Introduction: Style, media and language ideologies

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SLICE AND CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF STANDARD LANGUAGE

This book is the third instalment in the Novus book-series known as SLICE, an abbreviation for Standard Language Ideology in Contemporary Europe. The acronym has sometimes been interpreted as referring to 'Standard Language Ideology in a Changing Europe', which is equally appropriate, in fact more so in the case of this book, because *change* is central to all contributors' concerns. The book's broadest aim is to explore changing relationships between language and media – principally the mediation of spoken dialect – in diverse national settings over time. The 'European-ness' of the SLICE acronym should be interpreted liberally. SLICE may have its core activities in Europe, but has always had a view beyond the borders of Europe. In the present volume, this is evidenced by a case study by Allan Bell on Australian and New Zealand English (varieties which clearly bear systematic historical relations to British English and hence to Europe), but it is also discernable in several other chapters which take their data from media platforms such as YouTube – platforms that do not respect conventional national or continental borders.

The common scope of the three books in the SLICE series, as well as that of the research network which shares its name, is an interest in the status and role of (what have been considered to be) *standard languages* and standard language ideology in late-modern times, in Europe and to some extent beyond (for more information, see http://lanchart.hum.ku.dk/research/slice/). At the same time, the SLICE programme was founded on a critical conception of the term 'standard language', and in the belief that we need to reassess what standardness means in late modernity, and how the familiar sociolinguistic opposition between 'standard and non-standard language' nowadays stands, under the impact of changing socio-cultural conditions.

Like many other sociolinguists nowadays, we therefore approach the concept of a standard language with some scepticism; even when the terms 'standard' and 'non-standard' appear without scare-quotes in this book, a certain critical distance from these concepts can be assumed to exist. This caveat is necessary, in part, because of the problems associated with realist interpretations of *any* linguistic variety. 50+ years of sustained research into language variation and change has amply

demonstrated that no linguistic variety, style or register, and certainly no 'language' (in the sense of a national or regional linguistic code), has the ontological stability that a term such as 'Danish' might seem to entail. The concept of 'standard Danish' of course concedes the fact that 'Danish' is not an unvarying linguistic entity, but it falls prey to the problem that standardness is not an objective quality of language. What counts as 'a standard' as well as the values associated with such 'standards' undergo constant renegotiation. There is certainly some heuristic value in allowing ourselves to recycle terms like 'Danish' and 'standard Danish', because such terms do, after all, reflect a *perceptual* reality for many language users and commentators. Yet it is important to keep insisting that the boundedness of any language is negotiable, and that the criteria that underlie any attribution of standardness to a linguistic variety are contextual and changeable. In this book we favour the term 'style' for reasons that we will elaborate shortly. But one reason that we would like to mention at the outset is that the concept of style carries a weaker presumption of ontological singularity – in the sense that it is immediately obvious that styles of language are the weakly-bound products of local acts of styling through the deployment of linguistic resources in specific social and interactional contexts.

The contributors to this book are specifically interested in documenting and critically interpreting particular acts of stylistic creativity in performances of spoken language at particular historical moments and in particular cultural/national contexts – in all cases, performances that are disseminated through mass media of one sort or another. Contributors are motivated to explore how such mediated instances of language use may have contributed to, or may now be contributing to, processes of language change or alternatively, as we will more precisely define it, *sociolinguistic change*. What matters is not so much whether mediated ways of speaking do or do not fall within the conventionally understood categories of standard versus non-standard language, but rather how the technologically mediated styling of language-in-use is socially meaningful and consequential, when judged against social norms and conventions, and how acts of styling themselves may act as vehicles for bringing about change in sociolinguistic norms and conventions. A central idea in the book is therefore that, by studying the detail of how distinctive ways of speaking are contextually constructed and styled in media spaces, we can come to understand how the norms that underpin conceptions of standard and non-standard language are confirmed or challenged.

This is why beliefs, values and norms for language use, as well as the details of language use itself, have to take centre-stage in the present book and in the SLICE programme as a whole. 'Standard language ideologies' (which we comment on in more detail, below) are the reflexive value-structures through which ways of speaking come to be *construed* as being standard or non-standard. Indeed, the reification of 'the standard language' – treating a standard language in any particular national

context as an 'it', and loading it up with not only ontological stability but also with social and even moral value – is a fundamentally ideological process (Joseph 1987; Kristiansen and Coupland 2011: Introduction; Milroy and Milroy 1985). Like all ideological formations, ideologies of language are also historically contingent, coming to prominence under specific cultural conditions and serving particular political ends (Bourdieu 1991). This provides a second major reason for our scepticism regarding the concept of standard language and its applicability to the contemporary era. Standard languages came into focus as elements of evolving national projects, under circumstances when national coherence and associated normative regimes needed to be actively constructed (Anderson 1985; Auer, Hinskens and Kerswill 2005; Haugen 1997; see again volume 1 of the SLICE series, Kristiansen and Coupland 2011). A standard language – both in the sense of a purportedly singular code that could 'represent' the nation, 'one standard for the entire nation', but also in the sense of a specific dialect of that language that could purportedly represent 'the best' way of using that language, 'a standard for good usage' – could provide a focus for national unity and social order, *provided that* it was underpinned by an ideology that articulated its importance, i.e. a standard language ideology. Our take on ideologies resonates well with debates of recent decades in which language ideology as a field of study – the study of ideologies of or about language – has been promoted into general circulation in sociolinguistics from several different sources (e.g. Blommaert 1999; Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity 1998).

In keeping with a historical perspective, it has been the SLICE programme's priority to question whether particular cultural conditions in different European settings still fall prey to the ideologies of standard language that, in most cases, have shaped their past, and if so, whether they do so to the same extent as previously and with the same implications. We need to ask whether, to what extent and in which regards different cultures within the remit of the SLICE project function as (to use Milroy's 2001 phrase) 'standard language cultures' – cultures whose ideological views of language are powerfully ordered around beliefs about the importance of standard versus non-standard usage. If this has been the case in the past, does it remain so today? What role have broadcast media played in any potential changes? There are good *prima facie* reasons to doubt that the authority and influence of national languages and their so-called standard varieties have entirely survived the historical shift (for many countries) out of their nation-building phase into the much more complex and polycentric conditions of late modernity. Standard language cultures are, or were, cultures in which the hegemonic status of 'the standard', along with the status of institutions that defend and police 'the standard' is (or was) unquestioned. Like the nation state itself, these sociolinguistic conditions do appear, on the whole, to be in retreat, and it becomes a matter of priority for sociolinguistics to document and interpret the different aspects of this change. This book

contributes to this agenda by investigating instances of styled language use which, when disseminated through technological media, have played some part in reshaping, contesting or merely offering a critical commentary on the standard language ideology.

In using the term 'late modernity' we (and the SLICE programme in general) align with social scientists who orient to global as well as local conditions of social action, and who ask how social changes linked to the historical advance of globalisation are working on and through research data. In our own case this means interrogating language in society with an eye to post-national as well as national cultural circumstances and priorities, and to processes of de-traditionalisation as well as to traditions themselves (Castells 1996; Giddens 1991; Robertson 1992). Standard language cultures, however they are precisely defined, are certainly not fixed and immutable; norms and values change, including normative assumptions about standard versus non-standard language. As we explain further below, language users have particular resources for challenging and reconstituting norms, just as much as for respecting and perpetuating them, and mass media commonly have powerful resources for leading and disseminating changes of this sort. Language-ideological change – change in how values are attributed to ways of speaking – can incrementally be brought about through particular acts of stylistic creativity, and more particularly so when those acts are mediated into wide-reaching networks and patterns of consumption and uptake that we associate with the media. In other words, even in standard language cultures there is always the potential to rework norms through usage, but when this is done on a large scale it can develop into a more concerted pattern of change – and indeed into what we consider to be a sociolinguistic change. And, the other way round, sociolinguistic change can create new conditions in which local acts of performance have wider significance.

The broad lines of the SLICE perspective and its empirical concerns have already been set out in the first two books in this series. The first book (Kristiansen and Coupland 2011) included a series of 'reports' on the history and the current status of standard language(s) in several different European countries or regions. The aim here was to 'take the temperature' of linguistic diversity in a wide range of national/regional contexts, debates and histories, setting out facts and critical perspectives that have particular salience in relation to language ideology and change. The first volume in the series also elaborated the theoretical backdrop to SLICE, in a substantial introductory chapter and in a set of other theoretical contributions on standard language issues more broadly. We will not repeat that material here, and it would therefore be useful to refer back to the first volume for wider contextualisation of this book's contents. Of particular relevance to this volume on media are the Volume 1 chapters by Androutsopoulos (2011), Bell (2011) and Stuart-Smith (2011). It is important to emphasise that SLICE does *not* presume that social and

sociolinguistic changes are uniform across Europe, and certainly not that communities across Europe are experiencing language-ideological shifts of the same sorts, with the same levels of intensity or at the same time. Different communities may show very different responses to the same global trends; sometimes this is even the case for different language communities within the same nation state, e.g. Swedish and Finnish speakers within Finland (see Östman's chapter in the present volume). On the other hand we may see similar trends across different language communities within as well as beyond Europe, and by adopting a comparative stance, the SLICE project is ideally positioned to identify such similarities as well as possible differences. The comparative perspective is maintained in the present book, although necessarily in a more implicit and less rigorous manner than in the 'country reports' of the first volume of the series.

The second book in the series (Kristiansen and Grondelaers 2013) compiled chapters that were based in experimental sociolinguistic methods, mainly in the tradition of language attitudes and speech evaluation research, to explore the status and development of standard languages in various European countries. The book also contained chapters with a methodological focus, aimed at developing new experimental methods and reassessing dominant ideas in the social psychology of language. In fact, up to the present time, the SLICE programme's empirical contribution has been made in two specific traditions of sociolinguistic inquiry, which we can (briefly, but inadequately) refer to as 'experimental' and 'media', respectively. Experimental sociolinguistic research has been able to target language ideology quite directly, by identifying general tendencies in the speech-related beliefs of representative groups (usually younger people distributed across different spaces of national communities). This approach has allowed SLICE to engage with some of the most central problems in language variation and change, including the classically perplexing question of how community changes in speech norms are motivated (Androutsopoulos 2011; Auer and Spiekerman 2011; Bell 2011; Coupland and Kristiansen 2011; Grondelaers, van Hout and Speelman 2011; Stuart-Smith 2011). In the Danish case, for example, in data analysed in a substantial body of empirical studies, Kristiansen (e.g. 1992, 2001, 2003, 2009) has documented a remarkably regular pattern in how informants evaluate Danish ways of speaking. In official recommendations, e.g. for language use in school and as a preferred speech style for broadcasting, the Copenhagen-based middle-class style – the 'conservative', 'high' and in that sense 'standard' way of speaking – is promoted. When young people are asked to explicitly rank linguistic varieties under controlled experimental conditions, they will rank this same variety highly. However, when the same informants are asked to express their preferences by reacting to speech samples, but without speech itself being made explicitly salient, they rank the 'low' or 'modern' Copenhagen-based speech style as highly as the conservative style, and even more highly

when it comes to certain dynamic personality traits like 'self-confidence' and 'being interesting'. Kristiansen (2001) suggests that the only plausible way that young people across the nation can come to share these unofficial and indeed 'subconscious' norms is if they have been and are disseminated though broadcast media.

It is reasoning along these lines that originally brought 'media' into focus as the second broad field of empirical inquiry for SLICE, and set the general agenda for the present volume. For the analysis of media data, of course, different research methods are needed, and this third SLICE volume represents a radical departure from the experimental frameworks of the second volume. The chapters of the present book are, in the main, based in critical commentaries on media discourse. Contributors explore how language use in media contexts has been (or currently is) significant in the establishment and change of language ideologies in different national and regional contexts over time. The general approach is necessarily qualitative and interpretive rather than quantitative and distributional. Media data are treated as episodes of spoken performance whose historical and cultural significance rarely lies at the surface of the text.

As we explain in more detail below, for some sociolinguists this focus on media needs to be very carefully warranted, in view of the presumption that language change (if we take this to mean systemic change over time in a place-bound vernacular dialect, in the manner of William Labov's 1966, 1972, 2001 pioneering research) 'has nothing to do with the media'. This is a view – and to us a controversial view – that privileges 'everyday talk in the community' as the primary focus of sociolinguistics, relegating 'media talk' to the position of being, at best, a potentially (but not very probably) relevant 'factor' in inducing 'language change'. Our own starting point is quite different. We are not simply interested in 'media effects' – in treating media as a social or contextual variable that might or might not impact on 'real, everyday speech'. We orient to mediated language as *being* 'real, everyday speech', part of the day-to-day sociolinguistic environment of most people and thoroughly embedded in recycling and reshaping socio-cultural values. We can point to the widely acknowledged role that media institutions have often played, historically, in consolidating *ideologies* of standard language, and we should note that formal, systemic change in a community's way of speaking *may or may not* be in question in such a scenario (see e.g. Agha 2007; Androutsopoulos 2014c; Mugglestone 2007; Stuart-Smith 2011). Also, we can extend this perspective in order to ask how 'the media' may have been active in consolidating and recirculating much less uniform ideologies of language at particular times and places.

Linguistic standardisation, seen from a critical and ideological perspective, has always had an intimate relationship with media, and this is likely to be the case for processes we might refer to as de-standardisation too. We can also point to radical changes in recent decades in what 'media' actually *are*, in how they function social-

ly and sociolinguistically, and indeed in precisely *how* social worlds are mediated. In other words, as the 'media strand' of SLICE has developed, it has become interested both in language change (in the Labovian sense of this term) and in far wider social changes in which language is implicated. The main focus in the present book continues to be on dialect diversity and on how media performers represent themselves and/or their characters in dialectal terms. However, we and the other contributors to this book are also interested in the changing forms and functions of mediated talk itself, which is a much broader research interest than to search for 'media effects' on everyday language use.

A focus on how media performers and performances function adds many layers to the analysis of media language, and indeed to how we construe change in relation to language use. Older questions like 'Which dialects, standard and non-standard, are/were used in the media?' and 'How do/did these patterns of use impact (if at all) on language change?' tend to be superseded by other questions. These include: 'How do specific dialect performances play with or against prevalent norms and ideologies of standard and non-standard language?'; 'What mediational and interactional devices are used to conjure up standardness and vernacularity as ideological formations, and to index stances towards these norms?'; and 'How does mediated dialectal creativity impact on wider ideologies of standard and non-standard language, and how might it sow the seeds of sociolinguistic change?'.

The priorities we have pointed to in this first section clearly need to be explained and defended in more detail. In the remainder of this chapter we will, firstly, recap on historical relationships between sociolinguistics and the media. In reviewing the reasons why sociolinguists have historically steered clear of media data, and in discussing some new initiatives in this area, we make the case that media are not only relevant in sociolinguistics but indispensable for the contemporary account of language in society (cf. Mortensen, Coupland and Thøgersen in press). We will then return to questions of ideology and review the ways in which standard language ideology and media processes have already been closely associated, but how this relationship may need to be reworked in the contemporary era. In another section we will introduce the sociolinguistic concept of style and explain how we and the other contributors have engaged with it in the present book. In that section we will argue that style is a concept that is particularly productive for the analysis of mediated performance. After that we will return to this book's focal idea of change, and defend a particular perspective on the relatively new concept of sociolinguistic change. Finally, we will introduce the upcoming empirical chapters and comment on some of the themes that they hold in common.

CHANGING SOCIOLINGUISTIC ORIENTATIONS TO MEDIA DATA AND MEDIA PROCESSES

It is well known that the historically dominant paradigm in sociolinguistics, the study of language variation and change, which is often referred to as variationist sociolinguistics, has pointedly excluded consideration of mass media, saying that media are 'irrelevant' to their concerns (Chambers 1998; Labov 2001; Trudgill 2014). Despite this, in recent years we have seen a burgeoning interest in the role of media *vis-à-vis* language and society. Some of the prominent instances are:

- a suite of short papers debating language change and media (*Journal of Sociolinguistics* 2014, volume 18, 2);
- the (2012) Freiburg Institute for Advanced Study symposium on 'The Media and Sociolinguistic Change', published as Androutsopoulos (2014a);
- the 'Language in the Media' international conference series, the sixth meeting of which was held in 2015, and which has generated significant books including Johnson and Ensslin (2007); Johnson and Milani (2010); Thurlow and Mroczek (2011).

What accounts for this *volte face*?

Variationist sociolinguistics's denial of the role of media in language change can in part be explained by its reductive view on how media would exert its influence, if this could be proved to be the case. Chambers concluded that language users watching the same TV shows don't end up speaking identically, and thus that media must exert minute influences, if any. But then, no single TV institution or broadcasting company broadcasts a singular, uniform speech style, and even individual formats or shows tend to represent more than one speech style. Certainly, national broadcasters have, in the past, supported more uniform norms, when it was feasible to say that a particular style of speech – typically a style that was considered to be a standard national variety – was given priority within a broadcast repertoire of speech styles. However, even according to the most elementary principles of variationist sociolinguistics, including the now-obvious facts that there are no single-style speakers and that any defined community of speakers can be shown to maintain an envelope of speech-style and featural variation, any suggestion that a (national) broadcasting institution's style is strictly uniform is untenable. But still, in the most simplistic of terms, it has always been true that any effort to claim that 'broadcast speech' determines or even influences 'real speech in the community' immediately confronts the problem that *both sides* of this putatively causative relationship involve speech style *repertoires*. Causative effects (which variationists would model in terms of dependent and independent variables in correlational designs) would in

any case, therefore, be extremely difficult to investigate. What potentially influences what? What might one seek to correlate with what? What amounts to evidence of a media effect? These complex issues have been systematically examined by Stuart-Smith and her colleagues, both in her contribution to the SLICE 1 volume, Stuart-Smith (2011), in her contribution to this volume and in work with colleagues, e.g. Stuart-Smith and Ota (2014); see also references in Stuart-Smith, this volume.

The principal difficulty here, however, is not simply one of research design and method, challenging though such issues are. Rather, it relates to a raft of presumptions structured into variationist sociolinguistics which, from that discipline's own perspective, would diminish the case for mainstream variationism to engage with mediated language. (We fully recognise that there are some notable exceptions to this general statement, including Bell 1983, 2011; Van de Velde 1996; Van de Velde, Van Hout and Gerritsen 1997). We can summarise these presumptions under four headings: (i) social reality; (ii) formalism versus functionalism; (iii) contextualisation; and (iv) change.

i. Social reality

Variationist sociolinguistics has tended to make strong assumptions about social reality in relation to both language and society. As an empiricist project, the study of language variation and change invests heavily in the reality of its social and linguistic categories. Relevant categorisations have to be clear-cut and empirically watertight (otherwise how could you inter-correlate statistical extrapolations from them?) and social reality has to be credited as being absolute. In the evidencing of language change, for example, 'language' needs to be operationalised as a set of discrete variable units, sociolinguistic variables, which are not only amenable to objective definition and coding but also assumed to constitute 'what changes' in the domain of language use. In practice this has meant ruling out many aspects of language use which are recognised to change (e.g. norms of politeness and impoliteness, discourses of power, conventions for addressing and representing minority groups) but which are not defined as falling within the core remit of 'language change'. Unsurprisingly, then, one theme in disputes over the relevance of media language to sociolinguistics has been what counts, and what should count, as 'language' (see [iv], below).

The social reality of demographic categories – in particular social class, variationism's primary social metric, but also gender, age and provenance – also has to be strongly asserted with the variationist paradigm, despite there being widespread, continuing assertions in both the humanities and the social sciences that demographic categorisation needs to be viewed as non-absolute (e.g. arguments that social class should be defined 'emically', in its local context of application by peo-

ple directly experiencing the effects of social class versus 'etically', according to some universal, descriptive template). Critical discussions within sociolinguistics itself have foregrounded this same issue, challenging variationist assumptions about 'the authentic speaker' (e.g. Coupland 2013; Eckert 2003). Variationists' non-engagement with media language is also likely to be supported by the assumption that media introduce their own problems of social *un*reality. Don't the media trade in created, manufactured and unreal personas and voices? Classical sociolinguistic concerns about the social reality of unmonitored vernacular speech, surfacing, for example, in Labov's (1972, 1984) famous account of 'the observer's paradox', suggest priorities that would inevitably work against engagement with media data. The concept of speech community, and the principle of discovering structured variation through observation of carefully constructed data samples, similarly locks in assumptions about 'real data'. From this point of view, technologically mediated discourse such as broadcast talk can easily be thought to fall outside this category; it constitutes 'imperfect data': discourse 'sullied by mediation'. Needless to say, these are assumptions that we strongly contest.

ii. Formalism versus functionalism

The contrary stance is that *all* instances of language-in-use (whether mediated by technological means or not) are creative acts that amount to significantly more than a simple playing out of a community norm. Again, *all* acts of speaking are in some sense monitored. As Silverstein (2003) has argued, acts of speaking are launched and interpreted against a rolling backdrop of *metapragmatic* assumptions that inform how the social meanings of speech are processed by speakers and recipients. Indeed, it is in the interactive toing-and-froing between speech performance and metapragmatic processing that social meaning is made and remade. There is a far wider intellectual context to take into account here, too. The massive shift into discourse analytic framings of sociolinguistic issues that has been in evidence since the late 1970s (e.g. Briggs 1996; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Fairclough 1992; Schiffrin 1987; Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) has made it increasingly difficult for the study of language variation and change to hold on to its formalist priorities and its realist empiricism.

Any functional, pragmatically-informed perspective on language implies a wariness about drawing boundaries that restrict the account of language, in any particular line of inquiry, to strong formalist assumptions, including the view that language is an amalgam of variable formal features whose inventories and inter-relations change systemically over time. The importance of the Labovian language change agenda in itself is unquestionable, but so is the argument that formalism is not in itself sufficient. For our present purposes, the immediate point is that, once social meaning is acknowledged to reside in the dynamics of interpersonal and interac-

tional processes, the bar against media language largely falls away. There ceases to be any clear-cut distinction, at least as a matter of principle, between how individuals engage interactionally with face-to-face others (in 'real' encounters) and how they engage in mediated encounters with speakers in the talking media, i.e. media which disseminate spoken language and whose content is to a large extent spoken (or indeed sung) language. Engagement and uptake are of course *potentially* different across many interactional modes, both within and outside the remit of technologically mediated communication. But the fact of technological mediation itself is no obstacle to a discursively-informed sociolinguistics, and broadly the same interpretive apparatus (e.g. appealing to social norms, social performance, interpersonal and intergroup relations, or conversational inferencing) is needed for the sociolinguistic understanding of 'mediated' and 'non-mediated' data. In fact, this distinction becomes less and less stable in discursively-sensitive approaches.

iii. Contextualisation

'Mediated' versus 'non-mediated' has generally been held to be a simple distinction of social context, so that language 'in the media' has, as we noted above, been thought of as contrasting with 'real language in the community'. But it is worth exploring some of the ways in which this is an overly exclusive distinction. Technologically mediated language, for example the output of the so-called 'old media' (television and radio), reaches us, the audience, in utterly 'normal' social environments in experiences that we often take to be 'real'. Most people acknowledge that their understanding of 'how the world works' is based to a significant extent on what they experience through technological media. It would be possible to trade statistics on the proportions of time people spend engaging in face-to-face, 'warm-bodied' interaction versus engaging with technologically mediated talk, but conclusions would not be decisive. The obvious point is that our media engagement is substantial, and not at all outside of the realm of the everyday and (what we might call) everyday reality.

Mediatisation, if we interpret this term as referring to the steady increase in the number of domains in which our everyday lives involve technologically-depended mediation, emphasises this fact (cf. Androutsopoulos 2014a, 2014b; Hjarvard 2013; Livingstone 2009). Correspondingly, different formats of broadcast TV and radio are increasingly blurring the distinction between (on the one hand) media professionals and celebrities and (on the other hand) 'ordinary people', making for a less clear-cut distinction between 'ordinary' people/language and what we have considered to be 'media' people/language (cf. Thornborrow in press). It is clearly the case that technological media command particular resources for styling people, talk and situations that we take to be 'special' or 'different', e.g. involving scripting, rehearsal, editing, framing devices and command of multimodal expressive devices

that are not generally available in 'ordinary' contexts of talk. However, it is important to recognise that the sociolinguistic analysis of talk-in-interaction has, certainly since Goffman, found it necessary to draw on concepts initially drawn from the fields of theatrical drama and performance. If terms like *style*, *frame*, *key* and *performance* itself are necessary for analysing even the 'least mediated' of instances of language-in-use, there need be no cut-off point segregating the mediated from the unmediated.

Sociolinguistics itself could be defined as a multi-faceted research program targeted at understanding how language is socially contextualised, and technological mediation should therefore be seen as presenting challenges – perhaps stronger-than-otherwise – within this framework, but challenges that fall squarely *within* the core remit of the field. In the context of so-called 'new media' the boundary between media 'producers' and (supposedly) passively receiving 'audiences' is becoming increasingly untenable as 'audiences' are routinely invited to comment on live performances, and may take on the role of producers themselves and distribute 'content' via e.g. YouTube. Interactivity of this sort has probably always, to some extent, been part of broadcast media and there have probably always, to some extent, been 'grass-roots media producers'. But the proliferation of technologies and platforms that nowadays allow virtually all members of 'first-world' societies to publicly comment on anything they like, and to become their own 'broadcasters', underscores the artificiality of any attempt to make a principled distinction between 'ordinary unmediated talk' and 'artificial mediated interaction'. Technologically mediated talk is, in that particular sense, very ordinary.

iv. Change

As we have already noted, within sociolinguistics change has commonly been interpreted as language change, with the restrictive assumptions we mentioned above. We will discuss and defend the alternative conception of sociolinguistic change later in this chapter. But it is already relevant to point out that the variationist interpretation of language change carries its own disincentives against engaging with media data. At first blush this is a remarkable state of affairs. What is loosely referred to as 'the media' includes sites of creativity and innovation that could well be the *first* place we would turn to in order to study language-related change over time. Historical mediatisation is one of the most obvious and profound sociocultural changes in our lifetimes. It subsumes not only the intensification of people's exposure to ('old', but in actual fact highly contemporary in terms of use) 'mass communication' systems such as TV and radio, but a couple of decades of rampant expansion in mobile communication technology, the proliferation of (so-called 'new media') digital media platforms (which are scarcely new as a general category, but

intensely new in individual instances in a fast-changing mediascape). Where would sociolinguists find innovation and change if not in 'the media'?

In this context there has needed to be some means of restricting change as it might apply in the variationist paradigm, and one response has been the creative interpretation of the idea of 'significance'. Variationists insist that some aspects of language are more significant than others in language change. So-called sound change has been the centrepiece of variationist sociolinguistics, because it is possible to interpret 'sound' in terms of phonological systems that evolve over time within speech communities. This has fed into the further assumption that change has to be 'systematic' ('systemic' is arguably the more accurate term), and this works against so-called 'opportunistic' or 'off-the-shelf' changes (Milroy 2006, see also Androutsopoulos' 2014b; Stuart-Smith this volume). In other words, many of the linguistic changes that we can routinely detect in social life are excluded from the category of 'significant changes', as construed in the language variation and change paradigm. And these changes happen to be the sorts of change that academics and lay people alike tend to associate with 'the media'.

Language change research finds lexical change, for example, 'insignificant'. Lexical items are 'off-the-shelf' items that are not ingrained in systemic dimensions of language, in the way that units in vowel systems are. In reflexive discussions of language change and media, this stance makes it possible to ignore lexical change and media data (as a likely channel for disseminating lexical changes) because neither is a proper concern of variationist sociolinguistics. Trudgill (2014), for example, argues that the well-attested upsurge in the use of quotative expressions using 'be + like' in different English-speaking contexts around the world is uninteresting because 'be + like' can be argued to be a 'lexical' feature. Perhaps it is, but excluding lexical change from the agenda of language change research is difficult to rationalise. In any case, one contrary argument, relevant to variationists, is that diffusing lexical forms can sometimes be linguistic frames for disseminating phonological usage. Catch-phrases, slogans and set expressions, often linked to highly individuated characters in media performances (e.g. Catherine Tate's Lauren Cooper character and the catchphrase '[do I look] bovvered?', discussed in Coupland 2007: 173–174), sometimes intensify the cultural focus on vernacular pronunciation features, and this suggests that the lexical/phonological distinction for significance is unhelpful. There is also a much wider argument to be made – that restricting the empirical remit of language change to features that are below the level of conscious awareness and control risks missing out on those aspects of language change that are most socially relevant to non-specialists, and which may have significant social impact. The gradual emergence of *Lingua Tertii Imperii,* the language of Hitler's Nazi Germany, as chronicled by the German philologist Victor Klemperer (1996), represents an alarming historical example of language change that would fall outside the

scope of variationist sociolinguistics, but which nevertheless involved significant changes at the language–society interface. These extremely significant changes in official language in the form of deliberately invented neologisms to defend race segregation and extermination, e.g. *Jude* (about genetic lineage rather than religious conviction), *Konzentrationslager* (about sites of genocide) or *Entartung* (the degeneration of 'the people', *Volk* itself being inscribed new meaning), would never register as a case of language change. A critically informed approach to sociolinguistic change needs to be able to address this sort of change too, and be able to account for the role of technological mediation and historical mediatization in the overall process.

MEDIA AND IDEOLOGIES OF STANDARD LANGUAGE

The formalist emphasis in the language variation and change paradigm also renders it less sensitive to changes involving sociocultural values and norms – that is, changes relating to ideologies of language. As we have noted above, the SLICE project is interested in both community-based language change in the classical sense and in language-ideological change. This is necessarily so, because a so-called standard language can never be adequately defined in formal, descriptive terms. It often *appears* that this *is* a possibility. In relation to English-speaking contexts we might think of Gimson's series of books over many years on the *Description of English*, influentially describing Received Pronunciation (Gimson 1962, 1970, 1980) or Wells's (1982) three-volume series describing *Accents of English* which does the same, contrasting standard and non-standard varieties. In many other European countries we might think of the output of official language boards and councils. In the Danish context, *Dansk Sprognævn*, 'The Danish Language Council', produces a steady stream of normative literature on recommended standard usage. Most prominent among these is *Retskrivningsordbogen*, 'The Orthographical Dictionary', but the Council is also required by law to give advice on 'use of the Danish language' to individuals as well as public institutions and private companies. The existence of well-established normative authorities like these lends a considerable degree of perceived stability in relation to what particular standard varieties are, descriptively speaking, and the descriptions themselves largely bypass the issue of how the varieties in question are socially positioned in evaluative, ideological and metacultural terms.

The presupposed stability of 'the standard language' and other language varieties which we see reflected in language manuals (and in some cases in legal texts) stands in stark contrast to the perspective we adopt in the present volume. As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, the SLICE project does not take for granted

the stability of 'standard languages' or the stability of standard language ideology, particularly in the contemporary era. One broad line of critical orientation to this issue is based in the idea that sociocultural conditions in most of contemporary Europe and the west are probably less conducive to supporting ideologies of standardness than they formerly were. Individual cases may of course differ. But the flows of cultural change that are referred to, in short-hand reference, as 'globalisation' appear to have exerted similar pressures on most western states. Five salient aspects of globalisation are: (i) pressure against state-based autonomy in terms of political and economic action, as a consequence of different forms of transnationalism; (ii) the onward march of neo-liberalism and the corporatisation and commodification of ever-more aspects of social life, changing the bases of social inequality in unpredictable ways and introducing 'consumer choice' as a pervasive principle (even in cases where, for many people, no choice is actually available); (iii) detraditionalisation, a force that works against social continuity and social norms based in understandings of 'how things have always been'; (iv) individualisation being asserted or assumed as another generic principle, with increasing expectations and demands that individuals should be responsible for their own successes and failures, but also for their own world-facing identities; and (v) heightened reflexivity around social action of many sorts, such that any 'chosen' mode or social engagement is more likely to be construed as a particular option chosen from a range of known alternatives. (We are unable to provide detailed supporting references for every aspect of this highly generalised overview, but see, for example, Archer 2012; Beck 1992; Castells 1996; Coupland 2010, 2016; Giddens 1991).

In this list of 'new' sociocultural conditions we can readily see potential implications for language and for language use. For example (as we have already suggested), weaker nation states are less likely to be able to sustain ideological pressure in support of standard languages. Ways of speaking are liable to attract new commercial or quasi-commercial values, and well beyond the now-traditional-sounding association between standard language and symbolic capital that Bourdieu theorised in 1991. Sociolinguistic norms based in traditional relativities between standard and non-standard varieties are less likely to be carried forward, particularly at the level of the individual. Individuals will increasingly chart individuated courses through their social lives, and their linguistic 'choices' may be made in more complex and reflexive conditions, and be more liable to be conditioned by short-term considerations in symbolic exchanges of various sorts, and so on.

In running through this thought experiment about language under globalisation – or 'Language in Late-Modernity' (to use Rampton's 2006 title) – it is impossible to ignore processes of mediation and mediatisation. For example, linguistic individualisation is very much a process that we associate with technological media and its propensity to create 'personalities' or 'celebrities' (whether this refers to television

and radio, or to the self-celebritising function of social media, or to service-sector work-roles in call centres). More pervasive marketised conditions will drive new values for so-called standard and vernacular ways of speaking, where the top–down status effect that used to validate traditional standard varieties is liable to be subverted by the appeal of 'difference' (which creates new markets for vernacular speech in many media contexts). As entertainment rises in the hierarchy of media priorities, relative to 'national unification' or defending Establishment values, in highly cluttered and competitive national and transnational media markets, older focused norms are likely to lose their traction. The sociolinguistic world, in a quite profound way, becomes more reflexive and certainly more complex under globalisation. Speakers who command different forms of performative competence are likely to thrive, and those who cannot will not. To invoke the vocabulary of language attitudes research, *status* and *solidarity* are likely to be overtaken by evaluative criteria related to *dynamism*.

Whether and to what extent these ideas can be consolidated as more than loose speculations remains to be seen in detailed sociolinguistic investigations. But we find it helpful to open up a discussion of whether a reoriented language-ideological field, channelled through technological media, might be emerging. The chapters of this book certainly do not set out to prove that any particular new language-ideological configuration has settled into existence across Europe. But each chapter opens a perspective on how particular media initiatives have been involved (or are now involved) in promoting or undermining particular language-ideological priorities, particularly those relating to standard and vernacular language, locally construed. In other words, they share the critical presupposition that media performances *can* be involved in language-ideological change, and they seek out the best evidence available in the particular cases they investigate.

The traditional disciplinary interpretation put forward in dialectology and some strands of sociolinguistics is that the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries generally saw an increase in language standardisation within the nation state, partly promoted through mass media (Anderson 1985; Auer 2005; see also the 'country reports' in Kristiansen and Coupland 2011). Although the process may not have been as linear and clear-cut as some accounts suggest, the emergence of reified varieties that were given official status as 'the standard language' is well-documented. In our view (and we are obviously not alone in arguing this) such a process is unthinkable without *mediation* of language. In Haugen's (1972) terms, language standardisation involves 'selection' of one variety over all other, 'acceptance' of the selection in the community, aided by promotion through public institutions, 'elaboration' in which the selected variety is developed so that it can function in all spheres of society, and 'codification' in which 'the language' is described and solidified. It is easy to see that media (implying some form of staged, public dissemination of ideologies)

would play an important role in a standardisation process of this sort, especially as far as Haugen's 'acceptance' and 'elaboration' is concerned, but also as *de facto* 'codification'.

Even before the emergence of broadcast media in the more modern sense, processes of language standardisation were facilitated by technologies that offered new means of distributing language, and mediation was involved in this. One cause of language standardisation in the late Middle Ages was the invention of the printing press which opened a growing market for uniform reading material. The written language chosen for this new medium of dissemination of (written) language became, in effect, the standard language of the book market and of the nation state. The 'invention' of standard languages in Europe predates the dissemination of written material made possible by the invention of the printing press (Anderson 1991), but the printing press was a key factor in consolidating standard language ideology. Later, in the 20th century, with the establishment of national broadcasting corporations in most European countries – and thus the emergence of talking media (cf. Mortensen, Coupland and Thøgersen in press) – the role of mediated language use as a potential vehicle for standardisation spread to spoken language as well. Interestingly, in some contexts, media language came to be viewed as the *de facto* standard, which makes the claim that media promote 'the standard' an apparent truism. We remain critical of the perceived ontological stability that this sort of conceptualisation confers on the construct of standard languages, but the notion of a standard language and the perceived role and responsibility of mass media in promoting this variety stand as powerful ideological constructs, historically and in the present, which cannot simply be ignored. What we need to question is the assumption that mediatisation *automatically* promotes language standardisation. Historically, this may have been the case – at least according to received accounts – but there is no reason to assume that this should necessarily be so in all eras.

As described in the first SLICE volume (Kristiansen and Coupland 2011), the ideology of 'one nation, one language' may have been the language-ideological norm, but language standardisation in Europe has had more complex outcomes. Some states are officially multilingual (e.g. Belgium, Finland, Switzerland); at least one, Norway, has two standard varieties of the same language, Bokmål and Nynorsk. Even in contexts where national media institutions have been part and parcel of promoting monolingual 'standard language cultures' (Milroy 2001) (with the BBC in England as the textbook example, cf. Mugglestone 2007), it is quite obvious that these very same institutions have also invariably been instrumental in creating awareness of linguistic *diversity*, and, especially in recent decades, have actively come to represent and promote this. This suggests that the role of mass media in promoting standardisation is, at least to some extent, historically contingent. New forms of technologically-mediated discourse provide affordances for sociolinguistic

change, but whether increased mediatisation is likely to lead to a reinforcement of centripetal, standardising forces or, conversely, holds the potential to strengthen centrifugal processes that lead to linguistic diversification, is an empirical question. Our view is, in any case, that centripetalism never exists without centrifugalism, and *vice versa*, that standardisation and de-standardisation are mutually defining ideologies, whichever happens to hold the upper hand at any given historical moment. In line with the overall argument of this volume, we believe that a sociolinguistic account of the media/language/ideology interface needs to take account of centrifugal forces of heterogenisation and de-standardisation as well as the more sociolinguistically familiar centripetal forces of language standardisation.

As noted above, media, and particularly what are usually called broadcast media and their role in the establishment, development and renegotiation of standard language ideologies, have been a focus of the SLICE network since its establishment, for a number of reasons. One reason is that broadcasting institutions (state monopolies as well as private enterprises) tend not only to reflect prevalent language ideologies, but also to *focus* and *shape* such ideologies in their selection of speakers and speech styles, particularly in high-profile broadcasting roles and program formats. Broadcasters often promote specific language norms by giving prominence to speakers who, in some sense of the word, can be considered 'ideal'. Agha (2007) uses the phrase 'exemplary speakers', which implies a process by which certain individuals come to be seen as speakers who embody certain language-ideological values. Heller (2010: 278) suggests that we can see media as *discursive spaces* 'in which social actors, whatever else they may be doing, also define (again and again or anew) what counts as legitimate language and who counts as legitimate speakers'. The challenge is to unpack which ideological stances are in play in this process, while remaining sensitive to the fact that there may be divergent and competing perceptions of what constitutes 'legitimate' or 'exemplary' speakers.

The shaping and focusing functions of talking media mean that, from a longitudinal perspective, changes over time in what broadcasters treat as exemplary speech is open to different lines of interpretation. It may reflect changing norms and ideologies of standard language in the wider cultural context, where the least significant sorts of change are inventory changes. That is, the inventory of linguistic features comprising a speech style that is ideologised as being 'the standard' may (and indeed, inevitably will) change over time, in the manner of variationists' model of language change. The canonical style of, say, newsreaders' speech will change over time in a featural sense, although the ideological premise that there *is* such a style, language-ideologically speaking, may remain firmly in place; the featurally reshaped style may continue to index prestige, authority, 'establishment values', and so on (see e.g. Bell 2011; Thøgersen and Pharao 2013). However, changes in style may also reflect changed language-ideological circumstances, either in the wider

culture or more locally in a media institution's own reframing of social and sociolinguistic values. The perception of what constitutes 'proper' styles of newsreading may, for instance, be challenged or considerably expanded if speakers whose ways of speaking do not fall within the presumed range of the standard are given prominence as newsreaders. This does not amount to language change in a conventional sense, but certainly represents an example of *sociolinguistic change* that involves revalorisation of particular ways of speaking (Coupland 2014; Androutsopoulos 2014a; Mortensen, Coupland and Thøgersen in press; see below for further discussion).

The two previous SLICE books have opted to discuss these potential changes as cases of either *de-standardisation* or *re-standardisation*. However, these two processes of change are likely to be much too specific and much too rigidly defined to capture the range and subtlety of sociolinguistic changes that the talking media can institute. Even if we restrict our primary attention (as we do in this book) to changes relevant to issues of standard and non-standard language as conventionally understood, we should expect sociolinguistic changes to be partial (e.g. incipient, emergent, narrowly targeted) and complex (e.g. multi-faceted, ambiguous, sometimes contradictory) rather than totalising and complete (as the concept of de-standardisation seems to imply). Nevertheless, critical accounts of the ideological implications of mediated performances and innovations can provide rich if inconclusive evidence of the talking media's role in the renegotiation of standard language ideology in specific contexts.

DIALECT STYLE, STYLING AND STYLISATION

The overarching interest of this collection as well as its sister collection (Mortensen, Coupland and Thøgersen in press) and the round table meeting from which they both sprang is the interactionally managed use of dialect styles, i.e. *dialect styling*, in media performances. It seems pertinent, therefore, to give a brief overview of the concepts of *style* and *styling*, plus the more specific concept of *stylisation*, in sociolinguistics. We will try also to give our argument why we believe a 'style and stylisation' approach to the issue of media and standard language ideologies may be preferable to a more traditional variationist 'language variation and change' approach.

It is well known that Labov (1972) formalised style as a dimension of sociolinguistic variation in the earliest accounts of variationist method – so-called 'stylistic variation', referring to 'intra-individual' variability in speech across social contexts of speaking. Styles of speech were assumed to vary across a single dimension, 'attention paid to speech', and could, for example, be called 'casual' versus 'careful',

and stylistic variation was measured as quantitative distribution of linguistic, usually phonetic, features. The style of the speakers was shown to vary with the situation of speaking, more formal contexts yield more attention to speech and *vice versa*. Style in this sense was elaborated in various emerging paradigms of which some could be said to be recipient-focused and others more speaker-focused. Bell's (1984, 2001) media-oriented audience design perspective showed how speech styles (again established on the basis of quantitative distributions of features) can vary in response to characteristics of addressees – different styles for different media audiences. Stylistic variation, in this perspective, was not only, or not primarily, a question of speaker intentions and macro situation of speech, but rather a question of speech directed at recipient norms and expectations.

Among speaker-focused perspectives, but still theoretically in line with Bell's approach, we may include studies under the heading of speech accommodation theory (Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991) which sometimes attempted to correlate distributions of linguistic features with aspects of social situation as well as characteristics of interlocutors in interaction. The crucial difference between the two conceptualisations is speech accommodation theory's focus on the social psychological underpinning of stylistic variation, modelling acts of accommodation (a speaker adopting a speech style that is either more or less similar to the speech style of an interlocutor) as the consequences of 'psychological convergence or divergence' (the aim of decreasing or increasing apparent social differences between people in interaction). This general approach was sometimes referred to as 'speaker design', where style was viewed as 'persona management', the shaping of a speaker's own projected identities in interactional situations (e.g. Coupland 1985). This perspective drew its inspiration from Goffman's (1959) early accounts of 'the presentation of self', as well as from related psychological theorising of impression management. Styles, in these different treatments, are viewed not just as indexical of a single dimension of formality (as in Labov's original concept), but as being open to more or less conscious manipulation, whether to suit an audience or to promote a specific, positive, image of the performer.

It is this performative and socially sensitive aspect of language use that makes the terms 'dialect *style*' and 'dialect *styling*' preferable to the concepts of 'dialect' or 'linguistic variation' themselves. As a concept, 'dialect' is to some extent a product of a romanticised idea of folk speech, when linguists needed a way to describe ways of speaking that 'belonged to' a given 'language' (and nation) but deviated to some noticeable extent and in some socially significant ways from the 'standard' way of speaking, i.e. the way of speaking defined by and associated with the Establishment. Traditional dialectology was motivated by the desire to catalogue and (in a sense) to preserve rural ways of speaking that were in danger of being eradicated by standard varieties, and Labovian sociolinguistics has perpetuated the idea that

vernacular speech is the proper object of sociolinguistic research, because it is a scarce resource. Dialects in this view could be considered to be just as static and just as monolithic as 'standards', and everything we have said about standards being linguistic fictions might also have been said about dialects – dialects being seen as static, well-defined entities associated with stable and permanent indexical meanings, often meanings of rurality, lack of education and (in Bourdieu's terms) lack of cultural capital. Dialects, however, are not monolithic and not immutable; dialects vary and change. Similarly, the indexical meanings of dialects are just as open to contextualised interpretation and renegotiation as are the indexical meanings of so-called standards, and it is worth re-emphasising that 'standard', 'vernacular' and 'dialect' are all meanings attributed to speech styles, rather than labels that define such styles intrinsically.

We get a further indication of why variationist sociolinguistics has avoided media data when we realise that vernacular speech styles/dialects have always been assumed to be grounded 'in the community'. It is this presumption of community embeddedness that has loaded up vernacular speech styles with the (again romanticising) quality of authenticity. Dialects have been seen as the vernaculars associated with particular localised groups of people, *viz.* dialect speakers in defined speech communities. If not simply and simplistically perceived as single-style speakers, their use of dialect has certainly been seen as more authentic, and their use of other styles as somehow inauthentic. We do not deny that speakers may feel this way, and this 'dialect authenticity ideology' may indeed be deep-rooted in some cultures – notice e.g. the Norwegian verb *knote*, used derogatorily about a person who do not speak his or her vernacular dialect, but a different style (Bull 2009). In sociolinguistic theory, however, preferences for some spoken styles over others are worthy of critical examination. To repeat the variationist mantra, there are no single-style speakers; speakers manipulate their speech styles throughout their lives and in the local detail of their speaking activities, and we see no fundamental reason why some styles and some stylistic practices should be given preference. But we also need to recognise that vernacular speech styles are just as 'detachable' (Bauman and Briggs 1990) from their 'home' speech communities as standard speech styles are. The social meanings of vernaculars are just as amenable to being renegotiated in media contexts as are the meanings of standards.

When we approach style as a creative and dynamic resource in interaction – that is, when we consider styling as a form of social practice – we soon run across the tricky distinction between styling and *stylisation*. Stylisation is open to different interpretations, one of them being akin to crossing (Rampton 1995, 2006), the use of speech styles that notionally belong to other people. Interestingly, if we define stylisation this way, we can trace the idea back to Labov's own seminal studies of /r/ in New York City (Labov 1972). The classic department store ('fourth floor')

investigation was as much a study of persona management as one of social class. All the shop assistants in the study, presumably, shared a social class, at least as this might have been defined on the basis of their occupation. When they showed class-based variation in their pronunciation of /r/, they were, one could argue, stylising different class-based ways of speaking; what Labov examined might be conceptualised as speakers of one particular social class appropriating speech styles associated with speakers of other classes. A more nuanced interpretation would be that assistants working in particular department stores fell under the normative demands of their employers to style their dialect identities in ways consonant with the class identifications of the stores themselves, and a requirement of this sort would predictably have influenced stores' recruitment policies as regards the speech styles of their employees. Even so, the pertinent sociolinguistic issues in this classic study are dialect styling and identity performance, over and beyond the simpler matter of how sociolinguistic variables were distributed across speakers and speaking contexts.

In variationist interpretations, the symbolic values of dialects and dialect features tend to be seen as constant and immutable. In adopting a more flexible and more dynamically-framed 'styling and stylisation' approach we emphasise the negotiability and context sensitivity of indexical values associated with dialect styles. We do not mean to propose that indexical values are constructed anew in a vacuum at each interactional instance – no performative or constructionist perspective, in our opinion, would claim anything like that. All performances and all interpretations must be interpreted relative to pre-existing sociolinguistic norms, by interlocutors and analysts alike. But to sacrifice agency to structure entirely is theoretically untenable. It may be pertinent here to point to Bakhtin's (1986) dictum that 'the word in language is half someone else's'. A style perspective aligns with Bakhtin (and Goffman, by the way) in seeing language use as performative, managed and potentially manipulative in speakers' deployment of styles and 'words'. It may be that a performer is unaware of the indexical values associated with his or her choice of style. Goffman (1959) speaks of this mode of operation as 'sincere' performance, and describes it as the acts of an actor so taken in by her or his own performance that they don't distinguish between themselves as (as it were) actors and roles. This perspective would be analogous to variationists' assumptions of how vernacular speakers orient to their vernacular speech. We do not mean to imply that this stance never occurs; not all performances are cynical, devious or manipulative. Like many other sociolinguistics, however, we do agree with Goffman in suggesting that it is productive to look at performances *as if* they were deliberate, to ask what is being performed and how a given interpretation of a situation is being 'brought off'. Again we believe that technologically mediated language performances lend themselves particularly well to this view, because, in opposition to supposedly 'non-

mediated' performances, they are indeed likely to have been prepared, rehearsed and edited. If the 'sincere' performer is rare in everyday life, he or she is likely to be even rarer in aspects of everyday life constituted by mediated performances.

The concept of enregisterment (Agha 2007) has proved a particularly fruitful one for discussing how linguistic features come to be understood as belonging to the same norm-associated 'set of features', or how they become reified as 'a style' or 'a variety', and how these sets of features become inscribed with symbolic meaning ('good language', 'bad language', 'foreigner language', etc.). The upshot of this is the point we made above: utterances come to carry semiotic meaning not just through *what* speakers say, but also in *how* they say it, how they contextualise the stylistic features they use, because the use of linguistic features ascribed to a particular set come to hold rich and complex indexical meaning(s). Enregistered varieties and the metalinguistic discourses that sustain them, then, are rich sources for the investigation of language ideologies.

The gist of this discussion of dialect style and dialect styling versus simply 'dialect' is that a speech style is always an abstraction from the dynamic process of styling language, and that it is always freighted with socially interpretive, metapragmatic meaning. Styling is the creative deployment of stylistic resources which are metapragmatically potentiated in their socio-cultural histories. Styling brings the concept of dialect within the remit of discourse, viewed as a form of situated social (inter)action rather than a set of naïve, value-neutral acts of communication. Styling can be seen as a fusion of two inter-connected forms of semiotic activity: the utterance is framed as interpretable relative to known, socially significant meanings attaching to particular styles used. But simultaneously, the meanings of normative styles being referenced are themselves open to being renegotiated; the symbolic associations of styles may be reinforced, brought into question, opposed, turned on their head, etc. in local instances.

This means, as we have already suggested, that a critical view of media performance and sociolinguistic change needs to be based in close inspection not only of the formal (e.g. dialectal) features of speech styles, but also of the ways in which ways of speaking are styled into particular social contexts and media genres and events. Styling is a mode of performance, and it is helpful to recognise that the concept of performance is itself flexible, spanning those speech events that are culturally consolidated as 'set-piece performances' (e.g. reading the news, singing in public, acting as a character in a theatrical play) and others that are not institutionally recognisable. Everyday talk-in-interaction involves 'performance' in Bauman's (1978) sense, even if this is no more than the recreation of a familiar persona in a familiar relationship. Intermediate examples might include the telling of a joke among friends, when the performative framing of a speaker's actions is momentarily upgraded into something more like a set-piece performance; the speaker adopts a

particular speaking position as 'a joke-teller' and other participants redefine themselves as 'an audience', and so on. (Coupland 2007 suggests that a distinction of this sort can be recognised terminologically by referring to heavily institutionalised performance frames as 'high' performances.)

Theorising styling as performance allows analysts to engage with the creative work that speakers can do in managing social reality, and technological mediation is intimately involved in this process. Like 'ordinary speakers', but often in much more resourceful and influential ways, media producers and performers are able to conjure up representations that we (as audience members) recognise to be either 'entirely real', 'entirely unreal' or (perhaps more interestingly) ambiguous as to their reality and authenticity. Following a more specific definition of the concept, stylisation can in fact be viewed as a mode of performance in which speakers complicate and ambiguate the indexical relations of the speech styles they bring into play, neither firmly endorsing nor clearly challenging stereotyped expectations. We can think of stylisation, then, as the knowing deployment of socially familiar semiotic material where the speaker strategically complicates and ambiguates her or his relationship with that material, immediately bringing questions of (in)authenticity to the fore. In stylisation of this sort we again see the semiotic dynamism that can be characteristic of talking media representations and performances. The ambiguation of normative understandings of dialect is, as we argue below, one way in which mediated performances can lead to sociolinguistic change – talking media using reflexive resources for critiquing sociolinguistic norms, rather than simply adhering (or not) to such norms. Stylisation may therefore be seen as a semiotic 'third way', an opportunity for reconceptualising dominant norms and ideologies, including standard language ideologies (see the next section).

Acts of stylisation, as they are analysed in this collection, are often exaggerated or 'mock' performances in which the presumably defining traits of a style are brought out for scrutiny or utilised for the creation of easily-recognisable personas. Very often, then, stylisations have an element of parody or humour to them. They are verbal performances, but they are usually also (in Bakhtin's 1981 sense) active double-voicings in which a performer appropriates another's voice in their utterance, possibly in criticism and mocking parody of the original voice. The 'other' whose voice is being appropriated is more often than not a fictional, stereotyped persona – a 'social type', and occasionally a named person. (In the case of styling named persons, we tend to talk of 'impersonations', although the discursive functions of impersonations can again vary.) Stylisation is therefore very clearly an ideological resource – a resource for bringing into play and exposing existing stylistic norms and expectations, but with the creative potential to challenge and rework their ideological associations and underpinnings.

The analysis of stylisation as a mode of discursive practice needs to be rather sophisticated, in the general manner of critical discourse analysis. The (meta)pragmatic effects of stylisation depend on the uptake of social and ideological meanings. In complex, multi-party social environments, and certainly in mediated language performances where there is often a mix of participants who are active in the mediated frame and others ('audience members') who stand outside of that frame, there may be only partial uptake by selective sub-groups of recipients. This is often the case with humorous or parodic styling, where the communicative design may be to play off predictable meaning uptakes from one segment of an audience against predictably failed uptakes from another segment. In this way styling can be functional in the creation of social difference, as well as in the exploitation of differentiated sociolinguistic norms. This again highlights the critical, change-oriented potential of stylised performances. Stylisation may exploit stereotypical symbolic evaluations, for instance when a 'standard speaker' stylises 'dialect' to mock the stereotype of dialect speakers, or when a 'dialect speaker', conversely, stylises 'standard language' to mock the stereotype of the 'standard speaker'. But the discursive effects are likely to be more subtle than this, depending on how sympathetic the relevant personas have been constructed to be, whether audiences are positioned to 'laugh with' rather than 'laugh at' specific performers, how characters and relationships have been developed in particular narratives, and a host of other local-contextual considerations.

MEDIA AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC CHANGE

Talking media – the technological media that disseminate talk-in-interaction, such as television, radio, film, user-generated video and the various platforms that put digital material of this sort into circulation – demand sociolinguistic investigation for a variety of reasons. They constitute rich points of sociolinguistic practice because of the density and intensity of popular engagement that they can achieve. Talking media are therefore able to make linguistic styles particularly metalinguistically and metaculturally salient (Androutsopoulos 2011, 2014b; Coupland 2009, 2010). The audio-visual talking media embed linguistic styles in visual representations, so that 'style' becomes a more holistic, multi-modal concept. Mediated representations and performances are replete with styled identities, relationships, situations and activities that of course go well beyond this book's immediate concern with dialect standards and vernaculars. But even in this specific domain it is evident that we are dealing not only with linguistic styles *per se* but with the social types that speech indexes and with how they are 'rounded out' in multiple semiotic dimensions. Talking media are therefore a primary means by which cultural norms

and boundaries and language ideologies relating to standardness and vernacularity are reflexively represented and performed. Talking media put so-called standard and vernacular ways of speaking on display, contextualise them and imbue them with the socio-cultural values that we associate with standardness and vernacularity – very differently across different genres and contexts, and differently over time.

We stress, again, that large-scale engagement with the talking media is very much a part of 'ordinary' sociolinguistic experience in contemporary societies around the globe. Indeed, sociolinguistic diversity, normativity and change are at issue both in how talking media systems and institutions mediate language and in how the ensuing stylistic constructions do – or do not – survive subsequent movement *out* of talking media into 'the real world'. In other words, the issue at hand is not simply whether mediated styling impacts on 'everyday language use', or not. In fact, the chapters of this book and of its sister collection – Mortensen, Coupland and Thøgersen (in press) – contain plenty of evidence of the uptake and recirculation of media-generated styles and stylistic fragments, so that 'impact' is well documented. But even if this were not the case, we still have to address the wider question of how talking media *feed into* as well as feed off the wider sociolinguistic environment. As we have already stressed, talking media need to be seen as key parts of the sociolinguistic landscapes in which they appear, not as some sort of decontextualised meta-phenomena whose relationship with the social is open to question. The supposed 'inauthenticity' of mediated language is very clearly challenged by the fact that some sociolinguistically important styles and registers are primarily (or at least initially) brought to the awareness of language users in and through talking media. Familiar registers and genres like newsreading, talk show interaction, sports commentator style, and so on are born as mediated styles before they may potentially gain a social life outside talking media (see e.g. Rampton's 1995 analysis of boys' use of a sports commentator register as an on-going commentary to their cricket game). What we think of as 'media genres' are by no means sealed off from the world beyond technological mediation. But also, core sociolinguistic awareness, including recognition of regional and ethnic linguistic varieties as well as their associated symbolic values, is very commonly promoted through mediated performances (see Johnstone 2011 and Quist this volume). Sociolinguistic normativity is very much the home ground of talking media representations and performances, just as much as the memorable and striking cases of stylisation and of deviation from norms. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, we need to entertain the idea of change in *all* these instances. In order to retain their 'traditional' qualities, especially in the face of the de-traditionalising tendencies of late modernity (see above), norms need to be actively maintained through repeated confirmatory acts. Since all individual contexts of social action are unique, what looks like norm maintenance is, strictly

speaking, an accumulation of discursive acts of norm-convergence, where the change potential inherent in performance is minimised, but never wholly resisted.

The concept of *sociolinguistic change* was introduced (Androutsopoulos 2014; Coupland 2009, 2014; Mortensen, Coupland and Thøgersen in press) in order to refresh sociolinguistics's conventional view of change. We noted earlier that *language change* has been the dominant approach, closely defined within the field of language variation and change, emphasising systemic and mainly phonological change over time in the vernacular speech of particular speech communities. We fully endorse the relevance and coherence of this perspective, but we hope to supplement it with the broader and more socially sensitive concept of sociolinguistic change. Sociolinguistic change refers to changing relationships between language and society, and to changes that are socially consequential in one way or another for language users. In this new perspective, even in the absence of language change in the canonical sense, sociolinguistic change may occur, for example if the social and ideological structures in which linguistic varieties function can be shown to have changed (see e.g. Fabricius and Mortensen 2013; Mugglestone 2007). To take a clear instance within the remit of the present book, if a style that has been ideologised as a standard way of speaking begins to lose its social credentials, then sociolinguistic change is in progress. Language-ideological changes are clear instances of sociolinguistic change, and sociolinguistics is familiar with many such changes, even though they have not been named as sociolinguistic changes. Changing ideological values around the speech styles of gender, age and class groups are all sociolinguistic changes, and it is obvious that these changes, where they occur, are likely to be consequential for speakers. The changes that are of interest to the SLICE programme span both language change and sociolinguistic change – how the speech styles of defined social groups themselves shift incrementally over time, but also how those styles may be differently positioned over time in their sociolinguistic ecosystems.

Some key points about sociolinguistic change are worth emphasising here. First, sociolinguistic change need not take the form of slow, ineluctable change over time, in the manner of changing phonological systems; language-ideological change can be abrupt, hinging on specific events that come to popular attention (more in the manner of changes in political sentiments, then). Second, it will probably be more difficult to establish temporal 'before and after' points of comparison, in the way that language change research does, e.g. modelling generational shifts, in real or apparent time. ('Real time' here means that the same speakers, or similar speakers, being recorded twice over a span of time, often decades; 'apparent time' means that different generations are recorded in the same time frame, under the assumption that speakers do not change their speech styles during their adult lives. An assumption in both paradigms, as mentioned above, is that social categories and social meaning of

these categories are stable over time.) Sociolinguistic change need not be linear, while the linear directionality of much language change has of course been one of its most tantalising features. In contrast, sociolinguistic change can be studied as a new form of 'change in progress', when new ways of pulling together the social and the linguistic are first evidenced, and talking media will often be strongly involved in forging such realignments. Third, many sociolinguistic changes will arise as elements of even wider historical processes of *social change*. As we briefly noted earlier, social-theoretic accounts of globalisation, individualisation, de-traditionalisation, and of course technologisation and mediatisation, very clearly implicate language and discourse in particular respects. To this extent the concept of sociolinguistic change invites sociolinguists to engage with social-scientific theorisation of 'how things are' and 'how things are changing'.

Focusing on media data affords a coherent way of studying changing relationships between dialect forms/practices and social/ideological contexts. Contributors to the present volume study a mix of present and past data – in all cases, data that arose in talking media. Their analyses and interpretations are based on the full range of contextual information available to them, and in many cases this includes responding to multimodal aspects of broadcast performances.

We may think of television as the quintessential audio-visual medium in that it combines auditory (e.g. spoken, read-aloud or sung) signs with visual signs, sometimes in support of each other, sometimes in conflict or complex semiotic interaction. Following Bakhtin's (1981) concept of heteroglossia or multiple voicing, we can pursue a different sort of multi-dimensionality in televised performances, where utterances can contain a complex interplay of different voices, either in support of each other, uni-directionally, or vari-directionally, when one voice comments on or qualifies another (Morson and Emerson 1990: 147ff.). Yet even a 'purely' auditory medium like radio has the same potential for double-voicing in the interplay of different layers of auditory semiosis, e.g. semantics, voice style, background music and effects and of course dialect style. For all practical purposes we can conceptualise these auditory layers as being analogous to different communicative 'modes'. Analyses that are sensitive to the multi-modal nature of the performance in which dialect styles are presented (e.g. in the vein of Theo van Leeuwen's multi-modal discourse analysis, Kress and van Leeuwen 2001) give us new possibilities of investigating the semiotic potential and the ideological meaning of dialects. Stylised dialect performances are 'framed' (in the sense of Goffman 1986) by semiotic expressions in different modes, while dialect stylisations of course themselves act in framing the interpretation of multiple semiotic modes.

Media analysis also necessitates close consideration of *genre*. Genre is generally said to refer to culturally recognised modes of purposive social action in specific domains (Swales 1990), so that we can talk of genres of written text (e.g. novels,

poetry, journalism), of popular music (e.g. country, rock, hip-hop) or of spoken exchange (e.g. narrative, joke, advice-giving). But talking media also work to their own specifications of genre, including the macro-categories of news, current affairs, fiction, drama, etc. but also micro-categories such as 'experiential interviews' versus 'accountability interviews' (Montgomery in press). Bazerman (2013) argues for seeing genres as social acts. Recognising the genre of an utterance is essential for understanding the social meaning of the utterance: "since utterances are the site for the creation and transmission of speech acts and social facts, the typification of utterances in genres is related to the recognisability of acts and the location of facts" (*ibid*. 231). Fulfilling genre expectancies becomes a condition for the felicitous performance of a speech act, and violating genre expectations and hybridising genres exploits and transforms conventions: "When accomplished speech acts in one domain travel to another, they both carry some of the assumptions and practices from the original domain and become transformed by the practices of the new domain" (*ibid*. 231).

This introduces the aspect that genres can be styled in distinctive ways. Certainly, particular styles are normatively associated with particular genres, but social meaning is made in the detailed styling of any given genre performance (cf. Coupland 2011 on vocal styling in popular music). But just as identities can be stylistically reshaped over time on the basis of stylistic innovations, so can genres themselves – genres change, and this is sociolinguistic change more than language change. What it means to 'read the news' or to 'do stand-up comedy' can change, incrementally or more suddenly, on the basis of salient stylistic innovations.

For the purposes of this volume an interesting complication is that genres are themselves prone to playful reinterpretation and indeed stylisation. Just as we may think of speakers' variable stylings of dialect and his or her stylisation of those conventions as a complication or ambiguation of his or her stance towards the style, we may refer to a media performer's use of genre.

THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS

The main chapters of the book shed light on local instances of actual or potential sociolinguistic change across a wide range of national, linguistic, institutional and mediational contexts. They show how mediated styling and stylisation achieve a wide range of sociolinguistic effects; how they:

- bring language ideologies into play in public arenas, making them available for reflexive reconsideration

- play with or against socio-cultural norms, including norms for standard languages and vernacular dialects;
- reshape nationally established contexts for language use;
- negotiate elite and vernacular identities;
- model modes of participation in the public sphere.

The first three chapters, by Jane Stuart-Smith, Jan-Ola Östman and Jacob Thøgersen connect quite directly with the language change agenda in the sense that the first chapter investigates the interface between media language and language change in society at large, while the second and third track the evolution of particular linguistic varieties longitudinally. At the same time, all three studies present detailed information about changing cultural perceptions of linguistic features and sets of features in the shape of dialect styles. On this basis, all three chapters are able to theorise the role of different media in bringing about sociolinguistic change and what kinds of social-meaning enregisterments media performances may propagate.

Stuart-Smith approaches the sociolinguistic question of media's involvement in language change head-on, asking some very pertinent research questions. In the first part of her chapter she reports on a series of studies conducted to investigate the potentially direct effect of media consumption and psychological investment in particular media characters on the use of innovative linguistic features. The underlying hypothesis is that more intensive involvement with media performances exhibiting innovative features should promote the use of these features among adolescents in Glasgow. The results are inconclusive, leading Stuart-Smith to raise theoretical questions about *how* speakers may appropriate innovative features they meet in media; in which situations are they using 'media-disseminated' features, and which metapragmatic (or indexical) meaning do they carry? To answer these questions, Stuart-Smith turns to close analyses of language use in the BBC TV series *EastEnders*.

Östman's approach to 'media' is particularly original; his data are pop music lyrics, specifically the use of stylistic features recognisable as Finland-Swedish dialect features. As Östman explains, Finland has two official languages, of which the one under study, Swedish, is perceived to be in itself minoritised by Finnish. Östman presents a number of different periods or 'stages' in the use and interpretation of dialect styles in song lyrics spanning the last four decades. The central point of the analysis is that we witness both a change in the use of dialect features, and simultaneously a change in the symbolic (and political) interpretation of this use. Stylistic practices, thus, both reflect and challenge standard language norms.

Thøgersen discusses a staple theme in Danish sociolinguistics, the so-called 'flat a'. The treatment is partly a historical analysis of the use of this (supposedly) stig-

matised variant in prestige media language, and partly a study of contemporary stylised use of the standard or high-prestige variant. The upshot of the analyses is that what was a stigmatised variant has become neutralised, whereas the former standard variant has been ascribed a new meaning (or meaning potential, available for local interpretation). The chapter theorises the role of mediated performances in bringing about this change in symbolic meaning of a style marker. Stuart-Smith and Thøgersen therefore deal with variation within (national or regional) 'standards', showing how particular delimitations of (what counts as) standard are permeable, whereas Östman's perspective is on the relationship between different varieties within the larger community of the nation state.

The contributions by Nesse, by Van Hoof and Jaspers and by Cornips, de Rooij, Stengs and Thissen, constitute a suite of chapters which all deal with what we might call 'circulation of dialect styles', all treating stylised varieties being used as performative resources in broadcast fiction. A common feature of these three chapters is the close analysis of ways in which stylisations, in the sense of 'inauthentic' style usages, are used in fiction. In some cases dialect styles become the topic of metalinguistic treatment within a fictional universe, but the chapters first and foremost illustrate how dialect styles are used either as a characterological device (a semiotic short-hand used to present a stereotypical character, along with dress, demeanour, etc.) or as a metapragmatic framing feature.

Agnete Nesse analyses the use of dialect styles in a Norwegian radio play for children broadcast from the 1920s to the 1960s. An interesting feature of the play is that all characters are performed by the same male actor. Any difference in dialect styles used by the different characters must therefore be a deliberate, creative manipulation. How conscious the performer was of his linguistic choices we can, of course, only speculate about. The dialect styles used vary along axes of national vs. regional high-prestige speech and urban vs. rural, and the performances show clear symbolic meanings being attached to the different styles. This is particularly salient in the case of the two main characters who are constructed to have very different personalities and different dialect styles.

Sarah Van Hoof and Jürgen Jaspers analyse a corpus of Flemish TV fiction from the 1970s and 1980s, with a particular focus on the use of 'standard', 'dialect' and 'tussentaal', the last of these being, ideologically speaking, a hybrid between standard and dialect. Their analyses show, on the one hand, the connection between styles and genres, particularly how particular TV genres are dominated by use of the standard. On the other hand, their close analyses of a number of stylised performances show how this hierarchy can also be challenged, in particular within comedy which seems to lend itself particularly well to normative disruptions. Van Hoof and Jaspers theorise that the current rise in the use of tussentaal relative to the nominal standard may in part be an effect caused by the ridiculing that both dialects and

the standard receive in media performances. Tussentaal may be seen as a 'safe spot', an unmarked choice between heavily symbolically marked alternatives. Both Nesse and Van Hoof and Jaspers, then, deal with the standardisation of language *within* national broadcast media. As we have discussed earlier in this introduction, it is a common conception that language use was largely homogeneous (i.e. 'standard') in the golden age of national broadcasting media. The chapters by Nesse and Van Hoof and Jaspers show this was not exclusively the case, and also illustrate that the value ascribed to 'standard' speech was not necessarily as positive as traditional standard language-ideological views might suggest.

In their chapter Leonie Cornips, Vincent de Rooij, Irene Stengs and Lotte Thissen investigate how dialect styles associated with geographical and psychological stereotypes are exploited in the case of a translation and broadcast enactment of the international bestseller fantasy fiction book *Harry Potter*. The study is a remarkable illustration of language users' ability to form symbolic associations between language forms, personality traits and social spaces. The association that readers and listeners are invited to make between the personality traits of the characters in the *Harry Potter* universe and the values stereotypically associated with the dialect styles they speak is of an entirely ideological nature. Everything is imagined, yet the fictional universe is firmly based in well-known 'real-world' cultural perceptions of speech styles. By highlighting the language-ideological work involved in this meaning-making process, the authors are able to offer a critical commentary on the ideology of linguistic egalitarianism that prevails in the region.

As Cornips et al. show, language users are often fully capable of metalinguistic reflections on fictional characters' appropriate dialect styles. By saying that stylisations function as metapragmatic framing resources, we want to draw attention to fictional performances of stylisation, i.e. performances where the styliser is not only the real-life actor but also the fictional character within the narrative (although of course bodily the two are the same). In media performances the use of fictional stylisation, e.g. in the form of Ramptonian 'crossings', may act as a vehicle of humour and narrative tension. The different views on dialect styles as narrative resources in the three chapters again present evidence that we need a broad view on what to count as sociolinguistically 'legitimate' media genres and media performances. Certainly it is not the case that only 'serious' programmes and only 'authentic' style performances qualify as legitimate sociolinguistics endeavours.

Again we want to stress the dialectical nature of stylistic performances, at least in their use for narrative purposes. Each of the performances presented draws on a set of shared norms of dialect styles *vis-à-vis* standard styles. The narratives, the motives and the morale (or in the case of jokes, the punchlines) are only appreciable under the assumption that the listener/viewer can decipher the stylistic stereotypes presented. In that sense performances reflect existing sociolinguistic norms; in re-

circulating the connection between style and stereotype, they may also be said to confirm and strengthen this connection. However, stylistic performances clearly also have a disruptive potential to question and challenge those norms. And one perspective need not exclude the other. The chapters in this section show ample evidence of this, but it also becomes a central focus for the chapters in the last section of the book.

The final three chapters, by Quist, by Bell and by Coupland, all share a particular perspective on sociolinguistic change. They are all interested in the role of mediated performances in unsettling dominant ideologies. As earlier chapters have shown, linguistic stereotypes deployed in mediated narratives can be relatively fixed. Arguably, the style needs to be in a relatively stable relationship with its social meaning in order for it to work as a characterological shorthand. When dialect styles are used to index personality, the interpretation must be relatively unambiguous, at least initially. In the studies reported in the last three chapters, however, ambiguity and uncertainty in the interpretation of the indexical meaning of linguistic features and styles are brought to the fore, as well as questions about the composition and enregisterment of styles. Which features 'belong to' which styles, and to which personas? Which styles carry which enregistered meanings? In the sense that they actively query fundamental normative understandings of stylistic coherence, these chapters have a postmodern feel, which of course relates to the postmodern dimension of the acts of styling that they investigate. Here styles are not seen or used as fixed entities; rather, their inherent fluidity is brought out and played with, with the result that norms and ideologies are reflexively being questioned and challenged. This tendency is evident in earlier chapters too, but it is a distinctive feature of the final three chapters that the mediated, stylised performances they investigate play exactly on ambiguity and uncertainty, hybridisation and bricolage.

Pia Quist's chapter is concerned with a particular style of Danish that she calls 'urban youth style' or 'street style'. She overviews the historical evolution of the style, arguing that it has become enregistered through various mediated performances and developed its own indexical meaning potential against the backdrop of a language ideological landscape characterised by relatively strong normativity and perceived homogeneity. In Quist's account, the indexical meaning of 'street style' remains ambiguous, on the one hand holding the potential to index a 'gangster persona', on the other hand, in some contexts, indexing a '*wannabe* gangster' understood as someone who may be provocative and transgressive but who is also slightly ridiculous.

Allan Bell's chapter presents a discussion of mediated performances from the US television series *Flight of the Conchords* in which the traditional hierarchy between New Zealand and Australian English, New Zealand and Australian nationalities and national stereotypes are held up for scrutiny in a humorous context. The

comedic potential of the NZ–AUS juxtaposition is based on hyperbolic presentations of national(istic) oppositions and a particular kind of role-reversal in which New Zealand as a nation and New Zealand English as a style – traditionally both seen as marginal and peripheral compared to Australia and Australian English – are presented as the normative centre. Bell argues that *Flight of the Conchords*, in its carnivalesque approach to national and linguistic stereotypes, has a *verfremdung* effect on its audience which is likely to engender heightened cultural reflexivity and potential sociolinguistic change.

A similar process of estrangement is present in the data treated in Nikolas Coupland's chapter, but here the focus is less on the hierarchy of styles or the association between styles and social stereotypes than it is on the linguistic constitution of styles themselves and the meaning that may be created through the inconsistent, or in Coupland's term 'dissonant', deployment of well-known styles, presented in fragmentary ways. The data, sourced from the BBC television *Armstrong and Miller Show* and a TV commercial for *Boddingtons Bitter*, illustrate how the playful integration of styles with very different social meanings may achieve a range of pragmatic effects. In the sketch show, incongruous mixing of stylistic elements constructs humorous parody, and in the TV commercial the recycling of familiar tropes, including visual effects and musical styles that we associate with high-powered adventure films, combined with a dissonant dialect style promoting a bitter (beer) from Manchester in the north of England, triggers reflexive reassessment of how styles carry their meaning, and how they might be otherwise.

In the previous section we saw examples where stylisation was used to deliver a punchline; in this section more often than not stylisations *are* the punch lines. In Coupland's and Bell's cases much of the humour (or even the 'point' of the data) is based on the subversion of normative expectations, achieved either through the mixing of incongruous styles or by the disruption of established normative hierarchies. In Quist's case, humour hinges on style shifting which highlights the indexical values associated with different styles, thereby exposing the multi-layered social meanings associated with 'urban street style'.

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