

Abstract

Using comparative qualitative critical discourse analysis, this research maps the media's stereotyping and framing of athletes with disabilities. This paper focuses specifically upon the coverage of the Summer Paralympic Games by four Czech (formerly Czechoslovakian) newspapers from 1948 to 2008. A great deal of research has been published in foreign literature about minority topics in the media, but it usually pertains to the media's representation of gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. This research attempts to broaden the spectrum of those topics. The theoretical basis of this analysis consists of theories about discourse, media representation of social groups and framing.

This research also uses additional methods such as a brief quantitative mapping of media texts and interviews with sports editors-in-chief of four Czech newspapers between 1992 and 2008.

According to the results of this research it seems that even though the topics and the people in the news change over time, the style of media stereotyping and framing stays the same. The media's representation of athletes with disabilities is influenced more by the interaction between a discourse of health or "normality" and a discourse of disability within the discourse of sports journalism than by any political regime. The dominant frames within the 60 years studied are that of otherness, "softnewsness", and protectiveness.