CRIME NEWS IN BRITISH PRESS: EXPRESSING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE STATUS OF CORE PARTICIPANTS

Renata Jančaříková

Abstract
The paper presents a study of naming and referring strategies as they were manifest in crime news reports in four British national dailies (both broadsheets and tabloids). The focus is on the representation of victims and murderers, achieved mainly by attributing and projecting positive and negative status to core participants. It is shown in our study that in addition to providing information, newspapers also present and promote views and attitudes, which are communicated mainly via the language used. The same event or participants may be presented in different ways. The ways that people are referred to in newspaper discourse can, at least to a certain extent, influence the reader’s perception of the participants as well as the events described, together with the reader’s view of a particular issue. This contribution endeavours to demonstrate how messages and views can be incorporated in the text of newspaper reports by foregrounding of certain characteristics of the participants. The analysis suggests that the choice of naming and referring strategies helps enhance a particular intended effect determined by the type of audience at which the newspaper is targeted, although whether the effect is really achieved or not depends solely on the reader, since it is highly individual what inferences the reader will make.

Key words
naming and referring strategies, newspaper discourse, victim/criminal dichotomy, tabloids, broadsheets

1 Introduction
The primary function of the press is to provide readers with information on current events. From the reader’s point of view, obtaining information is the main motive for reading newspapers. Modern media, however, have several other functions, among which opinion formation and entertainment rank as the crucial ones (Diller 2002). A newspaper article does not necessarily fulfil only one of the functions mentioned above, although one purpose should, at least theoretically, be the central one. For example, when reading a report the reader expects an