Original Paper

"Reporting or Interpreting?"—A Discoursal Study of Broadcasts on NBA Games in China

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Abstract

From the perspective of empirical discourse analysis, this paper identifies the site broadcasters' roles and cognitive blending process in NBA (National Basketball Association) broadcasts in China. The authors find that NBA broadcasters chiefly interpret the information they have obtained from sports sites and interviews with the coaches and players, employing various interpreting strategies, such as commentary, amplification, supplementation and restructure. Cognitively, the language that NBA broadcasters applied reveals their cognitive blending process of interpreting techniques, strategies, sports knowledge and attitudes towards the games, of who take up different roles to fulfill different communicating purposes, all of which project various cognitions on NBA games. Despite the fact that one role might make certain linguistic behaviors prevail over the others, especially their interpreting role, NBA site broadcasters coordinate it with other roles properly through which they present different levels of translational and constructional schematicity, thus yielding a coherent and constructional working mode of NBA broadcasting practice in China.

Keywords

NBA game, NBA broadcaster, interpretation, cognitive blending process

1. Introduction

Many academic studies on sports broadcasts are dedicated to the study of the history, development trend, features of sport programs, or qualification requirements of broadcasters. Having analyzed the communicative quality and effects of TV-sports broadcasters through methods such as content analysis and questionnaires, Ran and Lin (2009) express great concerns of broadcasters' lack of interpreting proficiency in foreign languages. Fan (2014) conducts a research on sport TV broadcasters, who notes that many former professional athletes influx into the TV channels as reporters or commentators. She pinpoints the shortcomings of reporters/commentators, including the absence of proficient interpreting skills and abilities whenever the need arises, echoing the view held by Ran and Lin (2009). Many other studies addressing the features of TV broadcasters have a common propensity to solely focus on the reporting performances under either Chinese context or foreign language context concerning news broadcasting. While Li (2008) explores the professionalism of news broadcasting and sports, and the balance of the two, Zhou and Tian (2013) jointly conduct a research on the linguistic features of NBA (National Basketball Association) broadcasters. As Van Dijk (1997) remarks, nevertheless, the main stream of news reporting is about politics, economy and military while news reports on sports and other subjects only account for a small part. Studies on sports discourses in linguistic field are comparatively insufficient and lack of empirical linguistic studies.

From a cognitive perspective, the authors analyze the interpreting performances and strategies that the broadcasters of 2014-2015 NBA Finals conducted on site via CCTV-5 (China Central Television 5, the most authoritative and upscale sports channel in China), aiming at providing feasible analytical versions of NBA broadcasting discourses with an attempt to explore their reporting roles and cognitive blending process in their interpreting performances.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sports Discourse Studies

Sports discourses are characterized by information related to the latest events in sports circles, including training and updated physical conditions of athletes, pre-match predictions, real-time reports, box scores, post-game evaluation of the performances of specific players, together with the strategic plans of coaches, entertaining side stories, eye-catching trade rumors, the establishment and revision of sports regulations and so on. Sports coverage not only disseminates new information concerning sports events, but also allows readers and audiences to witness human's surmounting challenge, transcending themselves as well as pursuing perfection and victory which make the sports report an excellent channel to demonstrate and transmit humanistic spirits. Riding this trend, a wealth of discourse analyses of sports news have emerged over the years, and sports news has been analyzed from perspectives of pragmatics, communication, interactional sociolinguistics, and ethnography by many linguists and scholars, such as Dana et al. (2011), and Yoshiaki and Yasuo (2000). In China, Wang

(2013) endeavors to explore the linguistic features of sports news discourses in the aspects of ideational function and interpersonal function, whilst Li and Li (2010) conduct a comprehensive research of the anaphora phenomenon and NP anaphora in Chinese and English sports news, decipher the cognitive mechanism of NP anaphora construction, and probe into the functions of metaphor and metonymy in sports discourses from a perspective of cognitive linguistics. Similarly, through a contrastive cognitive linguistic study of Chinese and English sports news discourses, Liu and Liu (2005) have analyzed metaphors and their functions, summarizing three major functions of metaphors in sports news discourse: textual function, aesthetic function and social function. They find that the SPORTS CONTESTS ARE WARS metaphor exhibits cross-cultural similarity and universality. Moreover, it potentially exerts a negative influence on social function and leads to sports enthusiasts' misunderstanding of sports contests by neglecting the essence of sports. Hence, promoting cross-cultural communication and furthering the cause of sports are essential parts for international sports development and cooperation.

Although the number of studies on sports news discourse is constantly on the rise, few academic efforts have been devoted to the combination of sports reports and interpretation field, especially in terms of on-site oral sports reports which make them all the more necessary to analyze sports reports to figure out the broadcaster's linguistic application in reports and their reporting skills.

2.2 Relevance Theory and Cognition

The relevance theory is initially proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1995), on the basis of Grice's (1975) cooperative principle, which figures prominently in the modern pragmatics. The practice of mere decoding linguistic meaning will lead to the failure of deciphering implicated messages that are deeply interconnected with specific context and cognitive environment. Sperber and Wilson (1995, p. 2) propose an inferential model, in which "communication is achieved by producing and interpreting evidence". In communication, speakers will provide evidence of intention to engage in conversation and of messages to be expressed, through which audiences may infer the messages delivered by speakers via combining the commonly shared cognitive knowledge. However, the referential model would make little sense in the absence of decoded messages or linguistic signals in the communicative discourse. The success of the communication, from the standpoint of ostensive-inferential model, hinges on the cognitive context which from the perspective of relevance theory extends far beyond the ongoing cognitive context and environment where the communication takes place. It is a set of psychological assumptions constituting the cognitive environment of the audience and covering all the knowledge, known facts, and cognitive capacity of people engaged in the conversation. Under the relevance theory, during communication, the cognitive context is a fluid notion undergoing constant changes of supplementation and expansion. In practice, the non-demonstrative inference, which is proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1995), is the main form of deductive method in people's cognition and verbal communication, even though the premise may be inadequate. It is clear that the lack of

adequate implicated premise will lead to different cognitions and yield more than one explanation. There are three ways to complete the implicated premise: to expand the context by adding necessary background knowledge; to expand the context by using the aforementioned message; to expand the context by looking into surrounding context for more information.

Relevance theory is based on the assumptions so that every utterance is open to various cognitions and explanations, some of which will take greater effort to come up for the audience. It is "the principle that every utterance creates an expectation of relevance" (Wilson, 1994, p. 47). For another, relevance hinges on two main factors: contextual effect and cognitive processing effort. As Sperber and Wilson (1995) see it, the former is defined that "an assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect in that context" (p. 122). As for the latter, the contextual effect of assumptions is achieved through efforts required to process the context. The "processing effort is a negative factor: other things being equal, the greater the processing effort, the lower the relevance" (p. 124). In accordance with relevance theory, in the ostensive-inferential model, to the end of realizing informative intention and communicative intention, the communicator, with the interest, expectation and the cognitive capacity of the addressee in his or her mind, will resort to producing the most relevant stimulus which requires the smallest amount of processing effort in the context to the addressee, so that "it is mutually manifest that the communicator intends it to be manifest to the addressee that she has chosen the most relevant stimulus capable of fulfilling her intentions" (p. 157). Based on an in-depth study of relevance theory, Gutt (2014) proposes that in translation, what were expressed can be identified and inferred from communicative clues arising from semantic representations, phonetic and syntactic properties, semantic constraints on relevance and so on. He claims that given a comprehensive theory of inferential communication, there is no need for a special and distinctive general translation theory, which leads to both praises and criticism. Gutt's call to move from semiotics to an inferential paradigm of communication concerning translation remains a challenge for many. The debate continues, and this present research may demonstrate a new perspective concerning translation/interpretation and cognitive process involving thought and knowledge blending, which may bring out more clearly the unique mandate of translation/interpretation in practice.

2.3 Cognitive Blending and Translation/Interpretation

Interpretation, as a kind of translation in a broad sense for communication, is considered as a process of information decoding from source language to target language in traditional translation theory, which projects directly and indirectly the blending process of site broadcasters. This viewpoint bears stunning resemblance with the code model of communication and its deficiencies which might include failure to explore into implicature and ignorance of dynamic contexts and the cognitive competence of receptors. According to Fauconnier and Turner (2002), although elements and vital relations from diverse scenarios and perspectives are "blended" in a subconscious process, such a process is assumed to be ubiquitous in everyday thought and language. Having studied media reports, Yang et al. (2018a, 2018b)

argue that meaning making should be considered as a broad concept that pertains to cognitive, linguistic and social abilities, meanwhile, communicators' linguistic selections for cognitive constructions as a factor influencing language applications, presenting diverse news discoursal stances. Therefore, translators or interpreters might be obliged to look beyond the mere word-for-word or message-for-message correspondences and rendering.

Cognitive blending is a building process of an integration network which involves setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared knowledge, projecting backward to input information, recruiting new information to the blend, and running various linguistic operations in the blending itself (Fauconnier, 1994; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). The underlying idea of blending is that people conceptualize by constantly integrating information from different domains of knowledge and experience. From the perspective of cognitive blending, though translation or interpretation also falls into the category of ostensive-inferential communication, it is much more complicated due to its inter-language and cross-cultural properties and it is a double ostensive-inferential and blending process. To expand its connections with Sperber and Wilson's (1995) relevance theory, the authors notice that relevance emphasizes the roles of communicator and addressee in the negotiation of messages—hence of blends. Fauconnier and Turner (2000) approach blends in a predominantly textual manner, however, uptake is governed by many pragmatic factors. In addition, the notion of language use being fundamentally a "joint project" between communicator and addressee (Clark, 1996) is a pragmatic factor pertinent to blending theory concerns. Garcia (2001) proposes that the application of relevance theory in translation is just a preliminary step to the theory and practice of translation, which is then made to crystalize in valid criteria which may orient the translator in the decision-making process, which may project the blending process. During the process, three parties are involved: the original writer, the translator and the Target Language (TL). In the first round of ostensive-inferential communication, the writer is the sender with communicative intentions, who strives to make manifest and relevant to addressees, while the translator is the message receiver who spares no effort to pursue the optimal relevance between the writer's intention and the context after processing the message, then blending it with necessary knowledge or information the translator may have obtained earlier. In the second round of ostensive-inferential communication, based on his/her understanding of the author's intention, with the TL receptor's cognitive competence and expectation in mind, the translator transmits the author's intention to TL receptors in the hope of recreating the contextual effect intended by the writer. And then the TL receptors will make inferential and blending effort to grasp and comprehend the context without extra burden. Therefore, in light of the cognitive blending and relevance theory which offers clear and plausible explanations for the process of interpretation, communicators, interpreters and translators are expected to both seek the optimal relevance in the source language contexts and recreate the optimal relevance for the listener without costing the listeners more processing effort than intended by the speakers. Nevertheless, the blending

process or the application relevance from the cognitive perspective needs further empirical studies and analyses.

3. Data and Research Subjects

3.1 Data

This research analyzes the broadcasting transcriptions of NBA broadcasters. The attainment of the video materials of the 2014-2016 NBA Finals is the first step of data collection. After collecting all the video materials, the authors carefully examine all the videos and transcribe the reporting performances of the broadcasters. Through careful examining and transcribing the reporting discourses from the video of 2014-2016 NBA Finals presented on CCTV-5, the authors collect a proximately 9000-word transcript with 27 segments. The detailed number of words and the segment of the transcript in each of the 6 games for this study are shown in Table 1.

Table1. Number of Words and Transcript in Each Game

Game Number	Host Team	Guest Team	Home Court	Game Result (with host team in the front)	Transcript Number	Words Number
G1	Golden State Warriors	Cleveland Cavaliers	Oracle Arena	108-100	1	1200
G2	Golden State Warriors	Cleveland Cavaliers	Oracle Arena	93-95	2-5	812
G3	Cleveland Cavaliers	Golden State Warriors	Quicken Loans Arena	96-91	6-9	1300
G4	Cleveland Cavaliers	Golden State Warriors	Quicken Loans Arena	82-103	10-13	1040
G5	Golden State Warriors	Cleveland Cavaliers	Oracle Arena	104-91	14-17	1184
G6	Cleveland Cavaliers	Golden State Warriors	Quicken Loans Arena	97-105	18-27	2870

3.2 Subjects

For 2014-2016 NBA Finals, CCTV-5 sent experienced broadcasters to the US for on-site reports, whose professional qualifications include:

1) Mastery of basketball background knowledge with smooth access to up-to-date information about the teams in games.

2) Bilingual proficiency in both Chinese and English, coupled with certain interpretation capabilities.

3) Rich broadcasting experience in helping audiences understand the playing strategies, game plans and lineup adjustment made by coaches or players on site.

4) Psychological resilience. The subjects are expected to be strong and resilient without panic. Although broadcasters might make some interpreting mistakes, they should keep things going on without any noticeably long period of silence or confusion.

4. Analyses of the Broadcasts on NBA Games

According to CEO of NBA China, David Shoemaker, in the 2013-2015 season, every one of two Chinese audiences watched at least one NBA game. Such a large number of NBA audiences impose tremendous challenge for Chinese NBA site broadcasters who conduct reporting, interviewing, and interpreting work on NBA games to cater to various audiences' entertaining needs.

4.1 Interpretation on Interviews

There is no doubt that both players and coaches will speak basketball language, namely the basketball jargon and terminologies in match scenarios. Besides, there are always controversial fouls and rulings involved on the courts. If a certain senior referee is interviewed, he will present even more complicated and professional explanations of rules and fouls. Generally speaking, most audiences are lack of the expertise which is crucial to understand the intended meaning of the interviewees' utterances. Thus, an on-site broadcaster, serving as a bridge between the interviewees and audiences, must take up a job of filling up the gap with his/her professional expertise and removing the ambiguity brought to the audience as a staffer. Constantly, Chinese NBA broadcasters conduct interviews with the players and coaches, and then interpret the information to the audiences. This feature can be identified in a CCTV-5 pregame interview with the renowned former NBA player Grant Hill.

Example 1. (G1, Pregame Interview with Grant Hill)

Broadcaster: Hey grant, now is the time for the <u>Finals</u>, what do you think of the experience of <u>Finals</u> influence on this game?

Grant Hill: Yeah, it will be a great atmosphere, eh, the fans will be here in <u>San Francisco</u>, <u>Oakland the bay area</u>. It is so excited for the team. You got the <u>MVP Steph Curry</u>, against the <u>Cavs</u>, and possibly the best player in the game, <u>LeBron James</u>, so it will be an electric atmosphere here in <u>Oracle Arena</u>.

Broadcaster: But the <u>Golden State Warriors</u> have no <u>Final</u> experiences, right? How about that?

Grant Hill: Right. They don't have any <u>Finals</u> experience, so this would be new for them. They have a

coach, Steve Kerr, who's played in a number of Finals himself. But this team, the Golden State, they are the real deal, so they have been just unbelievable this season, and the question is, can they do it for one more series here in the Finals.

Broadcaster: 那么,格兰特•希尔也是说呢,总决赛在时隔 40 年后来到了湾区,这里的球迷,这里有最好的球员,确实会给这只球队带来不一样的感觉。而更重要的是,虽然他们没有总决赛经验,但是他们的主教练史蒂夫•科尔是有总决赛经验的。这可能会带来不一样的感受。(*Well, Grant Hill says that, after 40 years, the Finals return to the bay area where there are fans and best players which will bring different feeling to the team. More importantly, although they have no Finals experience, their coach Steve Kerr has it, so this could bring different feelings.*)

Broadcaster: You know, both teams got for more than one week, right? And who will benefit more? (interview)

Grant Hill: Well I actually think it probably benefits Cleveland more. Cleveland has a shorter bench and shorter rotation. Eh Kyrie Irving who has been struggling with injuries, he gets a chance to get healthy. So I think it helps Cleveland out, this extended rest in between the Conference Finals and the Finals.

Broadcaster: 我刚才问希尔呢,就是两个队都歇一周了,谁更占便宜?他觉得呢,是骑士更占便宜。为什么,因为骑士它的板凳深度更浅,骑士的,它包括欧文,它的伤病能够用这一周的时间尽快的恢复,所以希尔觉得呢,骑士更占便宜。(*I just asked Hill that, as for the two teams, who would benefit more after a week's break. In his opinion, it will benefit Cavs more, because they have a shorter bench and their players, like Irving, can take this week to recover from injuries. So, He thinks Cavs will benefit more.*)

Broadcaster: Ok now the final question. You just said the Golden State Warriors is the just best team in the NBA, and LBJ is just the player of the league, and who will win this series, or who will win this game?

Grant Hill: I think Golden State will win Game 1, and I think ultimately Golden State will win the series.

Broadcaster: Really?

Grant Hill: I do think so, yeah.

Broadcaster: And how about the total score? (interview)

Grant Hill: Total score? I don't know. I think tempo is gonna be key, whoever can control tempo will win. And I think Golden State is just too deep, too talented, I think ultimately they win as NBA Champions.

Broadcaster: 那么希尔也是说勇士会赢第一场,但是节奏将成为决定这个系列赛的最重要因素。我们拭目以待。感谢格兰特•希尔。(*So Hill says that Warriors will win the first Game as well but the tempo will be the most important element in the series. We shall see. Thanks for Grant Hill.*)

In Example 1, the broadcaster, working as a staffer, interviews Grant Hill on his prediction of the coming match, and then interprets the main ideas in his broadcasts. In the reporting, the frequent use of NBA terminologies interpretations is self-evident, including the names of teams, players, home courts, coaches, such as San Francisco, Oakland the bay area, Stephen Curry, Cavs (Cavaliers), Oracle Arena, Golden State Warriors, Steve Kerr, Cleveland, Kyrie Irving, Grant Hill, and other terms about the games, such as Finals, Conference Finals, season, bench, rotation, series and MVP (Most Valuable Player).

In reporting, the staffer, i.e., the broadcaster, explicitly manifests the assumption related to the decoded NBA terms and knowledge, which helps audiences receive the completed propositional meanings about the match. It demonstrates that the staffer must have the mastery of related NBA terms and knowledge about the players and basketball match and combine interpreting and reporting work together, i.e., the staffer interprets his interview with Grant Hill to audiences to fulfill his reporting duty. Therefore, apart from being a broadcaster of the game, the broadcaster firstly works as a staffer to interview the coaches and players, and then interprets what he has obtained from the interview and the intended meaning of the interviewees by using NBA terminologies and his own knowledge on NBA, helping Chinese basketball fans keep up with the match situation and fully comprehend what the interviewed NBA coaches and players have said.

4.2 Supplementation in Interpretation

In the data, we notice that an important mission in the interpreting work of broadcasters is to provide supplementary information to the audience, which can be conducted through the completion of fragmented contexts, though the possibility of the absence of complete context constantly occurs. To be relevant, supplementation method allows an interpreter to use his/her personal knowledge of sports players and coaches, which functions as the background information supplemented for audiences to understand better about the matches. See Example 2.

Example 2. (G6, Championship Awarding Ceremony)

> Doris Burke: You say you don't have time, this series didn't give you time to reflect on all the people who help you get here. Who are you thinking of right now?
>
> Steve Kerr: I am thinking of Lute Olson, I am thinking of Phil Jackson, Greg Popovich.
>
> Broadcaster: 他说你先谢谢谁，你想，就是说鲁特·奥森，是他的大学教练，以及菲尔·杰克逊，包括波波维奇。(*He says, who do you want to thank, or think of first. It is Lute Olson, his coach in university and Phil Jackson, and Popvich.*)

In response to Doris Burke's question, Coach Kerr lists the names of three coaches. The last two coaches are household names in NBA, for they are head coaches for multiple NBA Finals Championships. This is extremely rare, because even winning one championship is good enough to qualify for a prominent spot as a coach in NBA history. Top NBA superstars have played or are still playing under their leadership: Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Kobe Bryant, Shaquille O'Neal under

Phil Jackson, Tim Duncan, David Maurice Robinson, Tony Parker under Greg Popovich, to name just a few. For instance, Phil Jackson has won 11 championship rings, while Greg Popovich has 5 rings in total, but he secured his 1000th victory in February 2016, making him the ninth person who has ever accomplished this feat in NBA. Lute Olson, however, enjoys a less sonorous fame, because he has never been personally involved in NBA games and is a complete stranger to most of the NBA fans in China. Successful and respectable as he is, Lute Olson has been devoting himself to the coaching duty in university basketball teams and the USA National Basketball Team, which is less known by Chinese audiences. Owing to this background information, audiences have to pay extra processing effort in order to figure out who Lute Olson is. If they regard this piece of information as an important one, they will frame this knowledge in their cognition on this NBA game and search for the possible relevance to the game result.

Therefore, the simple transliteration of his name would make no sense for Chinese NBA audiences. Nevertheless, Lute Olson's name is too important to be ignored or skipped, as he was Kerr's head coach back in his time at the University of Arizona. It is understandable that as Kerr's coach, Lute Olson provided him with great insights into the game, taught him basic basketball concepts, ideas and strategies, which Kerr later developed into his own skills, and assisted him in owning a wonderful career as a noteworthy NBA player as well as a unique NBA coach who won his championship ring in his rookie season. Such background information is perhaps unknown for the majority of the NBA audience in China, because it dates back over two decades ago—many young fans are not familiar with the names of shining NBA superstars and legendary players back in the 1980s and the 1990s.

To deliver the relevant messages successfully, the broadcaster is obliged to supply additional information while they are doing interpretation so as to smooth the processing effort of hearers. The additional interpretation of "他的大学教练 (*His coach in university*)" would achieve optimal relevance for the audience that Lute Olson is an important and remarkable person in Kerr's coaching career, who might be more important than the legendary Phil Jackson and Greg Popovich to Kerr. The audiences may know that Steve Kerr is a grateful man who has not forgotten his college head coach, even after he has surmounted the peak in NBA. This demonstrates how relevant the vital background knowledge could be for interpretation in such a scenario, including historical information of subjects and contextual situation, because the loss of the underlying context is tantamount to the absence of the informative and communicative intentions delivered by Steve Kerr regarding to his appreciation to his university coach.

The analysis of Example 2 illustrates that a broadcaster's role in practice is more of an interpreter than a broadcaster, as he or she provides extra information which would have been left out if he/she simply reported what the interviewee has said to the audience. In reality, Chinese NBA broadcasters must accumulate an incredible amount of basketball-related knowledge for their working purposes. When the confusing part of a conversation shows up, a broadcaster can quickly make assumption about the

audience's cognition and identify some of their hearers, i.e., when his/her audience is deficient in receiving relevant information and inabilities to infer the intended meaning of the speakers. Their prior roles as interpreters motivate them to be both bilingual and skillful in interpretation, i.e., to be professional in interpretation by using various interpreting skills and strategies, to facilitate the inferring process of the mass audiences.

4.3 Commentary in Interpretation

Except the incompleteness of information in reporting, sometimes in NBA courts, coaches tend to speak too briefly to be simply interpreted accordingly. The broadcasters who have advantages of basketball knowledge, bilingual capability and being on site over the audience must fulfill their relevant roles in interpretation, adding certain information to provide audiences with commentaries, illustrating the coaches' unspoken and implied messages based on their own cognition. For example:

Example 3. (G3, Golden State Warriors down by 7 Points)

Doris Burke: What did you do defensively?

David Blatt: We just make things hard. No need to get to complex battle. We just hop in guards, we just make every shot a tough one, a contested one, and make them work.

Broadcaster: 现场记者也是问布拉特两个问题，第一个是，哎，勇士进攻这么差，你们防守做了什么？(*He asks Blatt two questions as well. The first is, uh, Warriors' offensive is so poor. What did you do defensively?*)

Broadcaster: 就是说我们防守呢，不见得要把每个球都防下来，不见得每个球都要盖个帽，就是要让他难受，让他打到这个出了投篮的机会，每出个机会你都要付出很大很大的努力，付出很大很大的代价，这个就行了。(*That means, on defense, we did not need to block every passing or every shot. We just need to make it tough for them, every time they take the chance to shoot, it would cost them huge effort. That's enough.*)

There are many differences between Chinese and English expressions shown in syntactical, grammatical and lexical use. In NBA broadcasting, to fulfill their relevant roles in interpretation, broadcasters may add their own comments in their interpretation, based on their own experiences and understanding to illustrate the coaches' implied messages. In Example 3, the broadcaster employs comments several times. The first comment appears when the broadcaster poses the question about the Cavaliers' defense: "What did you do defensively?" This question is open to two interpretations:

Version 1: "What did you do defensively to contain Warriors?" and

Version 2: "What did you do defensively to allow so many points?"

The first interpretation of the commentator demonstrates the inquiry into Cavaliers' defensive strategies and tricks, while the second one tends to be the retrospection of defensive flaws and loopholes. When processing the information with ambiguous interpretations, the broadcaster may refer to the contextual information if he/she wants to decide which interpretation is more relevant, and he/she firstly takes up the role as a hearer or message receiver, receiving message from the speaker(s), i.e., Doris Burke and

David Blatt. In Example 3, the authors presume the cognitive process as follows: the broadcaster initially infers his intention by combining the situation on the court that Warriors are down by 7, and reaches the conclusion that the first interpretation would be more appropriate. Then, the broadcaster reports what he interprets to the audiences. He provides background information to the audiences to eliminate the possible ambiguity in interpretation. By adding a commentary expression "勇士进攻这么差 (*Warriors' offensive is so poor*)" on Warriors' performance on the court, the broadcaster emphasizes the important role played by Cavaliers' defense to contain Warriors, and naturally eliminates the possibility of audience's misinterpretation of the question into interpretation version 2, which would be unlikely to occur, if the original utterance is only interpreted into "你们防守做了什么？(*What did you do defensively?*)" These commentary expressions greatly release the recipient of his comment, i.e., the audience, from excessive processing effort of deciding the more relevant interpretation between the possible options, and in this case, form the audiences' cognition on the match.

But the interpretation of "No need to get to complex battle" would be a little tricky and brain-racking in this place. Although its literal meaning is as straightforward as it can be, the literal meaning would not make much sense if it is interpreted as "没必要进行复杂的（防守）战争". To make the sentence more readily understandable to Chinese audiences, the broadcaster adds his commentary to the original text by saying that there is no need to try to block every shot, because the broadcaster, based on his own cognitive knowledge of NBA matches, clearly understands David Blatt's implicated meaning that blocking every shot is simply impossible. Rather than waste energy and effort on something beyond reach, the coach would prefer players to "make every shot a tough one, a contested one". It is the ultimate aim of the coach with regard to the defense, so the broadcaster comments with "这就行了 (*That will do*)" to emphasize the coach's focal points. These commentaries form extra relevant information for audiences when they watch the basketball match. By referring to the extra context provided in the commentator's interpretation, the audiences will obtain the coach's implied meanings rather than the literal meanings, which might be easier to be assessed and recognized to ensure the audiences' precise cognition and understanding of the intended information of the coach.

As for the interpretation of "make every shot a tough one, a contested one", it is more readily understandable for audiences than the previous one. Furthermore, the broadcaster adds his commentary "让他打到这个出了投篮的机会，每出个机会你都要付出很大很大的努力，付出很大很大的代价 (*We just need to make it tough for them, every time they take the chance to shoot, it would cost them huge effort*)" to further clarify how "tough" and "contested" the shot should be.

While fulfilling his reporting duty, the broadcaster fully takes advantages of his professional knowledge of the basketball game, explaining polysemic and commentary utterances like "*What did you do defensively?*" to direct the audiences and their comprehension and avoid confusion. By doing so, the broadcaster serves as an interpreter and a facilitator as well, who provides extra and contextual information in interpretation which is sometimes hard to be obtained by those who aren't present on

site. This can be observed in the constant appearance of broadcasters' remarks on the situation on court or the interviewees' opinions. The use of commentary method and the role as facilitator can best fulfill such function, allowing broadcasters share their understanding of the field situation with the audiences and project their cognitive context and intended meaning correctly.

4.4 Amplification in Interpretation

Except the incompleteness of context, coaches and players tend to speak briefly in interviews in which they leave a great space for broadcasters to further elaborate on the match. To fill the knowledge gap on NBA games between sports broadcasters and audiences, broadcasters often use amplification method in their interpretation in order to make their report and interpretation relevant. Owing to the linguistic differences between Chinese and English expressions, broadcasters, based on their working experience, constantly adopt amplification method in their interpretation to help the audience's comprehension of the interviewees' implied meanings. The following is a case of amplification method applied in interpretation.

Example 4. (G3, Postgame Interview)

> Broadcaster: LeBron got another 40 points-game tonight. What do you think about his amazing play?
> Timofey: It's LeBron, you know. It's LeBron.
> Broadcaster: 最后他表示，点评了下勒布朗的表现，他说勒布朗就是勒布朗，他用自己的方式去影响了比赛，他用自己的方式去带动了队友。他会带领着我们赢得胜利。(*At last he commented on LeBron's performance. He says LeBron is LeBron. He will use his own style to influence the whole match, and he will use his way to motivate his own team members. He will lead us to win the match.*)

In Example 4, because the answer from Timofey to the broadcaster is rather brief, the broadcaster gives a much longer version of interpretation by amplifying the interpretation. The amplification might include three implied reasons behind Timofey's short answer: the first is that after playing for thirty two minutes as a major defense player against Warriors, he wished to end the interview quickly and get a good rest soon, so he chose to give brief answer. Another reason is that, as a Russian, despite he had spent 5 year playing NBA games, Timofey still could not speak English as fluently and eloquently as his American teammates, which could be clearly seen from the interview, because he took relatively long pause to figure out right words from time to time, and his pronunciation sounded rather foreign to native speakers. Therefore, perhaps words failed him at that time, or perhaps he just thought LeBron's performance was amazing and he could not find any proper expressions to describe his excellence. Additionally, much has already been said by media dedicated to LeBron's play. Therefore he gave up searching for more concrete and detailed comments on LeBron's performance and concluded with a very brief answer.

From the long reporting utterance, it can assumed that the context on court necessitates a very brief introduction about LeBron James, who has won multiple awards and championships throughout his

NBA career, and has rich experience in joining in different kinds of elite team like the All-Star team, All-NBA team, All-Defensive teams, etc. As a wonderful player, especially after he scored 40 points with 12 rebounds and 8 assists, "It's LeBron" or "勒布朗就是勒布朗 *(It's LeBron)*" may still seem too plain and simple, because it seems that something is still left unsaid or unfinished. Besides, on such a grand occasion with such a feat, most of Chinese basketball fans might expect to hear more complimentary and ceremonial words from the broadcaster who may also believe that he should pick up what is left unfinished and make Timofey's comments and description of LeBron James more concrete and passionate. Therefore, he amplifies by saying "他用自己的方式去影响了比赛，他用自己的方式去带动了队友。他会带领着我们赢得胜利 (*He will use his own style to influence the whole match, and he will use his way to motivate his own team members. He will lead us to win the match.*)" to further demonstrate the outstanding capability and leadership of LeBron to navigate the Cavaliers. Besides, it seems unusual for a Chinese, when asked about opinions on his or her friend's or colleague's great achievement, to simple reply with a rather too brief and impolite answer "这就是张三 (*It's Zhang San*)". It seems that more flattery and compliment words should be uttered to make the person in question sound good especially considering that the Chinese hold personal relations in high regard. Therefore, the broadcaster, acting on his own, interprets Timofey's reply in the eyes of Chinese basketball fans, especially the fans of LeBron James. This interpreting strategy achieves the intended contextual effects and avoids confusion because Timofey would never mean to undermine LeBron James.

The interpretation, starting with three "他(*He*)", sounds momentous and powerful partly due to the use of alliteration and repetition of "他(*He*)". It fits the identity of LeBron James, who is always reputed as "King James" by American media or "詹皇(*King James*)" by Chinese basketball fans. In Example 4, the broadcaster employs amplification strategy to further compliment LeBron's performance in a more detailed way by adding more information, based on his knowledge about LeBron and judgment on Timofey's intentions for praising LeBron. As a result, the broadcaster assumes that more supplementary compliments to LeBron as amplification are needed for building up audiences' cognition and forming their assumption. The interpretation of "It's LeBron" indicates that the broadcaster adds his own cognition about LeBron James in his interpretation, making the compliment on LeBron more recognizable and accessible to Chinese audiences.

In live NBA broadcasting, broadcasters usually have the power to make their own judgments and express their own attitudes. Such power allows them to apply amplifications in interpretations, i.e., NBA broadcasters add their own understanding, knowledge, and judgment in interpretations when knowledge gaps and blanks might exist between the audiences and the games, although the comments sometimes could mislead the ongoing event and situation.

4.5 Restructure in Interpretation

There are huge differences between the construction of English and Chinese sentences and paragraphs.

Chinese audiences tend to be more paratactic, with short sentences illustrating the focal points, while English is rather hypotactic, in which long and complicated sentences are often employed to highlight the subjects. Therefore, for the sake of relevance, broadcasters also adopt restructuring (strategy), namely to reorganize the original word order and structure of source text in an effort to achieve the optimal contextual effect with the least possible processing effort and meet the communicative expectation of audience in interpretations.

Example 5. (G5, Postgame Interview)

Broadcaster: Those 2 teams were small in the last 2 games. But your team became the final winners. So, from your perspectives, what is your secret?

Draymond Green: I mean that's our game, you know we've been doing it the whole year. They fought though, you know, you should give them a lot of credit. It is a great basketball club. And we are not done yet, we still have one more win to get. And it is very tough to get in Cleveland on Tuesday. So it is our focus.

Broadcaster: Golden States haven't got a championship for nearly 40 years. And now you have the championship point. So you now really have a good chance to win the champion for this city. So what's your expectation for Game 6?

Draymond Green: Well, one game at a time. We can't focus on 40 years, and we got to focus one game at a time. And that's Tuesday.

Broadcaster: 在过去两场比赛里，应该说不论是勇士还是骑士，都用小个阵容，都用小球战术去相互制约，但是最后勇士能够成为了最后的胜利者。对此呢，格林也表示，其实这是勇士队一直以来的打法，他们用他们最擅长的篮球赢得了比赛。最后，我让格林也是评价了一下即将到来的第六场比赛有怎样的展望。毕竟，对勇士队来说，在过去的 40 年里都没有染指过 NBA 的总冠军。现在他们终于有机会去创造历史了。对此呢，格林也表示，我们现在你还要一步一步来，我们要专注于比赛本身，<u>毕竟詹姆斯是一个非常可怕的对手</u>，毕竟骑士队是个实力非常强大的对手。他们需要一步一步，为自己赢得比赛。(*In the last two games, both Warriors and Cavaliers were small and adopted small ball strategy but at last Warriors won. For this, Green says Warriors have always been using this strategy and they won the game using the strategy they are best at. At last, I ask Green to comment on the incoming 6th game, after all, Warriors have not got a championship for 40 years. Now they finally got the chance to write new history. For this, Green says, we will do it step by step and focus on the game. <u>James is a very strong opponent and Cavaliers is very powerful.</u> They need to win the game step by step.*)

From the interpretation in Example 5, the broadcaster, when doing interpretation, employs restructuring to suit different ways of expressions. Draymond Green did not forget to pay tribute to Cavaliers after Warriors' victory when he was asked about his team's winning secret. But that is not commonly seen in Chinese contexts, because audiences often focus on the winners rather than the losers. Besides, the tribute-paying part is not really a straightforward answer to the broadcaster's question; it is an

additional explanation of the toughness of the game at best. Therefore the interpreter/broadcaster skillfully moves the part "毕竟詹姆斯是一个非常可怕的对手，毕竟骑士队是个实力非常强大的对手 (*James is a very strong opponent and Cavaliers is very powerful*)" backward to the game expectation part, on the one hand, to suit Draymond Green's intention of tuning down expectation, and on the other hand, to sound humble and cautious. The two merits are cherished and encouraged in Chinese contexts. In Example 5, the broadcaster assumes that Chinese audiences would find the original order of the words obscure and hard to be processed and understood, and assumes that the restructuring of the sentence can help reduce the processing efforts of the audiences to achieve better contextual effect for understanding. In fact, the interpreted version indeed conforms more to the expressive pattern in Chinese, therefore, it is readily acceptable and understandable by Chinese audiences. Thus, in interpreting practice, the broadcaster is obliged to consider the linguistic differences between Chinese and English, restructuring the sentences, making them in accordance with the pragmatic pattern of audiences and their communicative mode to assist audiences in understanding the intended meaning of the utterances without paying excessive efforts.

Such practice in interpretation and reporting work demonstrates that NBA broadcasters also take disseminating roles while working. For on-site broadcasters, reporting on what is going on in the game may be the most important mission in the broadcast, especially in Chinese contexts. The Broadcaster must pay more attention to the transmission/translation of the messages to the audience, considering that they have to deal with not only the knowledge gap between the speakers and their audience, but also bilingual or even multilingual situations. Broadcasting work of disseminators requires broadcasters possess enough NBA sports knowledge, bilingual proficiency and excellent interpretation strategies.

5. Discussion

On account of the above analyses, Chinese NBA broadcasters work as site reporters, interviewers, commentators and interpreters, serving as a bridge linking the TV audiences with the sports courts based on their own cognition on NBA. Among these roles, their interpretation job is the core. They should take the speakers' cognitive environment, NBA background, and players' identities into account while receiving messages from speakers, and infer the intended view of the speakers after combining the utterances, logic links with their own background knowledge on NBA, bilingual proficiency and translating strategies for interpretation, in which their cognition process can be identified. Meanwhile, the broadcasters have a clear comprehension of the features of NBA knowledge, including its nationwide influence, large number of ordinary TV audience and NBA fans, vastly uneven cognitive capacity and potentially instant feedback and comments on social media for figuring out what should be interpreted and what extra information should be added in the interpretation, showing their integrating network and cognitive blending results. With this premise in mind, the broadcasters can anticipate the expectations of the audiences and deliver the speakers' information by using different

interpreting strategies that will not inflict extra effort on the audience's part to digest. In light of these requirements, broadcasters manipulate their language and apply supplementation, commentary, amplification and restructuring for interpreting work, which contains general, specific, and additional messages and implications based on their interviews (objective), what they have seen on site (both objective and subjective), together with their own cognition (personal). Therefore, NBA broadcasters are expected to be under great pressure facing millions of viewers because they must fulfill multiple and complex roles and functions while they are working (see Figure 1).
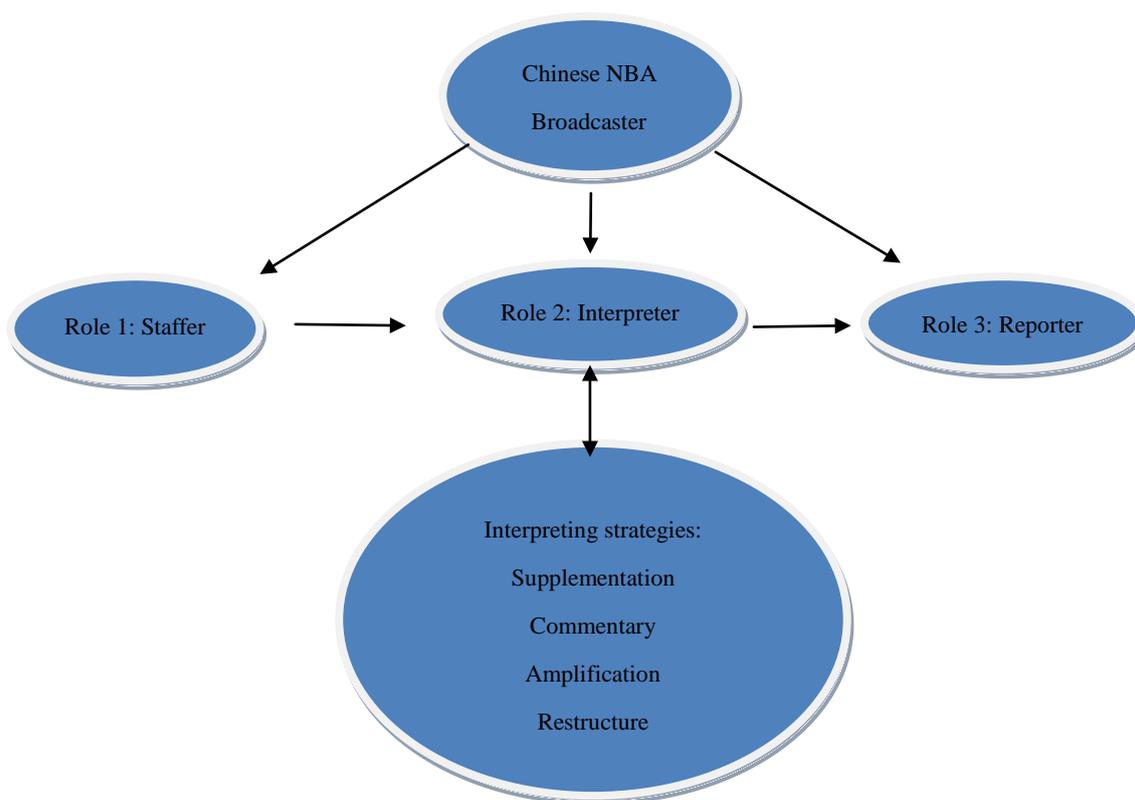
Figure 1. Working Mode of Chinese NBA Broadcasters

While fulfilling their working on site, NBA broadcasters may take the cognitive capacity of the majority of the audiences (given the number of audience, it is basically impossible to cover the cognitive competence of them all) into account in seeking the optimal relevance and constantly changing their working stances: as a facilitator, a commentator, a disseminator and most importantly an interpreter who uses various interpreting strategies in his/her interpreting work. It is predictable that audiences of such a magnitude will span several levels on account of the cognitive competence and understandings of NBA background knowledge, especially the NBA Finals. Finding the optimal relevance and commentator's working stance would imaginably seem brain-racking and challenging for NBA broadcasters. The integrating network and cognitive blending process can be sketched in
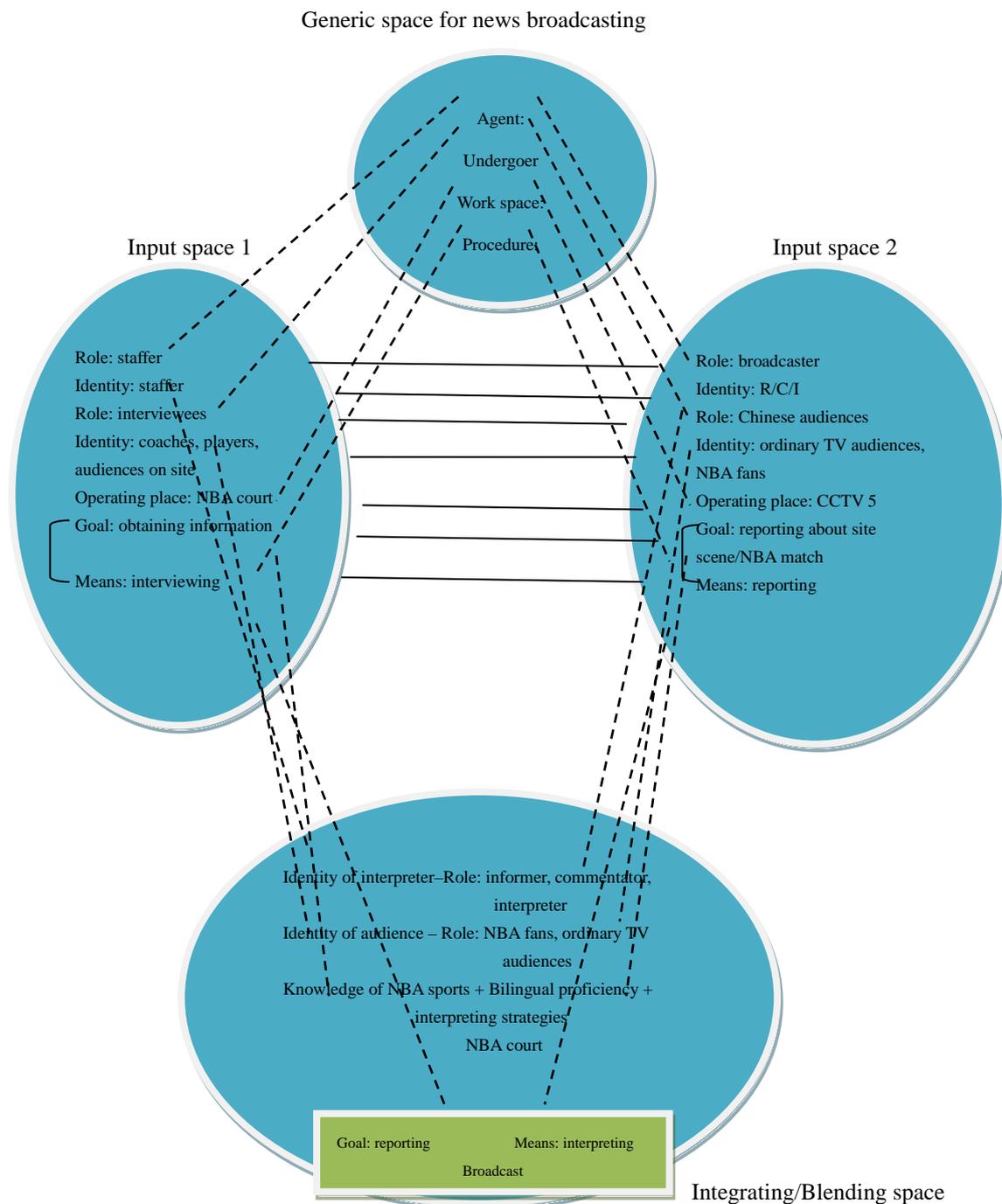
Figure 2.

Figure 2. Cognitive Blending Network of Interpretation by Chinese NBA Broadcasters (Note: R=Reporter/C=Commentator/I=Interpreter)

The cognitive blending/integrating network of interpretation illustrated in Figure 2 arises through an elaboration of the basic elements of the blended space, that is, the interpreters imaginatively and professionally reconstruct a scene in which NBA broadcasters are in charge of reporting, and use their

interpreting techniques and skills to assist their broadcasting work based on their own cognition and years of working experiences: there is a basic compatibility between the goal and the means, which leads to the inference of broadcast competence of NBA broadcasters and their cognitive blending work. However, owing to the fact that NBA Finals are very dynamic, intense and ever-changing, either the working mode or blending/integrating network of NBA broadcasters is not stable and regular as the authors illustrated in Figure 1 and 2, i.e., the working mode and cognitive blending process of NBA broadcasters are determined by their individual qualifications, language proficiencies, and learning/working experience. The trend and momentum of the games could easily swing after one time-out or strong physical contact. Families, home fans, years of sports injuries, the play in the field of players and other outside/inside-the-court factors could also inflict ups and downs on team's performance. These in-court or out-court elements may find their ways in coaches' remarks or broadcasters' questions. Therefore, NBA broadcasters should keep up an eye closely on the courts as well as news from different sources so as to cope with the changing contexts in understanding the coaches' intentions and then interpret them to the audience.

Broadcasters' blending process requires the interpreter or translator to design his/her translation production in such a way that it resembles the original closely in relevant respects, which necessitates the translator's effort to make the contextual effect intended by the original communicator reoccur without imposing extra processing effort in understanding the implicature, underlying message of the communicator. In practice, site NBA broadcasters are disallowed the luxury of extra time for thinking, processing and interpreting, because as the game goes on, the interpreting utterances of broadcasters must follow the situation on the court, and a long-time pause or silence during TV broadcasting is inappropriate. Therefore, the reporting interpreters must instantly respond to important interviews and talks that give rise to audience's attention and require immediate interpretation, and come up with suitable interpretation as quickly as possible. The multiple roles of broadcasters and their cognition on their roles are in fact interrelated, unified and gap-supplying; each of them is important and complements to each other. For example, broadcasters can fulfill their commentating job by doing interpretation, making comments, facilitating the intended meanings and communicative intentions and supplying relevant information with supplementation.

6. Conclusion

Broadcasters' cognition and their cognitive blending process might be the key issues for site broadcasters to fulfill their interpreting job on sports courts. The language that site NBA broadcasters employ in their interpretation reveals their individual linguistic proficiencies, reporting measures, cognition process, and cognitive blending of these elements. Since NBA site reports are naturally distinctive and different from other news reports, this kind of report poses huge challenges to NBA broadcasters in English-Chinese interpretation and cognitive construction during interpreting work.

During interpreting, NBA broadcasters may face the enormous pressure of fault-finding from audiences and they have to take the cognitive capacity of the majority of viewers into account in seeking the optimal relevance. In site broadcasting, NBA broadcasters take up different roles to serve different reporting and communicating purposes, projecting various levels of cognition and blending processes of NBA broadcasters. The roles played by broadcasters will determine how the messages and information are communicated to audiences. Despite the fact that one role might make certain linguistic behaviors prevail over the others, which leads to the emphasis of certain expressions, working patterns, and communicative functions, NBA broadcasters coordinate the roles properly instead of separating them from one another. In other words, each role complements and reinforces the other roles. The integrating and blending process during the reporting and interpretation is a useful mechanism to account for the emergence of cognitive constructions of NBA broadcasters, because it allows them to show how different levels of constructional schematicity yield a coherent and constructionally unique interpretation, reporting and commentary work in NBA broadcasting practice.

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