

Inaugural Seminar
Centre for Advanced Research in English Studies
Department of English
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Macau.

Changing Discourses of Broadcast News

December 12th-15th, Macau.

PROGRAMME

Sunday 12th December

19.00 – 21.00 Dinner and Informal Plenary Meeting: Miramar

Monday 13th December

07.30 – 09.00 Breakfast

09.00 - 09.30 Welcome

09.30 - 11.00 **Mats Ekstrom**
Changing forms of broadcast news: A twenty-year perspective on the Swedish case

Åsa Kroon Lundell
What about the weather? Historicizing broadcast news by examining weather-casting and audience orientation

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee/Tea

11.30 - 13.00 **Louann Haarman**
Perspectives on performing presentation 1987-2009

Martin Montgomery and Susie Shenjin
News presentation: expressiveness versus neutralism

13.00 - 14.15 Lunch

14.15 - 15.00 Walk

15.00 - 16.30 **Richard Fitzgerald**
Just like home: Remediation of the social in contemporary news broadcasting

Joanna Thornborrow
Styling the News

16.30 - 17.00 Coffee/ Tea

17.00 - 18.00 **Data Workshop**

19.30 Dinner: Clube Militar

Tuesday 14th December

07.30 – 09.00 Breakfast

09.00 - 10.00 Interview with Mainland Chinese media

10.15 - 11.00 **Angela Smith**
'Good morning Kate, are you there?': The development of the 'live two-way' in BBC broadcast news.

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee/ tea

11.30 - 13.00 **Marianna Patrona**
Revisiting the news interview: conversational patterns for displaying accountability in political news discourse

Michael Higgins
The accountability interview and its development in consumer programming

13.00 - 14.15 Lunch

14.15 – 15.00 Walk

15.00 – 16.30 **Martin Montgomery, Tong Chen and Zhu Hongquiang**
Cross-cultural variations in news interviewing: The Chinese case

Stephen E. Clayman
Politicians on 'Infotainment' talk shows: The case of *The Daily Show*

16.30 - 16.45 Coffee/Tea

16.45 - 18.00 **Data Workshop**

19.30 Dinner: Café 360, Macau Tower

Wednesday 15th December

07.30 – 09.00 Breakfast

09.00 - 09.30 Coffee/Tea

09.30 - 11.00 **Alison Duguid**

TV on TV: A semantic field in TV news

Martin Montgomery, Susie Shenjin and Daniel Feng

Structures of broadcast news in China: Similarities and differences

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee

11.30 - 13.00 **Closing Roundtable**

13.00 - 14.15 Lunch

Depart

ABSTRACTS

Stephen E. Clayman, University of California at Los Angeles, USA

Politicians on “Infotainment” Talk Shows: The Case of *The Daily Show*

With the proliferation of media outlets and the fragmentation of the mass audience, politicians have been increasingly willing to appear on non-journalistic or so-called "infotainment" programs. In the U.S., this trend is manifest in the growing presence of political candidates and elected officials on late-night celebrity talk shows and satirical programs such as The Daily Show. In contrast to journalistic programs organized around formal news interviews, these programs are distinguished by a less formal and hence more "conversational" style and by the prominence of humor and joking. This paper focuses on The Daily Show and explores the way in which humor can serve as an interactional resource for raising issues of serious import. It examines how this resource is mobilized by the program host in the design of questions, and it also examines the dilemmas faced by politicians as they struggle to respond to questions that are on the surface non-serious or joking, but are substantively significant.

Alison Duguid, University of Siena, Italy

TV on TV: a semantic field in TV news

Recent corpus studies of newspapers investigating diachronic change in the media have looked at the way newspapers refer to each other and how they represent themselves discursively (Partington 2009, Marchi forthcoming). In studies of broadcast news Thornborrow and Haarman 2009 (Backstage Behaviours as Front Page News) have shown how news coverage around the G20 held in London involved news features which concentrated on behind-the-scenes activity, usually involving provision for the press, camera crews and reporters as much as the actual summit itself. With the prospect of a project of diachronic investigation I decided to ask a similar question about how much television itself has become a referenced institution in the news over time and how this self referentiality is structured discursively. This preliminary study investigates how the semantic field of television (namely, self-referentiality) is represented in a 600,000 word corpus of news broadcasts from 1991-2009. A preliminary exploration of the corpus (e.g. frequency lists, concordance lines) reveals that there has been an increase in references to television and the media within news broadcasts. The lexical field relating to the media has a high profile in the TV corpus (around 0,6% of the tokens, the same level of frequency as the personal pronouns). Using the corpus data this paper examines the discursive construction of television as content in broadcast news, examining the varying treatment of particular items.

Mats Ekström, Örebro University, Sweden

Changing forms of broadcast news: A twenty-year perspective on the Swedish case

This paper will discuss historical changes as well as continuity in communicative forms in Swedish television news with data from three time periods: 1989-1990, 1998-1999, and 2008-2009. The paper explores how changes in the news discourse, the communicative styles and audience address, are related to the overall news formats, the use of visual and audio components and other technological props, the studio design, the construction of news stories, and the organization and design of live talk. Four trends will be illustrated: (1) The development of new forms of sociability, and an orientation towards a talking with instead of talking to the audience; (2) Changes in the communicative styles of news presentations, studio interviews and expert commentaries; (3) How other voices are represented and recontextualized in news reports, and the invention of an 'interview bite-oriented' news journalism; (4) The changing relations between the news room/studio and the outside world, and how for example the scene for political debates has gradually moved into the media.

Richard Fitzgerald, University of Queensland, Australia

Just like home: Remediation of the social in contemporary news broadcasting

In this paper we examine the 'popular aesthetic' of contemporary news presentation, noting some of the discursive and textual features as broadcasters endeavour to capture and hold target audiences in an intensely competitive and connected environment. This new environment creates a challenge for traditional news broadcasters in which notions of news delivery based on professional detachment and 'one-to-many' have been overtaken by a 'popular aesthetic' (Bourdieu, 1984) based more on a desire to participate and empathise and discuss. In the discussion below we examine the way TV news broadcasting is adapting to this new environment through the studio becoming a more social space in both physical and discursive features, where the physical environment creates an informal space for informal interaction.

Louann Harman, University of Bologna, Italy

Perspectives on performing presentation 1987-2009

The paper aims to trace features of the evolution of practices of news presentation in extracts of broadcast news bulletins recorded between 1987 and 2009, with specific reference to News Presenter (NP) talk, including headlines, NP introductions to reports, and reports by the NP him/herself. Aspects of significant changes in studio semiotics and kinetic/prosodic news delivery also emerge in the illustrative clips. The paper will take as a starting point Montgomery's (2007) exhaustive description of the various aspects of current news presentation and attempt first, to verify to what extent the various typologies of NP

talk are in fact substantially or stylistically distinguishable from previous older patterns; and second, to discuss how these changes or variations might be explained.

Michael Higgins, University of Strathclyde, UK

The accountability interview and its development in consumer programming

The accountability broadcast interview has been in development since at least the 1950s (Clayman, 2002; Montgomery, 2007). However, Richards (2007), Mathieson (2005) and others have suggested that recent decades have seen the most extreme examples turn from what might have been a robust search for information into a spectacle in personal confrontation. This paper examines the terms of this shift by looking at a recent edition of the BBC Radio 4 Consumer Programme *You and Yours*. It discusses how the interaction in that edition's headline interview shares many of the qualities of the political accountability interview, while arguing that the interview takes sanction from the programme's broader concern with the domestic sphere to emphasis what Arendt (1998) describes as the "shame" of the private realm in its pursuit the interviewee's pay arrangements. The paper discusses the extent of any implications for the accountability interview more broadly, in particular when seen alongside the shift towards the "personal" in the marketing of politicians (Smith, 2008). While acknowledging the roots of this play between public and private in the "populist ventriloquism" of the 1970s, the paper suggests that an increasing emphasis on the personality and background of politicians is likely to encourage any breach between public accountability and private feelings in accountability interviews.

Åsa Kroon Lundell, Örebro University, Sweden

What about the weather? Historicizing broadcast news by examining weather-casting and audience orientation

Although an integral part of broadcast television news, weather presentations and their various communicative styles and formats seem to be mostly left out of research on broadcast news talk. In this presentation I will try to argue that televised weather-castings provide us with very interesting data when it comes to examining the evolution of audience orientation and address in broadcasting. The meteorologists' own self-perception of representing an "Other" in relation to news journalism, and the communicative dilemmas they face, will be briefly touched upon before analyzing a weather presentation from the Swedish news program *Rapport* from 1982. How do the communicative resources that are deployed orient to the image of a presupposed viewer?

Martin Montgomery, Tong Chen and Zhu Hongqiang, University of Macau, China

Cross-cultural variations in news interviewing: The Chinese case

News interviewing on Chinese television appears to be quite different from ‘the western’, adversarial model familiar on UK television. This paper will look at some examples of interviews with public figures in both English language news interviews and Putonghua/Mandarin news interviews on Chinese television, focusing particularly on question-design. The English language interviews feature a variant of what might be called ‘mild questioning’ in which the question itself is often buried in long, contextualizing prefaces. These would seem to be oriented to the broadcast audience rather than designed to ‘close-down’ or engineer particular kinds of response. The Mandarin interviews, on the other hand, while apparently more critical, rely heavily on ‘3rd party attributable statements’. In either case the interview style seems to be heavily oriented to the avoidance of face-threat.

Martin Montgomery and Susie Shenjin, University of Macau, China

News presentation: expressiveness versus neutralism

Television news presentation is routinely performed in an institutional voice by means of which the newsreader disinterestedly ‘animates’ a text that has been scripted by the news team in advance of the broadcast itself. (see Claire Lindegren Lerman 1985 and Goffman 1981) In ‘animating’ or reading this text, however, the newsreader or presenter must achieve a balance between two conflicting requirements: (a) they must somehow engage with the text and with the audience in an interested and interesting fashion; (b) they must do so neutrally, i.e. without necessarily projecting a particular point of view or evaluative stance on the news material.

In extreme cases these conflicting requirements can pose special problems especially where the news material might, for instance, more normally be associated with grief, with outrage, or with joy. (Cp. Goffman and ‘flooding out’.) Everyday news items, however, depend on a modicum of expressiveness which can normally be carried by prosodic and kinesic features (rather than by the lexicogrammatical choices of the news item itself.) This paper will consider some of the kinesic features of expressiveness in news presentation looking in particular at the ‘eyebrow flash’. The paper will argue that the eyebrow flash offers a useful index of expressiveness, one which can be shown to be subject to historical change and cross-cultural variation.

Martin Montgomery, Susie Shenjin and Daniel Feng, University of Macau, China

Structures of broadcast news in China: Similarities and differences

CCTV1 and CCTV9 are two mainland-Chinese, state-controlled, television channels, each of which has a possible reach that exceeds one billion viewers. Both channels carry news

bulletins, CCTV1 in Putonghua/Mandarin and CCTV9 in English. In practice, therefore, their actual audiences are quite different. This paper will contextualise CCTV channels 1 and 9 both institutionally and historically and then explore some of the striking differences in how they broadcast the news by comparing and contrasting their respective daily half-hour news bulletin programmes broadcast at 7.00 p.m.. It will do so in two ways: by summarizing the overall discourse structure of each programme and by comparing one news item in English (CCTV9) with one in Putonghua (CCTV1). Some tentative suggestions will be offered as to why the discourse structure of the English Language version differs so markedly from the Mandarin version.

Marianna Patrona, Hellenic Military Academy, Greece

Revisiting the news interview: conversational patterns for displaying accountability in political news discourse

This paper will focus on two news interview sub-genres, namely the Accountability Interview and the Structured Panel Discussion, as two alternative and prominent schemes for performing accountability on Greek commercial prime-time news. By drawing upon detailed discourse and conversation analysis, it will be shown that, in both these generic variants, journalists occupy centre stage as strongly opinionated proponents of views: they either directly (through face-to-face interaction) or indirectly (through third-person reference) accuse and undermine political spokespersons, while providing authoritative interpretations of the meaning of political current affairs. By calling attention to their professional task as a primarily interpretive and argumentative—albeit legitimate—activity, journalists in effect re-define the standards of news journalism. It is argued that the shift from the formerly monologic news presentation to an interactive, multi-party format provides the conditions for marked departures from the interviewer’s neutral stance, and entails a fundamental re-casting of the function and role of the broadcast news journalist.

Angela Smith, University of Sunderland, UK

‘Good morning Kate, are you there?’: The development of the ‘live two-way’ in BBC broadcast news.

This paper will look at early examples of the ‘live two-way’ as found in the Kate Adie Collection. Data comes from the archive of broadcast news reports filed by Adie for the BBC and so offers an opportunity to explore the development of this feature of broadcast news through a study of one reporter’s use of it. Beginning with a study of the prosodic features based on telephoned interaction between the field-based reporter with studio-based news presenters, we will then look at how developments in technology allowed for live visual images of Adie to accompany her reporting, something that came to international attention during the first Gulf War (1991) and thus allow us to add a discussion of kinesic features to our understanding of the development of the live two-way.

Joanna Thornborrow, Cardiff University, UK

Styling the News

A noticeable feature of broadcast news which appears to have become more prevalent in recent years is the way that news reports have adopted a distinctly playful and sometimes ironic approach to the construction of textual meanings produced through verbal and visual synchrony. As Charlie Brooker has shown in his parodic take on *Newsnight* 'Newswipe' (How to Report the News) this 'fit' between word and image is sometimes arbitrary and thus humorous, while other fits appear to be more motivated and thus make more of a contribution to available meanings and interpretive frames of reference. For example the *Newsnight* report of the G20 summit meeting in April 2009 focalises on references to the 'historic' nature of the proceedings, while the editing of the report shows a camera clicking onto sepia photographs stills of various delegates in group portraits. This synchrony of verbal and visual meanings begs the question: Why a sepia still photograph now? The phenomenon is by no means limited to BBC2's *Newsnight*, so in this paper I will attempt to provide a possible answer to that question, and other examples of the indexical and metaphoric work being accomplished in *Newsnight*, *BBC* and *ITV* news reports, based on data taken from a sample week at the end of March 2009.