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. McCain's "two opponents" belong to the opposite team but, at the same time, they are adversaries themselves.

Upon closer inspection, the vertical line between (6b) and (7b) also helps the viewer to see, in terms of the "Given-New relation" (Krees and van Leeuwen, 1996), that on the left, in (6b), the newspaper adds nothing more than what is "known already" about Obama's campaign: he is still in the presidential race and still in "a protracted two-front war" (first paragraph in 6b) against Hillary Clinton on the one hand and McCain on the other.

The remote chance ("could") that Obama then has from that night on to clinch the Democratic nomination quickly clashes, typographically and metaphorically, with the right side of the picture, which has the *news of the day* about Hillary Clinton's decision to continue ("pushes on") her race. And yet, this news does not actually say anything *new* about Hillary Clinton's campaign: rather, by the very first sentence in the opening paragraph (7b), it implies some doubt about the wisdom of such a decision:

"As Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton raced from border towns to farm community trying to salvage her troubled presidential campaign in recent days, staffers at her Arlington headquarters were awash in mixed feelings about whether she should go on"

a doubt which is repeated over and over in later paragraphs:

“Defeats in both of the big states would spell the end. But the prospect of a split decision or close results generated sharply different judgments from strategist about her future”/ “the tight vote in Texas signalled she may yet face a tough decision in coming weeks. The slim margin in the Texas popular vote and an additional caucus process in which she trailed made clear that she would not win enough delegates to put a major dent in Sen. Barack Obama’s lead.”

The newspaper thus aims to show that, notwithstanding all of these factors, Hillary Clinton is somewhat obstinately continuing her campaign, even though she now has her “back against the wall” (7b) and is still nonetheless the “former front-runner” (“former” being the operative word here) as pictured in headline (7b).

Immediately below picture (3b) and the graphics, a bold line – not infrequent in the *Washington Post* – seems to separate the different items of news on the page. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 216, 217) argue, however, that “the repetition of colour in different elements is [a] key connection device”. In the *Washington Post*, for instance, by running along two other “apparently unconnected elements” in bold, the black frame line guides the reader also to focus on the word “Inside” above the third picture (P3b), then down to the headline “Packers’ Brett Favre Calls It Quits” (8b) and then again, to the right of it, the headline (9b). Indeed, these three elements - the third picture and headlines (8b) and (9b) - are separated by no more than a thin bright frame line this time.

The third picture (P3b) displays, this time, the serious face of a young football player, namely “the 38-year-old charismatic quarterback”, who is already a veteran in his football team and thus *decided* to retire (8b). The suggested analogy with Sen. McCain’s age is clear, but it may be extended equally to his more senior Democratic adversary Hillary Clinton, as she obstinately refuses to withdraw from the race.

Next to picture (P3b) and the foregoing article (8b), the reader cannot help noticing the following headline “Cancer Risk Stays After Hormone Therapy” (9b) which seems to introduce a completely new and different topic (if it is seen beyond the bold black line from P2b and 7b): “Menopausal women who took estrogen and progesterone faced a small increased risk of cancer for more than two years after they stopped...”

It *indirectly* alludes to the real “risk” (the word appears no fewer than 7 times in the article) that this represents for women in general and for



Hillary Clinton as a woman. This should be compared with the *New York Times*, which highlighted the metaphorical risk of Clinton as Obama's opponent ("Easily Overlooked Lesions...", 9a). Similarly then, in the pro-Clinton newspaper, the inclusion of the article (9a) within the typical frame lines used by the *New York Times* to separate 'unconnected news' (a double line, made up of a bold and a less visible one) and next to the picture (P2a) displaying Hillary Clinton suggests an ever more semantic association ("Tied", 9a) between the two elements on the page.

The other "unconnected" article on schooling (10b), instead, talks about "a shrinking pool of younger students" applying to an elite private school in the Washington area. It is a sombre picture of education during the recession and seems in almost direct opposition to the *New York Times'* optimistic article on paying students to excel.

In the article on schooling (10b) expressions like "Others are *rethinking the way we do business ...*", "And as fears of a *recession* spread, other schools are slowing down tuition increases and looking for *other ways* to raise *money*", "Some schools are *cutting* programs, some are looking at class size and *we are looking for ways* to generate *revenue*" clash again with the "news of the day" about Hillary Clinton. According to the newspaper, instead of *pushing on* "her campaign mired in debt" (7b), she "*could avert*" (6b) "costly battles" (6b) and a "protracted" waste of public and private money for her campaign, as well as Obama's and McCain's too. As a result, the newspaper seems to be at odds with Hillary Clinton's decision to continue her presidential race and with her apparent enthusiasm in the picture (P2b), thus underlining a real contradiction between the financial situation of the USA and her promises/deeds:

"Clinton, *her back to the wall*, played the role of aggressor, challenging Obama on his readiness to be commander in chief and *chastising* him on *trade* and health care".

## 5. Conclusions

To sum up, on the one hand, it has been argued here that news items on the front pages of national newspapers are selected according to precise criteria, giving priority to the "Impact" factor as demonstrated by

Stone (1987: 57 ). On the other hand, it has also been the aim of this paper to show that the newspapers themselves connect up the news in order to create a theme and then indicate “how to interpret the many different news items, including those that are apparently unconnected” (Violi, in Lorusso & Violi 2004: 52) by means of a whole series of linguistic devices and typographical choices (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). Through similarity and opposition of not only words and concepts but also the closeness or distance of the positioning of the news, the editors manage to favour certain concepts or themes with respect to others.

How much these choices, these designs, actually influence the way readers think and, consequently, the way they vote is impossible to say and it is certainly not within the scope of this paper. Other factors play an important role in determining such influences, such as “the reading of the same or different newspapers on a daily basis” (Murialdi 1982: 23), the influence of family and schooling, as well as “the cultural and psychological expectations that determine the choice of a given code” (Eco in Faustini 1995: 25).

Having said this, however, Eco again (1979) recalls that the interpretation of a text, in general, is always the result of cooperation between both the author(s) and the reader(s), even though a text is usually interpreted with a certain degree of unambiguity.

In conclusion, returning to Fowler, this paper has attempted to show that newspapers do indeed try to “silently offer” what is clearly “the ideological position” of the newspaper (Fowler 1991: 232). What emerges is a very complex puzzle made up of a whole series of linguistic and metalinguistic devices that the ordinary readers may not consciously notice, but which nevertheless are designed to influence them.

## References

- Barthes, R. 1985. *L'ovvio e l'ottuso*. Turin: Giulio Einaudi.
- Calabrese, O., Violi, P. 1984. “Il giornale come testo”. In M. Livolsi (ed.), *La fabbrica delle notizie. Una ricerca sul “Corriere della Sera” e “La Repubblica”*. Milan: Franco Angeli, pp. 104-151.
- Eco, U. 1979. *Lector in fabula. La cooperazione interpretativa nei testi narrativi*. Milan: Bompiani.
- Epley, N. “Science or Science Fiction?: Investigating the Possibility (and

- 
- Plausibility) of Subliminal Persuasion". In D. Elrod (Ed.), 2005, Cognitive Studies/Computer Science/Psychology/201/Cognitive Science in Context Laboratory. Laboratory Manual, in <http://www.csic.cornell.edu/201/subliminal/>
- Falvo, R. 2003. *Tecniche di priming subliminale nella rivelazione di pregiudizio e stereotipi impliciti*. Bologna: Pàtron.
- Faustini, G. (ed.). 1995. *Le tecniche del linguaggio giornalistico*. Rome: Carocci.
- Fowler, R. 1991. *Language in the News. Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Hartley, J. 1982. *Understanding News*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Hodgson, F.W. 1987. *Modern Newspaper Editing and Production*. London: Heinemann.
- Kress, G., Van Leeuwen, T. 1996. *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Lorusso, A.M., Violi, P. 2004. *Semiotica del testo giornalistico*. Rome & Bari: Laterza.
- Murialdi, P. 1982. *Come si legge un giornale*, Rome & Bari: Laterza.
- Stone, G. 1987. *Examining Newspapers. What Research Reveals about America's Newspapers*. Newbury Park: Sage.

## Websites

[www.csic.cornell.edu/201/subliminal/#nutsbolts](http://www.csic.cornell.edu/201/subliminal/#nutsbolts)  
[www.newseum.com](http://www.newseum.com)  
[http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/hr\\_archive.asp?fpVname=NY\\_NYT&ref\\_pge=gal&b\\_pge=1](http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/hr_archive.asp?fpVname=NY_NYT&ref_pge=gal&b_pge=1)  
[www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/hr\\_archive.asp?fpVname=DC\\_WP&ref\\_pge=gal&b\\_pge=2](http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/hr_archive.asp?fpVname=DC_WP&ref_pge=gal&b_pge=2)

\* Quotations taken from works in Italian have been translated by the author of this paper.

