

On the Processing of Political Editorials*

Tonya Y. E. Schooler
Joel Kennet
Jennifer Wiley
James F. Voss

Beginning with the work of Bartlett (1932), research on text processing has generally favored a constructivist position, the basic idea being that individuals, when reading or listening to a text, construct a mental representation of its contents. Moreover, the contents of the representation have been shown to be a function of the knowledge, as well as the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the individual. Research has further indicated that there are at least two types of knowledge that can be involved: knowledge of the specific subject-matter domain considered in

*This research was supported by a grant from the Mellon Foundation to the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh, and by a fellowship to T. Engstler Schooler from the National Science Foundation (DIR-9113599) through the Mershon Center Research Training Group at The Ohio State University. The views expressed in this chapter are not necessarily supported by any of these organizations. Requests for reprints should be sent to: Dr. James Voss, University of Pittsburgh, 634 LRDC Bldg., 3939 O'Hara St., Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

the text (e.g., Spillich, Vesper, Chiesi, & Voss, 1979), and knowledge of the genre of text structure such as the narrative (e.g., Johnson & Mandler, 1980).

Whereas the preponderance of the text processing research has involved the use of narrative text, there has been interest in how individuals process other types of text, such as expository passages (e.g., Meutsch, 1989). The present chapter constitutes an exploratory study concerned with the processing of yet another type of text—the political editorial—which, in a broader sense, involves the genre of argumentation. The general purpose of the research was to investigate the processing of political editorials in relation to experiential characteristics of individuals.

That the processing of a political editorial is likely to be different from that of other types of text, at least quantitatively if not qualitatively, is suggested by the observation that, going back at least as far as Thucydides, political editorials have been rhetorical in nature, having the goal of persuasion via the presentation of arguments. Given this goal, it seems only reasonable that when reading political editorials, a reader is initially disposed not only to comprehend or understand what the author states, but also to evaluate the editorial's contents. It would therefore be expected that the reader's representation would include the editorial contents as well as the reader's evaluation of the position and arguments presented.

A question that arises with regard to representation development is whether an individual tends to evaluate the editorial's contents while reading it, or whether the reader will perform the evaluation only when the reading is finished. Because, as previously mentioned, readers are likely predisposed to evaluate editorials, it was hypothesized that readers evaluate the contents online. (Such evaluation, of course, does not preclude the reader's developing an overall evaluation when concluding the reading.) In the present study we tested the hypothesis of online evaluation by collecting "think aloud" protocols as individuals were reading an editorial and analyzing the contents of the protocols with respect to evaluative statements. Specifically, we examined the extent to which there were statements of agreement or disagreement and the extent to which such statements were supported by some type of rationale or evidence.

A second hypothesis of the present study, based on the previously mentioned findings involving the role of knowledge, was that both the quantity and the quality of evaluative statements

made during reading would vary with the reader's knowledge of the content domain of the editorial and the reader's experience in the reading of this type of text. This hypothesis was tested by comparing the online evaluation performance of political science graduate students, who presumably had greater knowledge of subject matter and more experience with political editorials, with the performance of psychology graduate students. In addition, the performance of undergraduates in a political science course was compared to that of undergraduates in a psychology course to determine whether the frequency and content of evaluative statements differed among these two undergraduate populations.

One may, of course, argue that evaluation of the truth or acceptability of text content always takes place during the reading of nonfiction or even fiction, and this point is well taken. Nevertheless, it would seem that political editorials would instantiate more of an evaluative set because, in promoting one side of an argument, an editorial writer invites the reader to register agreement or disagreement and to consider the writer's argument in doing so. Furthermore, the reader may either want to find flaws in the writer's argument or learn previously unknown arguments that would strengthen the reader's own position.

In addition to examining online evaluation, the present study was also concerned with the question of how readily individuals were able to recall specific contents of the text; summarize the text contents; state the writer's argument, that is, the main point and how it was supported; and provide an evaluation of the text. Based on previous text-processing findings (e.g., Spillich et al., 1979), it was expected that the political science graduate students would perform better on such tasks than the psychology graduate students, whereas whether the psychology undergraduates and political science undergraduates would differ was open to question. Presumably because of their domain knowledge, the political science graduate students would be better able to perform these tasks than individuals in the other three groups.

In order to determine whether any relation existed between an individual's performance and that person's political views and interest in political events, at the end of the experimental session data were collected from each subject with respect to these topics. It was hypothesized that those individuals having greater political interest, regardless of membership in any particular experimental group, would produce more evaluative

statements while reading the text and exhibit better postreading performance than less involved individuals.

METHOD

Subjects

Sixteen students obtaining course credit for an introductory psychology course, 16 students enrolled in an intermediate political science course, 5 graduate students in psychology, and 5 graduate students in political science served as subjects, with the latter three groups being paid. Although the graduate students were in the two respective departments, the undergraduate students were not necessarily majoring in the two respective departments. Both undergraduate groups had a mean age of 19, whereas the psychology and political science graduate students had mean ages of 30 and 29, respectively.

Materials

Two editorials—one on Mikhail Gorbachev, and the other on the 1990 Gulf Crisis—were selected on the basis that the subject matter was topical and the editorials were likely to be controversial. (The data were gathered in late 1990.) The Gorbachev editorial, by Fred Barnes, was taken from the February 12, 1990 issue of *The New Republic*, contained approximately 990 words, and basically argued that Gorbachev's role in the changes in the Soviet Union was minimal, the changes being the result of his-*toric* forces to a much greater extent. The Iraq article, a syndicated column by Charles Krauthammer taken from the August 17, 1990 issue of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, contained approximately 880 words, and argued that "world order," rather than oil, was the reason the United States was and should be involved in the Gulf crisis. Both articles were edited to a small extent to remove information of authorship and date of publication, and to produce somewhat similar lengths. In terms of their political stance, neither could be judged as either advocating a strongly liberal or strongly conservative position: The former essentially embraced a "systems" view of international change, and the latter, although supporting the U.S. administration's position, presented a specific reason for American action that was more limited than the administration's stand.

Procedure

The subjects in the four previously mentioned groups were run individually in approximately 1-hour sessions with a single experimenter being present. All subjects read both editorials, the order of presentation being counterbalanced within the limitations of the number of subjects per group. After permission to tape record the subject was obtained, he or she was instructed to read the first editorial out loud at a natural rate and to report any thoughts regarding the article's contents that occurred while reading.

After the reading, the experimenter asked a series of questions. The subject's oral responses were tape recorded. These questions requested, in the following order, that the subject provide: (a) a summary of the contents of the article; (b) a statement of the author's main point; (c) a statement of what support the author provided for that point; and (d) a critical analysis of the article, incorporating his or her own reaction to the editorial and providing support for the reaction. The experimenter then asked four content questions to test the subject's memory of the text contents. This procedure was then repeated for the second editorial.

With respect to their political interests and related matters, subjects were asked their age, the number of political science courses they had taken, the extent to which they read newspaper editorials, and the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the U.S. bombing of Libya, the invasion of Grenada, and the invasion of Panama. They were also asked to rate propositions stating that it is the moral responsibility of the United States to intervene in foreign situations to preserve peace, to foster democracy throughout the world, to prevent other countries from developing nuclear weapons, and to stop aggression. In addition, subjects rated the extent to which they considered themselves to be liberal or conservative.

RESULTS

Frequency of Interjections

An interjection was defined as any comment a subject made while reading the text. The interjections varied in length, with completion of an interjection being defined by the return to the reading of the text.

Table 25.1 summarizes the interjection data. The first column presents the number of subjects in each respective group that made at least one interjection, the data showing that not everyone stated interjections. The data do indicate that graduate students were more likely to state interjections than were undergraduates, and that undergraduates in the political science course were more likely to produce interjections than were undergraduates in the psychology course. Specifically, for each editorial 4 of 5 graduate students stated interjections for each article, whereas about 50% or less of the undergraduates stated interjections.

The second data column of Table 25.1 indicates the number of interjections stated. The data indicate that graduate students stated almost twice as many interjections as undergraduates, per person stating one or more interjections, with little difference between the two graduate groups and between the two undergraduate groups. In addition the data indicate that more interjections were made in relation to the Iraq article than the Gorbachev article.

Data related to the hypothesis involving the statement of evaluative interjections are presented in the third data column of Table 25.1. (Two raters established criteria for calling a state-

TABLE 25.1
Number of Subjects Stating Interjections and Number of Interjections Stated

	Subjects	Interjections	Evaluative Interjections	Interjections with Backing
Undergraduates				
Psychology				
Gorbachev Article	3	12	9	4
Iraq Article	8	27	22	5
Total	11	39	31 (79%)	9 (29%)
Political Science				
Gorbachev Article	9	14	12	6
Iraq Article	9	2	16	3
Total	18	36	28 (78%)	9 (25%)
Graduates				
Psychology				
Gorbachev Article	4	30	10	4
Iraq Article	4	37	22	6
Total	8	67	32 (48%)	10 (31%)
Political Science				
Gorbachev Article	3	26	19	12
Iraq Article	4	40	33	19
Total	7	66	52 (74%)	31 (60%)
Article Totals				
Gorbachev Article	19	82	50 (61%)	26 (52%)
Iraq Article	25	136	93 (75%)	33 (36%)

ment evaluative, and an interrater reliability of .86 was obtained. A maximum of one evaluative statement was allowed per interjection.) Of the total number of interjections, almost 80% were evaluative in three of the groups with 48% being evaluative for the psychology graduate students. The political science graduate students thus did not provide a higher percentage of evaluative statements than other groups although their total number (52) was greater (31, 28, and 32, respectively). However, as indicated in the fourth data column of the table, the political science graduate students more frequently provided support for their evaluative statements, both on an absolute (31 vs. 9, 10) and on a percentage (60 vs. 29, 32, 31) basis.

The interjections were also examined with respect to length, broken down by article. For the Gorbachev article, the mean number of words per interjection for the political science graduate, psychology graduate, political science class undergraduate, and psychology class undergraduate were 62, 23, 50, and 31 words, respectively. For the Iraq article the four respective means were 37, 21, 28, and 23. The data thus indicate that political science students, especially the political science graduate students, tended to have longer interjections.

Content of Interjections

The contents of the interjections were analyzed, especially in relation to the nature of the evaluative statements and their support.

Political Science Graduate Students. Subjects in this group tended to mention counterfactuals, statements of what could have happened if some action was not taken. The political science graduate students also tended to provide historical support when they indicated agreement or disagreement with what they were reading. The latter was not true of any other group.

Following are three sentences from an editorial and an example of a political science graduate student's counterfactual utterance. Note also how this subject is backing an evaluative expression with historical support.

Editorial Text:

In truth, Gorbachev is shaping events about as decisively as Czar Nicholas did after WWI broke out. There's one exception: Gor-

bachev has been skillful in shaping his own image. This has made him the most overrated man in the world. (Barnes, 1990, p. 43)

Subject's Comment:

I out and out disagree because . . . aside from everything else that's going on there in terms of how bad the economy is, the Soviet Union is still the most powerful military nation in the world, and they could have held on to every single Eastern European nation and Afghanistan. They could have dragged that fight on forever had they desired to do so, and I think it took extraordinary leadership not [sic] to talk to the Soviet government—to say, it's time both to let Afghanistan go and also that—I think that they let Eastern Europe go because they no longer needed that or felt that they needed that as a security buffer against invasion from the West, and I don't know why they felt that the tide had changed in the country, but I think it took extraordinary courage to do that. I frankly can't imagine an American leader allowing that to happen.

The following shows a similar type of utterance (by a different subject) in response to a section of the editorial on Iraq describing Saddam Hussein's threat to the "new world order."

Editorial Text:

Today there is another value at stake in the Gulf. It is even more important than oil. It is world order. (Krauthammer, 1990, p. 8)

Subject's Comment:

One person's order is another person's oppression—I mean, you know, I mean—what would this guy be saying about the United States breaking away from Great Britain, disrupting world order—somebody like Garibaldi uniting the Italian peninsula—uniting the Italian nation into one state, thus upsetting the world order—Bismarck upsetting the world order uniting the German nation.

Psychology Graduate Students. Subjects in this group tended to summarize what the author was saying and tended to talk about the author's bias and writing style—this was not true of the other groups. Psychology graduate students provided little backing for their expressions of agreement or disagreement with what they were reading. Following is an example of a psychology graduate student's response to the same excerpt from the Gorbachev editorial: "Okay, so once again we're talking about image versus reality."

Two examples of psychology graduate students' responses, this time to the issue of world order in the Iraq article, also were basically not so concerned with the subject matter per se, as with the author and the writing. First subject: "Who wrote this?" Second subject: "I'm going to wait to see what they mean by 'world order.'"

Political Science Undergraduates. Subjects in this group questioned who the author was, and additionally, one subject labeled the author as "conservative." However, statements of agreement or disagreement were not well supported. Following are two examples of political science undergraduates' unsupported reactions to the same Gorbachev excerpt. First subject: "Who's the guy—I mean, who's the guy writing this? You can't tell me anything. All right—I wanted to know if he's like a critic or someone important." Second subject: "I don't know if I agree with that, but . . ."

In response to the issue of world order in the Iraq editorial, an unsupported claim stated by a political science undergraduate was:

I don't agree with what he's saying so far—it is clear—I think the reason we are there is for oil but he's saying for—he's talking about—control of powers and the whole world . . . I don't agree with that.

Psychology Undergraduates. For the most part, subjects in this group made statements of agreement or disagreement, but did not support them. (However, one psychology undergraduate, an international relations major, mentioned facts that the author failed to take into account in the editorial.) For example, a psychology undergraduate reacted to a related point in the Gorbachev editorial by saying, "I disagree with that." A psychology undergraduate's reaction to the new world order excerpt of the Iraq article also shows how the subject disagrees:

I just want to say—so far I disagree with this article. When I think about the whole crisis in the Mideast, I just think that the whole reason is oil—maybe not the whole reason. I think most of the reason is oil, not so much world order.

In sum, whereas interjection data, taken as a whole, support the hypothesis that individuals make evaluative statements, there were substantial differences in the nature of the evaluative statements and the support provided. Specifically, political

science graduate students' evaluative statements tended to be knowledge-based with counterarguments frequently provided to an author's statement. Although subjects in the other groups made statements of agreement or disagreement, support for the statements, even when provided, was less knowledge-based.

Postreading "Offline" Results

Two raters independently scored the subjects' performance on six measures, described here later, with interrater reliability correlations ranging from .75 to .94. Criteria for scoring each measure are described later. A general summary of the findings is that, for the four measures of knowledge of text contents—recall, summary, main point, and support for the main point—graduate students performed better than undergraduates, with a significant difference generally occurring between graduate students and undergraduates in psychology but not in political science. Although the political science graduate students' performance on these measures was generally superior to that of the political science undergraduates' performance, the differences were not significant, due apparently to variability of the undergraduate performance. For the two analyses involving the critical evaluation of the editorials, graduate students performed better than undergraduates, with psychology graduate students performing better than the psychology undergraduates, and political science graduate students performing better than political science undergraduates. Details of these analyses follow.

Recall. Recall performance refers to the number of correct answers given to the four content questions presented for each article. Recall for the Iraq article was significantly better among graduate students, $M = 3.7(4.80)$, than undergraduates, $M = 2.8(1.00)$; $t(40) = 2.55$, $p < .02$. The source of this difference was found to rest in the scores obtained from psychology subjects where graduate students, $M = 3.6(0.54)$, performed significantly better than undergraduates, $M = 2.8(.86)$; $t(19) = 2.1$, $p < .05$. No significant difference was observed between political science undergraduates, $M = 2.9(1.18)$, and political science graduate students, $M = 3.8(4.47)$, or between political science graduate students and psychology graduate students, $M = 3.6(5.47)$. For the Gorbachev article, the only significant difference in recall obtained was between the two graduate student groups, with political science graduate students, $M = 3.6(.54)$, performing bet-

ter than psychology graduate students, $M = 2.8(.44)$; $t(8) = 2.53$, $p < .05$. The respective means for the political science and psychology undergraduates were 2.9(1.13) and 2.8(0.34).

Summaries. For the summaries, raters used a scale ranging from 0 failure to demonstrate understanding of the gist of the article to 4 summary includes the main point, support, minor points, and some interpretation of the author's intentions or world view. Graduate students were rated significantly better than undergraduates in their summaries of both editorials—Gorbachev: undergraduate $M = 1.66(.98)$, graduate $M = 2.65(.82)$; $t(40) = 2.90$, $p < .01$; Iraq: undergraduate $M = 2.12(1.12)$, graduate $M = 3.10(.74)$; $t(40) = 2.57$, $p < .05$. The source of this performance difference rested mainly in the psychology students, where a significant difference was obtained between undergraduates and graduates on both articles—Gorbachev: undergraduate $M = 1.47(.88)$, graduate $M = 2.40(.65)$; $t(19) = 2.16$, $p < .05$; Iraq: undergraduate, $M = 1.88(1.16)$, graduate $M = 3.30(.84)$; $t(19) = 2.53$, $p < .05$ —whereas political science students exhibited no significant differences as a result of educational level, although in both articles the means were somewhat higher for graduate students—Gorbachev: graduate $M = 2.90(.96)$, undergraduate $M = 1.84(1.06)$; Iraq: graduate $M = 2.90(0.65)$, undergraduate $M = 2.38(1.05)$.

The summaries were also inspected with respect to whether they contained evaluation statements. The data indicate the existence of few evaluative comments in the summaries, thereby suggesting that although individuals made evaluative statements while reading, the individuals nevertheless delineated the editorial contents from the evaluation of the editorial.

Main points. For the main-point question, raters used a scale ranging from 0 misses main point to 3 hits main point and provides support for it. For the Gorbachev article, graduate students, $M = 2.30(1.67)$, scored significantly higher than undergraduates, $M = 1.38(.84)$; $t(40) = 3.16$, $p = .003$. Again, psychology students were the main source of this difference, where undergraduates, $M = 1.25(.57)$, were significantly outscored by graduates, $M = 2.10(.82)$; $t(19) = 2.61$, $p = .02$. The political science graduate students had a greater mean, $M = 2.50(.60)$, than the political science undergraduates, $M = 1.47(.88)$, although the difference was not significant. For the Iraq article, the only significant difference obtained was between undergraduates, $M = 1.39(.80)$, and graduates $M = 2.00(.66)$; $t(40) = 2.18$, $p < .04$.

Support for main point. For the support of the main point, raters used a scale ranging from 0 subject does not recall how author supported main point to 4 well-articulated points of support within a logically structured response. Overall, ratings for psychology and political science responses did not differ significantly for the Gorbachev article, $p > .05$. However, once again there was a difference between undergraduate, $M = 1.59(.95)$, and graduate, $M = 2.75(.70)$, performance, $t(40) = 3.12$, $p = .004$. For psychology subjects, there was a significant difference in ratings between undergraduates, $M = 1.31(.85)$, and graduates, $M = 2.80(.57)$; $t(19) = 3.62$, $p = .002$. For the Iraq article, no comparisons between ratings were significant, all $ps > .05$. Again, subjects' discipline was not related to performance, and in the Gorbachev editorial case, education level accounted for performance differences in identifying how the author supported his main point.

The remaining two measures involved the critical evaluation of the respective editorial's contents. Raters assigned two scores a global quality rating, ranging from 0 poor to 4 very good, as an overall rating of quality of evaluation. The second rating, termed analytical, ranged from 0 merely provides a statement expressing agreement or disagreement with the editorial to 4 provides additional facts as well as some theoretical perspective which enhances understanding or provides support for the subject's position.

Critical Analysis—Global. For the Gorbachev editorial, there was no overall difference between psychology and political science subjects, $p > .05$. However, there was an overall significant difference between undergraduates, $M = 1.82(1.14)$, and graduates, $M = 2.95(.86)$, $t(40) = 2.88$, $p = .006$. Among undergraduates, there was a significant difference between psychology, $M = 1.46(1.12)$, and political science subjects $M = 2.22(1.06)$; $t(30) = 2.11$, $p < .05$. In addition, for psychology subjects, there was a significant difference between undergraduates, $M = 1.4(1.11)$, and graduates, $M = 2.9(.89)$; $t(19) = 2.72$, $p = .014$. For the Iraq editorial, there was an overall significant difference between undergraduates, $M = 2.06(1.09)$, and graduates, $M = 3.25(.58)$; $t(40) = 3.28$, $p < .003$. In addition, for political science subjects, there was a significant difference in ratings between undergraduates, $M = 2.28(.95)$, and graduates, $M = 3.5(.50)$; $t(19) = 2.72$, $p = .014$. No other comparisons were significant. These results show that, for the Gorbachev editorial,

discipline differences in performance occurred among undergraduates, but all other significant differences, for both articles, were due to education level.

Critical Analysis—Analytical. For the Gorbachev editorial, there were no significant differences, all $ps > .05$. For the Iraq editorial, there was an overall significant difference in ratings between undergraduates, $M = 1.84(1.13)$, and graduates, $M = 3.10(.62)$; $t(40) = 3.34$, $p = .002$. For psychology subjects, there was a significant difference between undergraduates, $M = 1.68(1.25)$, and graduates, $M = 2.90(.22)$; $t(19) = 2.12$, $p < .05$. For political science subjects, there also was a significant difference between undergraduates, $M = 2.00(1.0)$, and graduates, $M = 3.30(.84)$; $t(19) = -2.59$, $p < .02$. Again, educational level rather than academic discipline accounted for differences in the content of subjects' critical analyses of editorials.

Correlational Data

The interjection data as well as performance on the six measures described in the preceding section were analyzed in relation to the data obtained from the questionnaire on political news and interests. A correlational matrix involving 27 variables was obtained. The following results are noted: (a) With few exceptions, the dependent measures of the study were highly intercorrelated, with all correlations reaching the significance level of .05 or higher. This result thus indicates a high consistency of subject performance. (b) Opinions toward statements concerning the protection of America's foreign interests, America's moral responsibility, America's need to prevent aggression, the Libyan, Panamanian, and Grenadan actions, and viewing oneself as conservative were substantially intercorrelated. In addition, agreement with these statements was inversely related to the number of interjections as well as to global and analytical scores. (c) The amount of newspaper reading was only significantly related, positively, to interest in the Middle East, and to the critical evaluation scores of the Iraqi article. These findings suggest that more liberal individuals, especially the political science graduate students, had better critical scores and more interjections, while also being individuals reading more newspapers and being interested in the Middle East. At the same time, political preferences had relatively little relation to the four measures of knowledge of the editorials.

DISCUSSION

With respect to the first set of hypotheses, the results indicated that only about one-half of the undergraduates and three-quarters of the graduate students made comments while reading, and of these, over three-quarters of the comments were evaluative, except for the psychology graduate students, who made evaluative statements approximately half of the time. However, as hypothesized, political science graduate students made more evaluative interjections than any other group, their interjections tended to be longer than those of the other groups, and their evaluative comments were supported by knowledge-based information to a greater extent than those of any other group. The political science graduate students also used counterfactual reasoning as a means to criticize the author's position, but the other groups did not use this strategy. Psychology graduate students, although making as many interjections as political science graduate students, stated considerably fewer evaluative interjections and tended not to support their evaluative interjections. Similarly, although about one-half of the undergraduates made some evaluative statements, they tended to be simple statements of agreement or disagreement with only infrequent support. Moreover, little difference of performance occurred in the two undergraduate groups. These results generally support the hypothesis that students with more experience in the discipline of political science make more evaluative comments than those with less experience.

The hypothesis regarding the role of domain knowledge in the identification of components of the editorials' argument structure was not confirmed. There was not, generally, a difference between psychology and political science graduate students' ability to identify the authors' main points and support for main points; however, graduate students generally performed better on the measures of content recall and understanding than undergraduate students. In addition, the failure to find significant differences between the political science graduate students and political science undergraduates, even though the means were of approximately the same magnitude as the two psychology groups, suggests that the variability in the political science subject performance was greater than in the psychology groups. The quality of subjects' critical analyses of the editorials was also, for the most part, a function of the educational level rather than the academic discipline of the subjects.

Obtaining some measures of the political views and interests of the subjects yielded results suggesting that individuals with greater political interests and with more liberal views tended to provide more interjections and obtain higher scores of editorial criticism, whereas scores of editorial comprehension tended to be much less related to these factors. Furthermore, it was especially the political science graduate students that contributed to this finding. These results, taken with the finding that the summaries did not tend to include evaluative information, also suggest that individuals are able to differentiate editorial contents and their evaluation of the contents in their mental representations of an editorial.

In conclusion, this chapter constitutes an exploratory study in the processing of political editorials. The results support the occurrence of online evaluative performance, which, in the case of political science graduate students, was especially prevalent, with the students also providing knowledge-based support for their evaluations. These same students did not produce better performance in the offline, postreading performance compared to psychology graduate students, suggesting that specialized prior knowledge was not advantageous with respect to recall and comprehension. These findings at least suggest that more sophisticated readers or listeners tend to evaluate editorials or speeches online, and although domain knowledge may not be critical to understanding the contents of the discourse, it is critical in providing support for evaluation.

REFERENCES

- Barnes, F. (1990, February 12). Gorby's demons. *The New Republic*, 202, 43.
- Bartlett, F. C. (1932). *Remembering*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, N. S., & Mandler, J. M. (1980). A tale of two structures: Underlying and surface forms in stories. *Poetics*, 9, 51-86.
- Krauthammer, C. (1990, August 17). Affirming world order in the Mideast. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, p. 8.
- Meusch, D. (1989). How to do thoughts with words II: Degrees of explicitness in think-aloud during the comprehension of literary and expository texts with different types of readers. *Poetics*, 18, 45-71.
- Spilich, G. J., Vesonder, G. T., Chiesi, H. L., & Voss, J. F. (1979). Text processing of domain-related information for individuals with high and low domain knowledge. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 18, 275-290.