

# **Aspects on future Television: an experiment on how to produce readability and perceived comprehensibility in a sport television broadcast**

J-O Gullö, Södertörn University, Sweden 2012

The purpose of this paper is to present results from an experiment in TV production. This experiment is a pilot study in a larger research project that aims to examine various aspects of intelligibility, readability and perceived comprehensibility in sports television. The over all purpose is to develop knowledge about production techniques for television production in general and live broadcast TV sports in particular, which takes account of intelligibility as an important aspect of how viewers perceive a TV broadcast. A further aim of the project is to investigate whether there are universals in terms of television production in general and live broadcast TV sports in particular and to develop methods for how knowledge of such phenomena can be used in practical production work.

This project has its origins in a successful collaboration around a television production-training project between industry representatives from various Swedish TV production companies, national broadcasters and academics. One experience from this television production-training project was that there is a lack of current relevant research on television production in general and in particular for live broadcasted television production of sporting events.

During an Ice Hockey game in the Swedish First League, Elitserien, an experiment was conducted to test how the tempo of a sports broadcast is experienced depending on camera framing. The director of the broadcast gave the cameramen instructions to have a slightly tighter framing than is customary. This was done during the first period, one third of the game. However, the instruction was clearly not to make an extreme difference from what is customary as the experiment was conducted during a live broadcast in national television. The purpose of the experiment was primarily to investigate technical production aspects and, therefore, the editorial staff, journalists and Ice Hockey experts, was not pre-informed that the experiment was conducted. This led to an unexpected result. The journalists and expert commentators in the TV studio who followed the match off-tube, they were not in place in the hockey arena, experienced much higher tempo in the match compared to how the match commentator and expert commentator who were present in arena reported from the game in live. The experiment was reported to journalists and expert commentators during an industry-led training seminar for sports journalists and expert commentators in January 2012. Selected parts of the broadcast were shown to the participants where the live commentators perceptions of the match was clearly different from how those who watched the game on television experienced the match. After the presentation a discussion followed about whether it is ethical to, for example, through advanced methods produce a sporting event as more fast-paced and perhaps even more interesting than it actually is. One general opinion was that more research is needed on questions like this.

This ongoing project is expected to provide results that can be used to develop improved methods for television production in general and live broadcast TV sports in particular. Another expected goal is in this project is to develop new theoretical knowledge as well as new practical knowledge about mobile live television production. Such knowledge may well be the basis for future educational efforts, not only in higher education but also in training and retraining journalists and technical production staff.