

Interfaces between media, speech, and interaction

Do the media have an effect on the language use of their audiences? There are two main responses to this in sociolinguistics. The first originates in the variationist tradition and focuses on potential influences of mass media, especially broadcast, on the linguistic system and on language change. Despite sporadic evidence for such influences (e.g. Naro / Scherre 1996, Carvalho 2004), the mainstream answer is negative (cf. Chambers 1998, Labov 2001, Milroy/Milroy 1999), restricting an impact of the media to conscious levels of language (vocabulary, catch phrases, awareness of linguistic varieties).

A second, more recent approach is contextualized in interactional sociolinguistics. Inspired by cultural studies (e.g. Gillespie 1995), and resembling the shift in media studies from media effects theory to active audiences approaches, this line of research examines how audiences actively appropriate bits and pieces of media discourse, creatively transforming and embedding them in everyday interactional practices. As a consequence, the focus of attention shifts from the linguistic system to verbal interaction, and processes of entextualisation, performance, and voicing gain prominence (e.g. Shankar 2004, Branner 2002, Schlobinski et al. 1993).

However, substantial dialogue between these approaches as well as to wider sociolinguistic theory is lacking, and despite a number of important, yet disparate, publications (including case studies such as Cutler 1999, Spitulnik 1997), it seems that interfaces between mass media and non-mediated language use are not well understood yet (Herring 2003, Stuart-Smith 2006). This is an area in need of more attention and development in contemporary sociolinguistics, not least in view of the importance of mediatization for contemporary processes of social and cultural change.

Against that background, the aim of this thematic panel is to critically discuss relationships between media discourse and language use by audiences. The contributors will offer state of the art presentations on the areas outlined above; debate on different conceptualizations of media effects (e.g. as a contributing factor to language change vs. providers of interactional resources), and on ways of mediating between them, thereby at the same time bridging quantitative and qualitative approaches in sociolinguistics. We attend to the Symposium's focal topic – 'micro and macro connections' – by examining the relationship of mass-disseminated cultural products to local (i.e. individual or group level) processes of language variation, performance, and social identity construction, and also by exploring links between media, discourse and language change. More specific questions addressed by the contributors will include:

- the relationship of media engagement and stylistic variation;
- the relationship of mass media, language use, and language ideology;
- paths from the interactive recycling of media resources to processes of conventionalization (lexicalization, new phonological variants);

- case studies of situated, culturally-specific engagements with and appropriations of media resources, including classroom interaction and peer-group interaction;
- sociolinguistic implications of media globalization, e.g. the appropriation of dislocated media content resulting in language/dialect contact.

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Organisation: The panel will consist of ten (10) standard length contributions, followed by concluding open discussion. It will ideally require three (3) 90-min slots. The precise order of papers will be specified based on allocated time.