

The view from the couch: Changing perspectives on the role of television in changing language ideologies and use

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INTRODUCTION

Language standardisation in Europe is linked to the mass media in a number of complex ways. On the one hand, historical processes of language standardisation in Europe have always had a close relationship with the mass print media (e.g. Hjarvard 2004; Buchstaller 2008 after Milroy and Milroy 1998). On the other, the role of the broadcast media, especially television and radio, in the recent and contemporary processes of standardisation – and other kinds of change which together might be loosely grouped together as ‘destandardisation’ – seems rather less straightforward. This chapter focuses on the latter theme, and falls into four parts.

In the first I consider the theoretical context for such a discussion, and in particular the different kinds of claims, assumptions, and evidence for media influence on language change across sociolinguistic research: the picture is complex, and the details seem to relate closely to theoretical context and location/domain of study. The second part gives a brief overview of how media influence on social behaviours more generally is modelled within mass communications: the key insight, whatever the theoretical perspective, is that media influence is crucially contingent on what the viewer brings to the media experience. It seems plausible that a similar assumption can be made if we wish to understand better what might be entailed by assuming that the media ‘influences’ language. In the third section, we test the predictions of such an approach with phonological data from two theoretically different sociolinguistic contexts of (de)standardisation. In the fourth and final part, we make some practical suggestions for improving the empirical base for understanding and modelling media, influence on language change, especially from television. Whilst it is clear that we need much better understanding of media models and their social and ideological meanings as resources for viewers, fundamental research is needed into viewers and the viewing experience, and how this relates to language variation and use in the short, and longer-term. For though even our terminology for the phenomenon (or rather bundle of phenomena), ‘media influence on language’, implies that any kind of shifts in conjunction with media arises from the media somehow doing things to the viewer, it seems much more likely that it is the viewers, in ways thoroughly constrained by their existing linguistic, social and ideological knowledge, and usually without any overt awareness that anything might be happening, who are doing things with the media.

TENSIONS ACROSS THEORETICAL BOUNDARIES

At the broadest level of sociolinguistics, the notion of the influence of the broadcast media on standardisation, and language change more generally, seems to elicit a number of tensions. Sociolinguistics is a substantial discipline encompassing a range of approaches (Coulmas 1997). Across, and even within, these approaches, media influence is treated rather differently. Interestingly – and especially for this volume – the geographical location of the practice

of sociolinguistics itself seems to engender, or at least be congruent with, rather different views of what the media might be responsible for.

The advent of broadcasting, first by radio and then television, meant that standard varieties of languages could be experienced by very large numbers of non-standard dialect speakers in their own homes (Holly 1995). It also meant that standard varieties could be promulgated and promoted as such by media producers (Agha 2003; Milroy 2006). The widespread level of repeated exposure to such standard varieties, especially through news broadcasting, was assumed to lead to a fundamental erosion of traditional dialects and shift towards standard norms, particularly because it was assumed that the standard would not only be ubiquitous but also uniformly socially prestigious. However the degree to which language standardisation has actually taken place in structural linguistic terms, especially since the 1960s during which personal ownership of television sets peaked (Bushman and Huesmann 2001), is unclear, and the picture seems to vary according to linguistic variety and sociolinguistic context.

Sociolinguists working in the variationist paradigm on varieties of English in America and the UK have argued against a direct role for the broadcast media in systemic aspects of language change in direction of the standard, given the continued and documented diversity of non-standard dialects, particularly at the levels of phonology and morpho-syntax (e.g. Milroy and Milroy 1985; Chambers 1998; Labov 2001): wholesale shifts do not appear to have taken place. This position contrasts strongly with that expressed by linguists and sociolinguists working outside English-speaking countries. For example, in Germany the widespread reduction in dialect forms found in spoken regional dialects (dedialectalisation) is claimed to have taken place at least in part as a result of the introduction of radio broadcasting (Lameli 2004), and even general accounts of the potential influence of the broadcast media on language change argue for inevitable shifts (e.g. Brandt 2000; Schmitz 2005). The media is also suggested as the impetus for changes across national standards, for example, Austrian German shifting towards German German (Muhr 2003), and not only in terms of lexis. Other instances where the broadcast media are cited as a factor in either dedialectalisation, or the implementation of a standard variety (or standard features) are not difficult to find; to pick just a very few: Danish (Hjarvard 2004); Dutch (Willemys 2003); Telegu (Bartsch 1985); Swahili (Moehlig 1992); Japanese (Takano and Ota 2007). Most of these discussions assume that media influence is only one factor amongst others, especially education and increased social and geographical mobility after the Second World War.

Despite the rejection or acceptance of media influence on community norms, there seems to be little direct evidence from studies which consider speakers' actual linguistic usage with their reported exposure and their engagement with the media (Gunter 2000). The two variationist studies which look at standardisation of morpho-syntactic variation in Brazilian Portuguese show significant correlations with reported media exposure (Naro 1981), and a combined media exposure/engagement variable (Naro and Scherre 1996), while Saladino's (1990) correlational study of dialectal Italian does not. A slightly different context, across a national boundary, is presented in Carvahlo (2004)'s discussion of Uruguayan Portuguese speakers' explicit orientation towards the norms presented in the socially attractive Brazilian television programmes (though no actual correlations were found).

What is interesting about the sociolinguistic context for these studies, and in fact, most of those where the media is thought to be involved in structural instances of standardisation, seems to be both the potential linguistic distance between standard variety and (regional) dialect, and possibly more important, the social and cultural distance, which might be captured in terms of the nature and degree of enregisterment of the varieties concerned (Agha 2003). The mass media – including the broadcast media – seem to be integral in the development of standard language ideologies (Milroy and Milroy 1998), which attach in complex and dynamic ways with arrays of linguistic variation that emerge as standards (Agha's 2003 discussion of RP and Standard British English provides a good example). So it is inevitable that the broad-

cast media will have an impact on metalinguistic awareness of linguistic varieties and variation, standard and non-standard, and the ideologies surrounding them (Coupland 2009a: 40), and this has been well acknowledged by English-based scholars (e.g. Milroy and Milroy 1985 citing Rogers and Shoemaker 1971, now Rogers 2003). But what seems to remain unclear are the connections between media exposure and engagement, structural linguistic change, and speakers' shifting ideologies about language variation which are at least partly constructed by their media experience (Kristiansen 2009).

The concern with modelling structural aspects of language change goes hand-in-hand with a particular theoretical perspective, which has largely been focussed on varieties on English. Variationist sociolinguistic studies have tended to discount the influence of the broadcast media on changes other than to lexis, and other than above the level of conscious awareness (i.e. modelled in terms of copying). This is partly because of the emphasis on locating the primary mechanisms of language change in involuntary low-level shifts during social interaction (e.g. Labov 2001: 228). Whilst social interaction is without doubt the locus of variation and change, it is becoming clear that much more constrains the linguistic outcome than the physical presence of the interlocutor (Auer and Hinskens 2005), and may be far from automatic (e.g. Babel 2010). It is also because of an implicitly-held assumption that media influence on language would have to entail wholesale shifts in form and function, for example the adoption of a linguistic item, such as 'be like' complete with linguistic and sociolinguistic constraints of the 'donor' variety (e.g. Buchstaller 2008; Buchstaller and D'Arcy 2009), which is reminiscent of the old, now abandoned, 'stimulus-response' media effects models (e.g. Curran 1996).

By contrast, interactional sociolinguistics recognises the complex reciprocity of form and function in linguistic variation as it is variously represented in the substantial array of media genres, formats and texts, and as it is used within communities. The large body of work on styling and stylisation, including crossing (e.g. Rampton 1995; 1999; Androutsopoulos 2001), identifies, documents and accounts for the creative appropriation of elements of media language within the interactional context that they appear (Holly *et al* 2001). Such appropriation is fundamentally determined by the communicative purposes of the interaction, and is also usually illustrated by largish chunks of language, whose original provenance is marked by the speaker with some representation of original prosodic features of intonation and rhythm (whether or not these may be retrieved by the listeners).

Interestingly, while the two theoretical perspectives differ in underlying assumptions about the relationships between language in the broadcast media and language in the community, the assumptions and data from both support each other in apparently demarcating structural shifts which occur at some linguistic levels but not others, or which are observable and recognised as linked with particular broadcast media sources by speakers, communities and analysts. Specifically both variationists and interactional sociolinguists seem to struggle to find evidence for linguistic change in conjunction with media models which is not available for metalinguistic awareness or comment. Taken together both raise important issues of 'linguistic level' and 'awareness' in relation to media influence on language – if this is to be equated with shifts in language items and structure. And again, there remains the paradox that language ideologies emerging about varieties and particular linguistic features, are integrally structured by the intersection of local community knowledge, beliefs, and values with those of the mass media, and they are linked to sets of linguistic items or variable parts of the linguistic system (albeit in fuzzy ways), but it is very difficult to identify how and whether the media's contribution to such constructs relates to shifts in linguistic usage.

Having said this, we must also recognise that there is an increasing body of sociolinguistic research which benefits from both perspectives, which takes language variation and change within the broader context of communication and the development of social meaning at all levels (e.g. Eckert 2000, 2005, 2008; Coupland 2007, 2009a, 2009b). On the one hand it is

important to acknowledge the increasingly blurred boundaries between media language and community language. Media language reflects, represents and reproduces sociolinguistic norms, but also offers new resources (Coupland 2007: 184) and constructs new norms, in particular by offering new social meanings for existing features, for example, the slightly subversive, cool, associations for Northern English variants in young BBC childrens' TV presenters (Coupland 2007: 172, 185), or through the focussing and stylistic elevation of particular individuals (celebrities), e.g. Tess Daley's Northern English variation on *Strictly Come Dancing* (Coupland 2009b). Media representations of colloquial language, such as TV dramas, can both reflect patterns of community usage and be more innovative (e.g. intensifiers in *Friends*, Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005). Coupland (2007: 185f.) also makes the important point that colloquial language usage itself 'increasingly [has] the feel of mediated discourse', such that some aspects of interaction between speakers are highly performative (see Baumann's theorising of 'performance', e.g. 1992, discussed in Coupland 2007: 147f.), constructed to enable speakers to fulfil specific roles for a particular audience. For example, the shift in English towards performance of narratives which include or focus on the emotional state of the participants, and which enable and require a rich socially-symbolic quotative system, such as the rapid spread of *be like* (e.g. Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2007; Buchstaller and D'Arcy 2009); or the use of English intensifiers (*so, really, totally*) which enable expressive social evaluations. Drawing firm lines between changes in ways of speaking in the community, which relate to – yet are themselves reproduced in continually reciprocal cycles – in the media is difficult. It is even harder to identify causal links from the latter to the former. Such shifts might also be difficult to discern only by statistical comparison of variation between media and community language, because a substantial shift in meaning can be conveyed by even a single instance of a variant within a media text (Dion and Poplack 2007).

On the other hand, and likely connected with the shifting possible ways that speakers may present their social personae to others in their talk, it has been noted that some language changes seem to be special. In her useful critique of certain tenets of variationist sociolinguistics, Eckert (2003: 395) observes:

We also fortify our view of the vernacular as natural, or at least ingrained, in our view of the necessity of regular contact for the spread of change. We have all been told by non-linguist acquaintances that language change comes from the television. The idea that language change could be accomplished in such a trivial fashion is part of the popular 'bag o' words' view of language ... that we're all tired of dealing with. However, we shouldn't ignore the possibility that not all changes are equal. We need to ask ourselves what kind of changes require the kind of repeated exposure that social interaction gives, and what kinds can be taken right off the shelf.

Though it is not stated explicitly, the 'shelf' here certainly includes experiencing language without interaction, as for example offered by engaging with the broadcast media. The changes are those which have been found to be spreading extremely rapidly through communities, sometimes geographically very far apart (e.g. quotative *be like* across national varieties of English, or TH-fronting across urban UK accents). Some may constitute aspects of destandardisation – shifts away from the standard and at the same time shifts to different standards operating in specific domains of use (Kristiansen 2009). Interestingly Milroy's (2007) further exploration of 'off the shelf' changes suggests this is not just a 20th century phenomenon, and so responsibility for rapidly accelerating change, even if it appears to be contemporary, cannot be laid solely at the feet of the broadcast media.

The common thread seems to lie in the connection between ideological associations between features and groups/types/particular personalities (celebrities) and the locally-determined communicative needs in constructing social meaning in interaction. In some cases these can be accessed at an explicit level, to the extent that they even can be labelled and located by speakers and analysts alike, e.g. 'Valley Girl', 'California', are suggested as social-

symbolic associations for *be like* (Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2007; 'Kensington' in Labov's Philadelphia study, 2001). At the same time, the local embedding of such 'diffusing' changes is an important characteristic, both in terms of form and function (e.g. Buchstaller 2008; Buchstaller and D'Arcy 2009), and also evaluation (e.g. the reallocation of innovative variants in Glasgow as 'local', Stuart-Smith *et al* 2007). Again, the tension for understanding the role of the media in this kind of change occurs most potently when it is not possible to identify explicit ideological links with such rapidly diffusing changes. This suggests that we need much further investigation of implicit attitudes and ideologies (Kristiansen 2009; see Section 5) in order to make more progress in understanding the connections between media engagement and language ideologies, and linguistic usage in local social contexts.

RECONCEPTUALISING MEDIA INFLUENCE ON LANGUAGE – RETURN TO THE VIEWER

The discomfort felt within variationist sociolinguistics about the notion that non-interactive experiences of speech and language could have a lasting effect on core linguistic patterning seems to be rooted in a specific conceptualisation of how media influence might be manifested in language. Classic arguments against media influence, such as the maintenance of dialect diversity and the lack of widespread standardisation of varieties of English (e.g. Labov 2001), or the expectation that media-induced change must lead to the appearance of the same social and linguistic constraints for a feature across varieties (e.g. Dion and Poplack 2007; Buchstaller and D'Arcy 2009), can only be understood if one expects a powerful media, and a kind of simultaneous imprinting of (socio)linguistic media language features onto a passive viewer/speaker. Conversely, the view inherent in much interactional sociolinguistic discussion is more congruent with an appreciation of role of the audience in receiving media messages. This assumes a much closer, reciprocal, and dynamic relationship between linguistic varieties and usage represented in the media and those found in communities, and speaker agency in the creative deployment of media features to serve specific communicative functions.

These two kinds of approach to media influence reflect similarly different kinds of theories and models within mass communications studies, carried out typically within media effects research and media studies respectively (e.g. McQuail 2005). However, the former, 'hypodermic needle', one-step transmission model of media influence on social attitudes and behaviours was reconfigured fairly quickly into a two-step model which incorporated interpersonal communication as a key aspect (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955), after research into the role of the media in political campaigning in the US in the 1940s and 50s revealed rather more complexity between media sources, interpersonal sources and voters' views and decisions than had been anticipated. Those expecting to find that behavioural effects of media stimuli on viewers were necessary and causal soon revised their modelling to contributory factors, functioning alongside other social factors (e.g. Klapper 1960: 8; Bushman and Huesmann 2001: 223f.). This is not to say that within quantitative theorising, media effects are thought to operate indirectly through social factors. Rather, early fears that information from the media might somehow completely override and replace the viewer's existing knowledge inducing them to act in particular ways, were simply not supported by the empirical research findings (Gunter 2000).

Again, despite a protracted search lasting until the 1970s, media effects research failed to find consistent links between the broadcast media and overt attitudinal shifts (Gunter 2000: 195), which is echoed by Bargh *et al*'s (1996: 241) observation of the intractable difficulty within social psychology of explaining behaviour as being mediated through explicitly reported attitudes. In terms of more general cognition, however, subsequent work on social perception within the framework of 'cultivation theory' considered 'the degree to which the dif-

ferent media have come to interpose themselves between ourselves and any experience of the world beyond our immediate personal environment'. For example, heavy exposure to television violence can lead to an over-exaggerated perception of violence in the real world (McQuail 2005: 64). This research emphasises the extent to which the broadcast media can furnish viewers' internal knowledge of the world beyond their own actual experience. Researchers have also been aware that viewers can show deep psychological and emotional engagement, 'para-social interaction', with fictional worlds and characters experienced solely from the broadcast media (e.g. Abercrombie 1996). Watching a favourite programme can be as intense psychologically, or even more so, than interacting with a real person (Coupland 2007: 184f.).

Attempts to understand the possible processes by which the media might exert influence began with experiments looking at short-term triggering of behaviours after watching films. Although it had been assumed that viewers would directly imitate what they saw, the earliest results showed that if participants responded, their responses clearly belonged to their existing patterns of behaviour (Bandura *et al* 1963). Subsequent behavioural modelling of media influence assumed the activation or associated triggering of existing stored routines by media stimuli (Berkowitz 1984); Bargh and colleagues' social-psychological 'perception-action' theory of implicit, 'automatic', responses to stimuli experienced with or without interaction is rather similar, although they also argue for the need to recognise situational relevance as a constraining factor (e.g. Bargh *et al* 1996). Current cognitive psychological conceptualisations of media influence assume that

viewers use multiple cognitive schemas when interpreting TV programmes. In order to make sense of a programme, viewers must find connections between the media text and their own inner world. One characteristic of this inner world is that it is cognitively organised in terms of schemas that represent social experiences, cultural knowledge, and specific personal experiences. When interpreting a TV programme, viewers spontaneously use a whole set of cognitive schemas to serve as interpretative frames of reference. (Gunter 2000: 233; Harris 2004)

Note that these theories of implicit learning or responding to the media all share the assumption that the viewers' existing knowledge/routines/schema play a fundamental role in understanding how the media are processed at the cognitive level, and hence impact on any possible effects that might be ascribed to the media. Such perspectives also assume that attention to and engagement with media is a crucial aspect of any model of influence, as opposed to exposure *per se* (Gunter 2000: 163).

Alternative views of media influence began to emerge within the development of cultural studies and critical assessment of media production, media content and messages, and the role of the audience in receiving the media (Curran 1996). Hall's 1980 seminal paper on 'encoding/decoding', which deals with the production and reception of media meaning, argues that the viewer negotiates the meaning of media messages within the context of their local, socially and cultural situated experience/knowledge of the world. Qualitative research on audience reception, particularly of news content, illustrates how media texts may offer more meanings than intended or expected by the media producers, and the extent to which viewers draw on their own understanding to make sense of media texts (e.g. Morley 1980). But suggesting that the audience is active in the decoding of meaning does not also mean that the media cannot have an impact on viewers' beliefs and values (e.g. Philo 1999, 2008); rather it requires us to reconsider 'influence' from the perspective of the viewer.

At least some of the grounding for the theoretical notion of *Kommunikative Fernsehaneignung* (literally 'taking, or making sense of, television for one's self with respect to communication') or 'communicative appropriation', which was developed to take account of viewers' linguistic activities when watching television in their own homes, rests on qualitative audience reception research (Pueschel and Holly 1997; Holly 2001; Faber 2001). In this work,

‘appropriation’ refers not only to taking linguistic features from the media for one’s own purposes (the German verb *sich aneignen* is reflexive), but also to the entire range of possible communicative and linguistic behaviours that accompany making sense of the television, from explicit comments addressed to other viewers, to the associative triggering of other topics (Faber 2001). Linguistic appropriation can be thought of as the numerous complex linguistic, social, cultural and personal processes that take place when decoding audio-visual media language, some aspects of which may possibly emerge in some ways in our talk, more or less noticeably to our interlocutors (Branner 2002). Also relevant here are two points made in Hall’s (1980) discussion of the decoding of televisual signs. First, perceiving televisual signs is habitual – we are very used to doing it and naturalised – we feel as if we are perceiving a real interaction between two speakers when watching a drama, when in fact we are experiencing only a two-dimensional representation (it isn’t real). Second, such decoding is particularly effective when there is a ‘fundamental alignment and reciprocity’ between what is encoded and the viewer’s own knowledge with which to decode. We have to ask whether the same might also apply to the decoding of media language, such that viewers use their existing social and linguistic knowledge together to make sense of mediated language. If so, linguistic change which seems to be associated with ‘media influence’ might result from the effective alignment of aspects of media language with aspects of viewers’ stored sociolinguistic representations which are somehow similar.

What emerges from considering both quantitative and qualitative approaches to media influence more generally (and there is also a desire to combine them within mass communications, Gunter 2000) is that both share the assumption that influence seems to have at least as much to do with what the viewer brings to the screen/media experience, as with what media presents to the viewer. We suspect that in the case of linguistic structures, which are acquired and embedded through continual loops of active perception and production (Adank *et al* 2010), what the viewer brings in terms of sociolinguistic cognition could be more important. What is also interesting is that, in some ways, decoding the audio-visual media may possibly be more congruent with face to face interaction than we might think. It seems increasingly likely that the speaker’s individual social cognition is as important in constraining production and perception responses to speech as the physical sociolinguistic linguistic performance of the interlocutors themselves, and sometimes more so (Auer and Hinskens 2005; Staum-Casasanto *et al* 2010). But there is a fundamental difference too. Although we can on some levels appear to ‘interact’ with representations of people on a screen (in terms of assigning social agency, and psychologically and emotionally), this kind of interaction may be rather different from that which occurs when the interlocutor is physically present.

How does all this pertain to media influence and standardisation and destandardisation? We would predict that existing sociolinguistic frames of knowledge are likely to constrain and enable the decoding of media language, and that decoding may entail structural shifts if the sociolinguistic knowledge of an engaged viewer is strongly congruent and socially informative (Pierrehumbert 2006) – in terms of communicative function – with what the viewer is experiencing. For example, a dialect-speaking viewer belongs to a linguistic community some of whose members are already using a standard feature, and that feature has some social-symbolic functions for interaction between those members, and there are aspects of the communicative situation represented in the media programme that align particularly well for that speaker, and that speaker has the relevant inherent personal traits (e.g. empathy, innovativeness, Yu 2010), there may be enhancement, resonance, or validation of that feature for that speaker – such that they might then use it when the next stylistic opportunity presents itself (though that is also likely to depend on the speaker’s personality). We would also expect the feature to be thoroughly integrated into the local social and linguistic system, since it is the local recipient system which dominates and constrains the integration (as opposed to the non-local element, or an entire non-local system, being, as it were, beamed down). Hence the local

sociolinguistic context of the speaker/viewer is likely to be crucial, and different contexts would predict different outcomes (Buchstaller and D'Arcy's 2009 emphasis on the local constraints on the 'reception' of *be like*).

We would expect ideologies about linguistic varieties to be shaped and formed by media experience, in similar ways to those about other aspects of social behaviour; though like social behaviours it is not clear how ideological shifts might relate to structural shifts. We hypothesised above that the degree or nature of enregisterment might play a role. This must also relate to the ways that local social meanings play out in interactions and at the same time how these social meanings link with and are part of wider indexical fields of meaning (Eckert 2008). That the links between ideological constructs, linguistic usage and media engagement are not clearly apparent is extremely interesting – and may result from our relative lack of sophistication in probing these relationships; the growing field of research on implicit socio-linguistic cognition may have much to offer here.

TESTING PREDICTIONS: TWO CASE STUDIES

We can test these predictions by considering phonological evidence from two case studies, from very different locales, and theoretically different sociolinguistic situations. The first is the putative influence of television, and particularly media representations of the London dialect, Cockney, on vernacular segmental forms of the dialect of the large post-industrial city, Glasgow in Scotland. In terms of (de)standardisation this represents the interaction of two non-standard varieties, both showing a fairly high degree of enregisterment (e.g. Johnstone *et al* 2006 on Pittsburghese). The second is the possible impact of standard Tokyo Japanese on suprasegmental aspects of remote rural dialects in Japan, including that of the most southern city, Kagoshima. Both dialects are enregistered though in different ways – Tokyo Japanese is a national standard; Kagoshima Japanese is a regional non-standard variety with some stereotyped features.

Media-Cockney and consonantal change in Glasgow dialect

The Glasgow case concerns the appearance of a set of consonantal features more typically associated with the South of England, for example, [f] for /θ/ in e.g. *think, tooth, 'Th-fronting'*, first identified as indicative of a rapidly accelerating change by Stuart-Smith *et al* (2007), though sporadic instances had been noted since the early 1950s; the changes are thought to have diffused from London across urban accents, possibly as a set of 'youth norms' (Williams and Kerswill 1999; Kerswill 2003). The broadcast media, and especially watching the London-based soap opera, *EastEnders*, was invoked as the probable source of these features in Glaswegian by the media themselves when the findings were first reported in 1998, and particularly because the original study found that the leaders of the changes were working-class inner-city adolescents with apparently limited opportunities for interaction with speakers from outwith the city, let alone from the South of England.

The follow-up study was devoted to a systematic investigation of the potential role of the television in language variation and change, using media-Cockney and Glaswegian vernacular as the focus (e.g. Stuart-Smith and Timmins 2009; Stuart-Smith forthcoming 2011; Stuart-Smith *et al* in preparation). The study worked with 36 adolescents and 12 adults from the same working-class area of Glasgow, and considered 4 consonantal variables and 3 vowel variables. Of these three had been associated with TV influence: *Th-fronting*, mentioned above, and *Dh-fronting*, the use of [v] for /ð/ in e.g. *brother*, and *L-vocalisation*, the realisation of syllable-final /l/ with a high back (un)rounded vowel, in words such as *milk* and *people*. The other four had not: derhoticisation of postvocalic /r/ is an ongoing change from be-

low; the vowels of CAT, BOOT and BIT are socially stratified in Glasgow but no changes have been observed for them. Speech and demographic, social, and language attitudinal data were gathered from the participants, and a contemporary sample of media-Cockney dramas popular with the informants, including *EastEnders*, was subjected to fine-grained phonetic analysis.

The results of the media-Cockney sample confirmed the presence of the ‘London’ consonant features in the speech of most of the characters. But the acoustic vowel qualities were more typical of South-East English accents, similar to the large audience sector located in the heavily populated area surrounding London, than of Cockney itself. As we noted earlier, the TV show itself is reproducing – but also materially altering – models of ‘Cockney’ accents, reflected in the media’s own reflexive label ‘Mockney’ (‘mock-Cockney’). Comparison with the Glaswegian adolescents’ patterning showed that: the Glaswegians used proportionally more instances of the features than did the characters; the social constraints are different in media and community varieties; and so too are the linguistic constraints, and this is not surprising since the diffusing features enter, and compete with, local Glaswegian variants which in turn determine the possible linguistic patterning, for example, /th/ can be realised as [th], standard (rarely), traditional local non-standard [h], and innovative supralocal non-standard [f].

A large-scale multi-factorial analysis revealed that alongside other factors (linguistic, participating in more anti-school social practices, dialect contact with speakers in English, and to a lesser extent, overt positive attitudes towards London accents), strong psychological and emotional engagement with the TV show *EastEnders* (really liking the show, it being their favourite programme, and/or having their favourite TV characters) was robustly significantly correlated with using the innovative consonantal variants, but not with acoustic vowel quality. Reported exposure – so just watching the show, or television because it was on in the house – showed no such relationship. Also, whilst one might expect television preferences to be contingent on social networks and social practices, this was not evidenced for these speakers: there was no correlation either between social network or social practices and TV preferences. This suggests that – as in media effects studies – engagement with the broadcast media only has a predictive function when taken alongside social factors and at the level of individual social cognition, as opposed to indirectly through shared social practices. This is perhaps not surprising, either in general, since shared reported viewing does not necessarily equate to similar levels of psychological engagement, or for these informants, who were young adolescents and rarely reported watching TV programmes together with their friends. It would be interesting to see whether this finding would be replicated for older adolescents or young adults cohabiting with shared viewing time/patterns.

The evidence from these informants also does not allow an interpretation of the positive correlations with television engagement via positive overt attitudes, i.e. as some kind of indirect causal effect such that using innovative variants is predicated on liking London accents: again the TV preferences were not correlated with positive attitudes (see Stuart-Smith 2006). Nor was there any indication that these speakers were aware of the innovating features: they could not imitate them, or talk about them, and they showed no indications whatsoever of wanting to ‘sound’ like Londoners (in fact such an idea would be simply laughable in Glasgow). However, the innovations also showed strong stylistic variation, such that they were used more in the more ‘performative’ opportunity of reading the wordlist, which may have been indexing a particular stance towards the task and the fieldworker (Stuart-Smith *et al* 2007). What we seem to be witnessing here is a genuine instance of bricolage (Eckert 2008), whereby features both local and non-local are brought together during interaction for the construction of personae explicitly evaluated as thoroughly (modern) local. Interesting questions remain as to how, and to what extent, such usage links to broader ideologies relating to ‘youth’, ‘coolness’, and even ‘urban toughness’ or ‘dynamism’ (as suggested by Trudgill for

Norwich in 1986; Kristiansen 2009), though it seems highly likely that covert attitudinal testing, and assessment of implicit sociolinguistic cognition would confirm this.

Media Tokyo Japanese and pitch changes in rural Japanese dialects

Regional Japanese dialects have been observed to be undergoing dialect levelling, especially since the 1960s (Sibata 1975 in Takano and Ota 2007), and Japanese sociolinguistic scholarship has linked this with a number of factors, including increased mobility and the mass media (television, radio and the print media). Within Japanese sociolinguistics and phonetics the accepted model of media influence is articulated explicitly in terms of exposure and expected effect, albeit with the opposite assumption held by Anglo variationists. In this context Tokyo Japanese is the national standard, assumed to be socially more dominant, though a resurgence of pride in local dialects has also been observed. The broadcast media generally represent varieties of Tokyo Japanese for all genres, though the Kansai dialect from the area of Kyoto is also found, particularly for certain very popular, ‘dynamic’ TV personalities (Ota, personal communication). Two sets of phonological changes are typically associated with exposure to the broadcast media, and especially television, though to date the evidence for the role of the media is only the regional distribution of particular forms across Japanese dialects; a research project to obtain reported exposure and engagement patterns alongside linguistic patterning is currently underway.

The first concerns the phonetic implementation of pitch across utterances. Takano and Ota (2007) carried out a systematic phonetic production and perception analysis of pitch patterning in speakers of rural dialects of Japanese from the far north (Hokkaido: Hikada) and far south (Kyushu: Kagoshima) in order to investigate reports that younger speakers in these remote, and relatively isolated areas, were using levelled pitch patterns typical of younger speakers of Tokyo Japanese. In this case, the variety assumed to be influential is not typical of the standard *per se*, but a feature found in the younger generation, with explicit social-indexical meanings of being ‘youthful’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ (Sibata 1995 in Takano and Ota 2007). The results of the study confirmed that three groups of younger speakers from these remote areas, with little apparent opportunities for dialect contact, a) produced similar degrees of phonetic pitch levelling in two reading tasks to each other and in contrast to older speakers (from Hokkaido, those in Kagoshima were not tested), and b) identified pitch levelled stimuli as ‘sounding young’. A qualitative comparison of these younger speakers’ pitch patterning with that of a female TV announcer shows remarkable similarity in the overall shape.

However, the overall levelling of sentential pitch is not the only change which is taking place to alter pitch patterning in younger speakers of Japanese. At the same time there is a converse trend, whose provenance is unknown and not from the local dialects, but which is associated in each area with being ‘local’. This involves the loss of accentual differentiation in many two-morae words, leading to a general ‘flattening’ of the pitch perturbations associated with lexical pitch accents in younger speakers. Takano and Ota confirmed that the younger speakers from Hokkaido in their study are also participating in both changes: the first, overall sentential pitch levelling, which indexes supralocal metropolitan meanings, and the second, reduction in lexical pitch accentuation, which indexes pride in speaking a local dialect. (The pitch accent system is different in Kagoshima, see below.) Their sociolinguistic interpretation emphasises the need for media influence in order to explain the appearance of the first change in speakers from two areas which are so remote, and so distant from each other, and Tokyo. But at the same time, it is clear that if the media are involved in this generational shift in pitch patterning – and that remains to be established – some attention needs to be paid to the fact that this is taking place in conjunction with another change which is not associated with the common variety represented on the TV. It is not possible to assume a direct lifting of the entire pitch patterning – sentential and lexical – from the media. This tension between fine-grained phonetic variation and change in pitch indexing supralocal norms,

possibly partly due to media influence, and local norms at the same time, can be seen more clearly in the second set of changes.

These concern an ongoing reorganisation of the system of phrasal tone in lexical items in one of the two dialects covered by the previous study, the dialect of Kagoshima. Until the building of a highway through the mountains was completed in the 1980s, the southern coastal city of Kagoshima was extremely remote. It is now a tourist destination, which was well-known for capitalising on its rural charm as a popular spot for honeymooners (in the 1970s). Both Kagoshima and Tokyo show pitch variation in association with lexical items, but typically in different ways. Tokyo Japanese has ‘accented’ words, with an abrupt pitch fall from the first syllable, e.g. DOo.na.tu ‘donut’, and ‘unaccented’ words, which do not show this fall, e.g. bu.RA.ZI.RU ‘Brazil’ [capitals indicate higher pitch]. The lexicon of Kagoshima dialect also splits into words of two pitch accent types: Tone A words show a high fall on the penultimate syllable, e.g. bu.ra.ZI.ru, Tone B words show a high tone on the final syllable, e.g. doo.na.TU. A careful phonological analysis based on auditory analysis of an age-stratified sample of speakers by Kubuzono (2007) shows an interesting change is taking place. Specifically in one group of items, showing compound tone, the younger Kagoshima speakers are showing Tone B patterns where older speakers use Tone A (so, e.g. bu.ra.zi.RU instead of bu.ra.ZI.ru, this corresponds to unaccented words in Tokyo), but conversely show Tone A patterns for older Tone B (e.g. doo.NA.tu, corresponding to accented words in Tokyo).

Kubuzono ascribes this change to influence from ‘dominant’ Tokyo Japanese via the media, mainly because the local neighbouring dialects have rather different tone patterns, and his explanation is couched in a strong ‘stimulus-response’ discourse (p.15): ‘A phonetic or perceptual factor forces young native speakers of Kagoshima Japanese to copy the overall shape of standard Tokyo Japanese forms’. But he is also struck by the fact that the result of this influence ‘cannot be directly attributed to the prosodic system of Tokyo Japanese. ... the influence is accommodated within the system of the provincial dialect by a force to preserve its original system.’ (p.3). Again, there is no evidence to confirm that the media is a factor in this change, and even if it were, it is likely to be alongside some opportunities for contact with Tokyo Japanese, through the recently improved transport links into Kagoshima, and tourism. However two points are worth noting.

Strictly in terms of linguistic structure, the new Kagoshima tone patterns show a reorganisation which corresponds to Tokyo Japanese accentual patterns, as opposed to any kind of identical replication of phonetic patterning. A question remains as to the extent to which the fine phonetic realisation of the Kagoshima tones may be changing. The second point concerns the local social and regional evaluation of the tones, which Kubuzono does not refer to: whilst the two-tone phrasal tone is in itself typical of a local regional dialect, Tone A is a marked local stereotype of Kagoshima dialect. It is therefore interesting to note that the shift in lexical tone means that whilst there is a shift away from the local Tone A in those words corresponding to Tokyo unaccented words, the words which correspond to Tokyo accented words are those which move to Tone A, i.e. the more local. What this means is that whilst one set becomes less local, at the same time, the more marked Tokyo forms show correspondingly more marked and local forms in Kagoshima dialect (Ota, personal communication).

Summary

These two brief case studies, from rather different sociolinguistic contexts, involving different phonological features (one segmental and the other suprasegmental), both suggest that media influence might play a role in systemic linguistic change, albeit more securely for Glaswegian than for Japanese. How do these changes relate to the predictions made earlier? At first sight, both might appear to show shifts towards homogenisation, but the detail shows a different picture. Probably most striking is the observation that only certain aspects of the phonological system show change, and in both cases this is even within a phonological category. For ex-

ample, in Glasgow supralocal [f] is the innovative variant for /th/, but the local variant [h] is also still maintained; in Kagoshima the phrasal tone system is being reorganised in ways that seemed to be linked with Tokyo Japanese, but the local stereotype is still holding fast (in fact in Kubuzono's data, 'erroneous' local Tone A is proportionately more common). So if broadcast media influence is a factor (which it seems to be for Glaswegian), it is difficult to assume any kind of blanket imprinting, displacing local features and bleaching local dialects. Rather what we see here is more consistent with the idea that the local sociolinguistic system of the speaker/viewer is crucial in the negotiation of supralocal elements; the outcome looks like classic bricolage facilitating new kinds of local dialects. In Glasgow this appears to be well below the level of awareness; in the case of sentential pitch levelling in young rural Japanese, the shared social-indexicality of 'sounding young' is accessible in a perception task. Thus it looks as if local linguistic and social factors together constrain the possibility of media 'influence' on language change.

We also see that the parts of the phonological system which are changing, and linked with media influence, are also those which seem to be associated with particular social meanings for the communities concerned. On the whole the broadcast media are informally linked with larger chunks of language, like words and phrases, replete with prosodic markers of their original source (for example: 'p[ə:]lease', associated with female characters in *Friends*, 'al:right[r]y then', from Jim Carey's *Ace Ventura*, 'yeah bu[?], no bu[?]' from the voluble spoof schoolgirl 'Vicky' in *Little Britain*, 'good'bye', with raised eyebrow, from Ann Robinson in *The Weakest Link*, and so on). But it also seems as if small chunks, and structural aspects of language, can also be linked. We suspect that this relates both to the possibility for variability in the linguistic system for the chunk concerned, and more importantly, the communicative function that this variability can serve. Quite how the kind of social-indexical filtering or resonance hypothesised above might take place for the viewer at the screen, engaging with the television programme, is far from clear. Though we must remember that the negotiation of social meaning via linguistic practices, indexing particular stances at particular moments (with their incorporated bundles of ideological referents and connections; Kiesling 2009), unfolds over real time. In the same way, viewers witness a drama playing out in real time, with linguistic variation indexing many aspects of the characters and their stance-taking from interaction to interaction. Thus it seems likely that whatever fundamental alignment and reciprocity might occur for the viewer's sociolinguistic system with aspects represented in the media, this must be constrained in two ways: first, the way in which such features may function at a basic level of interaction for the speaker/viewer, and second, the extent to which such connections can be made at all. Though it also seems likely that social-indexical meanings may be simplified or made more abstract through the kind of linguistic stylisation which is necessary to construct dramatic personae (see Bucholtz's 2009 observations of the simplification of indexical meanings in advertising and the spread of 'Whassup?').

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

The main difficulty facing sociolinguists wishing to evaluate whether engaging with the broadcast media might lead to language variation and change at the level of the community remains the paucity of evidence. The strong rejection of media influence has meant that very few have even incorporated media factors into quantitative analyses of sociolinguistic variation. If one considers the number of studies which underpin generalisations about language variation and social class, or gender, far more research is needed if we are to gain any kind of appreciation of what to expect. Variationist research is ideally suited for this, since the method of considering the statistically predictive role of a number of different social factors together, using regression analysis has been central for many years.

We also need much more analysis of the structural characteristics of media representations of language, of different genres, formats, scripted and unscripted, but with the specific inclusion of the social and interactional roles that features – especially low frequency items – may be playing (Coupland 2007). For example, Dion and Poplack's 2007 study of a corpus of American television shows and films revealed so few instances of *be like*, and with different linguistic constraints from the usage in their corpora of Canadian Anglophones in French-speaking Quebec, that they reject any possible influence from television. It is quite possible that the spread of this feature for these speakers does not owe anything to the broadcast media, but it is equally possible that the few instances were more socially meaningful than can be ascertained from the numbers alone. (And in fact research on frequency effects has shown that low frequency items can be as influential as high frequency ones, e.g. Goldinger 1998).

In general we need to understand far more about the intersections between and across language use in the media and in the community, how features are used for styling, to index stance and to construct social personae, and the similarities and differences that can be observed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative sociolinguistic methods. We also require ethnographic studies which allow detailed observation of engaging with broadcast media (of all kinds, including via the internet) amongst and within the social practices of adolescents and young adults, along with deep analysis of systemic aspects of language before, during and after engagement.

At the more fundamental level of cognition, very little is understood about how and whether witnessing language without speakers being physically present is different from being able to interact with a co-present interlocutor. We might expect talking to someone to be quite different from watching a film of an interaction, and early results from an experiment to test this suggest that both perceptual learning and short-term shifts in speech production arising from witnessing non-interactive mediated speech are different (Stuart-Smith *et al* 2011). Not physically being able to answer, or prepare speech in response, the lack of activation of the speaking brain whilst perceiving on-screen dialogue might constitute a fundamental difference (Kuhl 2010). But this is a hypothesis which focuses on the speech mechanism. There are many aspects of human interaction either with things or with living beings which cannot talk, e.g. pets, babies, which suggest that interacting may be a continuum, at least in terms of the social agency which humans may bring to or impose on their interlocutor (whatever/whoever that may be).

Finally, and of particular relevance to this volume, since the SLICE collaboration has so much promise in this respect, throughout this short essay we have needed to acknowledge the likely importance of general ideologies about varieties, and specific ideologies about aspects of language, in understanding language changes which are linked to the media. There seems to be something special about structural changes which are mooted as being influenced by the broadcast media – they seem to relate to aspects of the sociolinguistic system which connect local social meaning making with broader ideologies. But these connections are often not overtly accessible to the speakers themselves, which means that overt attitudinal testing can fail to catch them. Progress in understanding this fundamental set of links seems to be more likely if researchers concentrate their efforts on investigating covert attitudes and developing the paradigm for examining structural linguistic variation and change and implicit sociolinguistic cognition.

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