13 Theorizing media, mediation and mediatization

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1. Introduction

Sociolinguistics is currently facing the challenge of how to conceptualize the rapid expansion of its main object of study, socially meaningful linguistic differentiation, beyond the domain of spoken language in face-to-face interaction. This expansion moves into two distinct but interrelated directions: the rise of digitally mediated language as a new type of everyday language-in-use, and the circuit of mediatized representation, uptake, and recontextualization of linguistic fragments. This chapter discusses the three concepts flagged in the title in terms of their status in sociolinguistic theory and their usefulness in responding to these processes.

Discussing media, I first suggest that the concept is currently either erased from the discipline's canonical knowledge or reified as a catch-all notion that obscures the differentiation of the domain it denotes. I also suggest that a lot of thinking about language and media in sociolinguistics is shaped by metaphors which obscure, rather than illuminate, this relationship. Ultimately, I argue, 'the media', widespread as it might be as a descriptive cover term, is a theoretical cul-de-sac. Instead, understanding the implications of media for linguistic differentiation and its social meaning will fare better with conceptual alternatives, including mediation and mediatization.

Discussing mediation, I develop an understanding of the term that centres on technologically facilitated production and reception of linguistic signs. Digitally mediated written language represents a historically new type of mediation, which boosts the importance of writing as an everyday modality of language. I suggest that the sociolinguistic impact of digital mediation is more than its being a written representation of preexisting spoken-language variability and that we need to understand how digital mediation expands the boundaries of visually constituted linguistic heterogeneity.

Discussing mediatization, I introduce the concept's currently predominant readings in linguistic anthropology and communication studies and explore their implications for the study of sociolinguistic differentiation and change. These include the mediatized representation of sociolinguistic differentiation

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and its language-ideological implications, techniques of staging involved in these representations, and practices of uptake and circulation. Overall, I argue that mediatization and mediation take us further in opening up the black-box notion of 'the media', in transgressing unproductive distinctions such as the one between 'mass' and 'new media', and in understanding media in terms of performance, staging, uptake, and recontextualization.

2. 'The media' in sociolinguistics: erasure, reification, differentiation

An informal survey of the term 'media' in sociolinguistic literature yields two main findings. The first we can refer to as 'erasure': Discussions of language and media are largely absent from canonical systematizations of sociolinguistic knowledge. This becomes obvious by looking a few years back. For example, there is no article on language and media in the second edition of a multivolume handbook (Ammon et al. 2004); there is one article referencing media ("Interaction and the Media") in a more recent handbook (Wodak et al. 2010). Discussions of language and media are missing from earlier publications on sociolinguistic theory (e.g. Coupland et al. 2001), as they are from most international introductions to sociolinguistics. The term 'media' rather comes up in absentia, as 'influence' to be denied or a factor of linguistic change deemed implausible (cf. Chambers 1998). This is not to deny early and still influential research on variation and style in media language, notably by Allan Bell (2011) or the recent interest in media, which is rapidly rising in the context of various theoretical advances.[1] Language and media issues are an emerging theme but do not represent canonical knowledge.

The second term, reification, aims to capture what happens when media are eventually thematized in sociolinguistic literature, especially in variationist sociolinguistics. The dominant understanding of 'media' is mass media and basically boils down to television. It evokes the social functions of mass media as institutions of mass communication that are fundamental to the production and reproduction of a nation-wide public sphere and imagined national community (Anderson 2006). This is complemented by a dominant understanding of 'media language' as a type of language that is professionally scripted and acts as a "working definition of the standard language" (Bell 2011: 178). A mainstream understanding of 'the media' in sociolinguistics is that of a centripetal force whose effect on language in

[1] See, among others, Blommaert 2010 (globalization), Bell and Gibson 2011 (performance), Androutsopoulos 2014a (sociolinguistic change; see also Chapter 20 of this volume), and a debate on media and language change in the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 18, 2 (2014).

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the community can be imagined only as a pull towards homogenization. This is how sociolinguists such as Trudgill (2014) and Chambers (1998) justify their rejection of media influence on language use, with the argument that no evidence for such homogenization exists. Were language systematically affected by the media, Trudgill (2014) argues, speakers of British English would have adopted American English accents.[2]

For researchers who dismiss a priori any impact of 'media' on language use, the media are coextensive with mass media and conceived as a force of linguistic convergence. Digitally mediated communication, including the now-popular social media, are deemed a different issue altogether. Exposure to media language and social interaction (as a prerequisite of linguistic diffusion) are apparently considered distinct processes that somehow never interrelate. In this view, the argument for a potential (but refuted) impact of media on language apparently boils down to the claim that "language change must come from the television" (Trudgill 2014: 220).

A sociolinguistic problem with this understanding of media is that it is reductive and in many ways outdated. Not only does it erase digitally mediated communication, where extensive variability in public written language undermines the assumption that 'media language' equates to standard language, it also erases the diversity in mass media language itself. This diversity has evolved – in Europe at least since the liberalization of the television market in the 1980s – into a rich repertoire of speech styles, themselves encased in a repertoire of genres. There are worlds of difference between, for example, standardized news language and speech styles by candidates in reality television shows. As Busch (2006) argues, rather than thinking of media as a centripetal, standardising force, they are more aptly viewed as heteroglossic, yet hierarchically ordered spaces, whose orders of indexicality draw on the audience's life worlds and speak back to them. However, traditional sociolinguistic views of language and media hardly examine media language itself but rather operationalize media consumption or 'exposure' as an independent variable (see discussion in Androutsopoulos 2014b; Sayers 2014; Stuart-Smith 2014).

For scholars beyond linguistics, such as media theorists and anthropologists, an undifferentiated entity termed 'the media' is theoretically and analytically a cul-de-sac. Asif Agha (2011a: 171) argues that the 'mass media' construct "obscures the characteristics of cultural forms that emerge

[2] Trudgill's response to the debate on media and language change (2014) offers a compact presentation of the 'received view' (Kristiansen 2014) on media and language change, which can be summarized as follows: The diffusion of linguistic changes below the level of awareness, i.e. in grammar and phonology, requires density of interpersonal interaction. Diffusion of features above the level of awareness, i.e. lexis, idioms, etc., can also take place via mass media.

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and spread through" practices of mediatization, to which I turn below. As media scholar Nick Couldry puts it,

> the term 'media', and notoriously the phrase 'the media', result from a reification. Indeed, media processes involve a huge complexity of inputs (what are media?) and outputs (what difference do media make, socially, culturally?), which require us to find another term to differentiate the levels within and patterns across this complexity. (Couldry 2008: 379)

The reification of 'media' offers fertile ground for a number of old and influential metaphors, which can promote deterministic and homogenising views on language/media relationships. One is derived from the container metaphor of communication, which conceptualises messages as 'containers' for 'thoughts' or 'meanings' (Krippendorff 1994). Applied to media, this metaphor separates 'containers' (media technologies) from 'content' (the messages transmitted and their characteristics). Its traces are evident in constructions such as 'language *in* the media' (Johnson and Ensslin 2007). Taking this trope one step further, the type of medium (or 'container') is viewed as the most important determinant for classifying and explaining linguistic patterns, so that the language of, for example, newspapers is viewed as distinct from that of radio or television. Similar 'containers' are expected to bring 'content' with similar linguistic patterns. No doubt there is some empirical validity in this, as a comparison between, say, live sports reporting on radio and on television quickly demonstrates. Varying the transmission channel while keeping everything else constant demonstrates the impact of channel at the level of genre, register, and linguistic structure. So, language use is constrained to some extent by the technology of mediation, but this is not the same as a technologically determinist view, which creates an entirely compartmentalized conception of media and language and thereby obscures the relevance of factors such as audience design and speaker design, which cut across transmission channels.

The container metaphor pairs up with a second, theoretically even more consequential metaphor, that of media 'influence' on language. I find it striking how common this and associated metaphorical expressions (such as 'flooding') are, not just in popular lay concerns about media-driven language decay (see Chambers 1998), but also among researchers who clearly move beyond a wholesale dismissal of media importance and even take speakers' engagement with media seriously into consideration.[3] The influence metaphor assigns 'the media', an impersonal entity whose status between technologies and institutions remains obscure, the capacity to influence 'language', cast here

[3] See Sayers 2014; Stuart Smith 2014; Tagliamonte 2014; and discussion in Androutsopoulos 2014a.

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as another underspecified entity. However, once we develop a differentiated view of processes of representation, stylization, uptake, circulation, and engagement, a putative causal link between a media construct and a linguistic system just makes no sense.

Against this backdrop, it should come as no surprise that alternative views on the language/media relationship come without these metaphors or with different metaphors altogether. Perhaps the strongest alternative is the interest in media representations of sociolinguistic differentiation. The prototypical objects of study here are media texts whose speakers, often fictional characters, are differentiated from one another by some pattern of sociolinguistic heterogeneity. Interested sociolinguists examine things such as the allocation of language style to characters, the deployment of features from one or more dialects or registers in constructing a speaker persona, the voicing of social identities and intergroup relations in media performance, and the commodification of vernacular features in heavily styled multimodal texts such as commercial advertisements.[4] Sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology develop a language-ideological critique of such representations: What values underpin them, and what kind of metalinguistic knowledge must audiences bring to bear on their viewing in order to interpret the socio-stylistic contrasts in representation? How do these representations reproduce or challenge inequality, discrimination, and racism (Hill 1995; Lippi-Green 1997)? And how do the features indexing social groups relate to empirically documented variation in nonmediated contexts? This line of research is boosted by, and in turn contributes to, theoretical input from the notion of enregisterment (Agha 2003), notably the suggestion that the mediatized performance of speech styles contributes to the construction of their typical or 'exemplary' speakers. I return to this issue in Section 4.

Unlike the exposure-and-influence paradigm, this line of scholarship is compatible with research on audience practices with the media. Unlike the rhetoric of 'influence', the perspective on media engagement emphasizes the agency and creativity of audiences in how they deal with media language (e.g. Spitulnik 1997). Understanding how representations of sociolinguistic differentiation are read by audiences can offer a much-needed complement to linguistic media analysis (Johnstone 2011; Androutsopoulos 2014b). So, understanding whether patterns of media language might have an impact on audiences' own linguistic practices requires analysis of genres and styles of media language, on the one hand, and of media engagement practices, on the other. Issues of impact are raised here too, but in a more contextualized, qualitatively bolstered way. Not least, this line of research goes to show how fuzzy the boundary between media language and language in the community

[4] See Androutsopoulos 2010 for a research survey; Coupland 2007; Jaffe 2009; Bell and Gibson 2011; Johnstone 2011; Queen 2015.

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has become, with the former staging the latter, the latter recontextualizing fragments of the former.

Metaphors such as circuit and circulation, unelaborated as they still may be at present, are useful in opening up the 'media' construct and developing the shift of perspective to 'new media', a term which is equally inadequate at a theoretical level. The analytical distinction between 'mass' and 'new media', handy as it may be for quick reference, will not take us far in an era where media technologies, institutions, and publics give rise to hybrid combinations of institutional and participatory discourse and new opportunities for digital circulation and rescaling of utterances. New theoretical metaphors are required here, too. Space is one such metaphor, in the sense that digital technologies provide the infrastructure by which virtual spaces for interaction and discourse are semiotically constructed by institutions and publics. This understanding of space becomes topical and timely as engagement with media ceases to be exclusively in the receiving and consuming mode. Space does not just refer to the physical site of co-present viewing. In online communication, the metaphor of space connotes movement, presence, interaction, and agency. People go to and act in virtual spaces (being on Facebook, in a forum, or on a chat channel); people move in virtual space through their avatars (e.g. in *Second Life* or a multiplayer online game); and they discursively construct these spaces by means of mediational tools, including those that enable the production of digital written language.

3. Mediation: digital written language as a sociolinguistic object

The meaning of mediation advanced here is semiotic materialization, its premise being that all realizations of language depend on technologies of mediation. Agha (2011b: 163; 2011a: 174) uses the term "mediation" to refer to all semiotic means by which people relate to each other within frameworks of communicative activity (see also Bucholtz and Hall, this volume, Chapter 8). Kristiansen (2014) points out:

> Language as such is "mediated" in the sense that a formed substance is necessary to express linguistic meaning. In order to form the substance, we make use of technologies. We use "physiological technologies" to form sound waves that make sense in spoken language, and gestures that make sense in signed language. We apply writing and printing technologies to a multitude of substances in forming "strokes" to be made sense of in written language. (Kristiansen 2014: 99)

Mediation thus refers to "the technological aspect of speaking, signing and writing", Kristiansen continues (p. 99), which is "inherent to language in this fundamental sense". Following up on Kristiansen, 'primary' and 'secondary' technologies of mediation can be distinguished. Primary mediation is embodied,

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in the sense that spoken language is mediated through verbal cords and facial movement; sign language is mediated through gestural and facial movement (again, see in this volume Bucholtz and Hall, Chapter 8, and Lucas and Bayley, Chapter 16). Secondary mediation depends on mediational tools – a term familiar from mediated discourse analysis (Norris and Jones 2005), by which the recording and transmission of signs are amplified. Mediated language of the secondary type is defined by Kristiansen (2014: 99) as "language use based on some technology that 'liberates' the transmission/construction of meaning from the contextual constraints of face-to-face interaction". All written language relies as a sine qua non condition on mediational tools, with the tools themselves changing in the course of time. An elaborate classification of mediational tools, as found in semiotics, would further distinguish these processes according to their material conditions, technical complexity, historical depth, and so on. On this basis we can think of speech events as drawing on and combining various technologies of mediation in generically conditioned ways, so that, for example, a stage performance involves both primary and secondary mediational tools, and digitally mediated interaction involves the mediation of written language via keyboards and screens (Jucker and Dürscheid 2012).

It could be argued at this point that processes of mediation as such are of primary interest to phoneticians and graphologists, whereas sociolinguists are interested in their outcome, that is, spoken and written language. One reason to evoke mediation in sociolinguistics is in my view the ongoing change in the social status of digital written language, which is aptly captured with the term "mass literacy" (Brandt 2015). In my own phrasing, we are witnessing a new scale of unregimented writing in society at large: "more people write, people write more, and unregimented writing goes public" (Androutsopoulos 2011). One consequence of this turn to mass literacy is, I believe, that everyday informal language, the subject matter of sociolinguistics, is now expanding into a new domain. Rather than being restricted to specific purposes and occasions (and segments of the population), language mediated by keyboards and screens is now being used by almost everyone and to all sorts of purposes, including spontaneous and informal networked writing (Androutsopoulos 2011).[5] The widespread assumptions that authentic language in the community is limited to spoken language and that written language is the most homogenous, or invariant, area of language, seem no longer tenable.

Once the notion of authentic language in the community is extended across mediational borders, the question is how linguistic differentiation in digital

[5] By this, I do not mean to deny the persisting digital divide and inequalities of Internet access across countries and continents but to emphasize that at least in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia, computer literacy and online access are available to the vast majority of people.

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written language relates to that in spoken language (other things being equal); or, differently phrased, how sociolinguistic heterogeneity can be theorized across modalities of language. My impression is that the hitherto predominant response has followed the phonocentric assumption, or spoken-language bias, that by and large predominates in sociolinguistics. By this I mean the notion, which goes back to early structuralism, that written language is a secondary mode, a mere 'rerendering' of spoken. In research on computer-mediated communication, this phonocentric view is reflected in the assumption that socially meaningful variation emerges only in the relation of digital language to (or its simulation of) spoken-language variability, for example when regional features are represented in writing. To be sure, there is ample evidence for the written representation of spoken-language variation in digital sociolinguistics research, and important questions to be asked: Which socially diagnostic variables from a given vernacular are represented in networked writing, and how do they relate to orthographic norms? Why are some features represented and others not? (see Siebenhaar 2006; Dorleijn and Nortier 2009; Vandekerckhove and Nobels 2010). Questions of this kind have important theoretical implications for a transmodal view of language in society. However, they are still based on the assumption that the patterns of linguistic variation that matter are those that reproduce spoken-language variability.

By contrast, my intent here is to suggest that digital mediation gives rise to graphic variability that is not just a mirror-image of phonic variability but emerges against the backdrop of the orthographic representation of a given linguistic item in a given language. To the extent that a writing system enables two or more spelling variants, these can be mobilized, conventionally or in ad hoc ways, provided they are still within the realm of recognisability. Sebba (2007) establishes that spelling variants can be socially meaningful even without encoding phonic differences, that is, as heterographic homophones. One of Sebba's examples is the word *dog*, which can also be represented as <dogg>, with potential indexical associations to hip-hop, or <dög>, with added "heavy metal umlaut" (Spitzmüller 2012). However, the spelling <Dd@gG> probably isn't a socially recognisable representation of the word *dog*.

The status of orthography as a mode-specific point of reference for graphic variability extends to punctuation and diacritics. The apostrophe in English (Squires 2012) is a good example. Squires analyses the use of the possessive apostrophe in texting by female and male students and revisits sociolinguistic theory of language and gender in interpreting the results. The apostrophe is systematic enough to be treated as a sociolinguistic variable, and its variability clearly goes beyond being a mere reflex of phonic variation. Another similar example is the graphic signalling of gender-inclusiveness in German

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nouns, a process termed *Movierung*. In past usage, the morphologically masculine form was the noun's generic form. One way of signalling inclusiveness is by repetition of the noun in masculine and feminine (suffixed) form. For instance, the noun *Mitarbeiter* (literally 'co-worker', i.e. 'associate') has the feminine form *Mitarbeiterin*, and together they build the gender-inclusive plural construction *Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter* ('staff'). Such plural constructions are often abbreviated by means of a separator between the base form and the gender-marked plural suffix. The most common separators in institutional and public texts are the slash </> and word-internal capital <I>, hence *Mitarbeiter/innen* or *Mitarbeiter-Innen.* We currently see in the discourse of German universities, notably in circular emails, a number of new separators, such as <*> and <_>, hence *Mitarbeiter*innen* and *Mitarbeiter_innen*, respectively (readers are invited to look these up on the Internet). There is a metapragmatic awareness of these variants being preferred by younger members of staff who seem to be deliberately avoiding the institutionally unmarked separators. In the metapragmatic discourse that evolves around this instance of variation, the visual shape of some innovative separators gains symbolic meaning, e.g. in the suggestion that the underscore, <_>, iconizes the prevailing gender gap.

The same logic of analysis can be extended from single graphemic variables (like the above) to digital writing styles such as the notorious (and underinvestigated) "Leet speak", where letters are replaced by similar-looking digits (hence, *L33t*) or the typographic practices by young female bloggers studied by Vaisman (2011), where elements from different scripts, substitution of graphs by visually similar digits, decorative usage of punctuation and other resources are tied together in creative visual expressions of social identities.

A second aspect of genuinely graphic variability emerges within multilingual and multiliteral repertoires. As discussed in Androutsopoulos (2015), digital language practices are constrained by participants' languages of alphabetization and socially asymmetric conventions for written usage. In postcolonial societies such as Jamaica or Senegal, language choices for spoken conversation and written discourse have traditionally parted ways, with vernacular repertoires of spoken interaction not being used for writing. Informal digital communication can offer new opportunities for reducing this gap (cf. Deumert and Lexander 2013). In such settings, the relation of informal digital language to spoken usage is in flux, with digital written language becoming a resource for overcoming the hegemony of postcolonial language regimes.

My intent against this backdrop is to emphasise the opportunities provided by the availability of two or more orthographies or scripts for local heterographic

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practices in networked writing. The practice of writing utterances in one language in the orthography or script of another can crystallize in patterns of computer-mediated digraphia for languages regularly written in the Latin script online, such as Greek and Serbian (Androutsopoulos 2009; Ivkovic 2013). It can also materialize in more fleeting, smaller-reach, often ad hoc moments of what I term 'trans-scripting' (Androutsopoulos 2015). This can be observed with for example, young speakers of Greek writing English or German items in the Greek script, or speakers of Turkish spelling German words and phrases in Turkish orthography, so that *Deutsch* is cast as *Doyc* (Hinnenkamp 2008). These variants are homophones, so *Doyc* indexes not a Turkish accent but rather a Turkish view of things.

Trans-scripting, then, is a practice by which conventionalized values attached to scripts can be evoked as impromptu contextualization cues in digital written language (see also Su 2003). The contextualization perspective has broader relevance in this respect (see also Rampton, this volume, Chapter 14). Following Gumperz (1982), contextualization cues cover all semiotic means by which interlocutors provide hints to the sociocultural placement of their contribution in interactional context and its preferred interpretation. Georgakopoulou (1997) was one of the first researchers to observe that in the absence of familiar prosodic, segmental, and visual cues, contextualization work in computer-mediated discourse largely relies on what can be encoded with a keyboard and mouse. She also observes that the lack of ordinary resources for contextualization "results in an increased reliance on code-centred contextualization cueing, which would be otherwise delegated to different signals" (Georgakopoulou 1997: 158). Spelling or punctuation variants of different kinds can accomplish pragmatic work that would probably draw on prosody in face-to-face conversation.

The issue here is how to conceive of the relationship of graphically realized cues to their presumable phonic counterparts. While a phonocentric approach would assume that graphic contexualization cues in digital writing replicate spoken ones, the graphocentric approach advocated here suggests an analysis in terms of iconic contrasts. A case in point are iterations of graphemes or punctuation signs, which are extremely common in the social media data with which I am familiar. The following examples are status updates or comments among young female users in semi-public exchanges on Facebook (for a detailed discussion of these data, see Androutsopoulos 2015). Their base language is Greek in (1)–(4), English in (5), and German in (6) and (7), and they all include one or more items with iterated graphemes as well as multiple punctuation signs, especially exclamation marks. The items with iterated graphemes are in italics in the English glosses below.

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1. simera to bradu partyyyy xD naiii eimai sta high mou :D agaaapes m thnxx :*
   'tonight there's *party* xD *yes* I'm in great mood :D my *loves thnxx* :*'
2. hahaha....aurio mwro m 3ekourasou...gt anamainetai megalh vradiaaaaaaaaaaaa! !
   'hahaha....tomorrow get some rest baby...because we're expecting a great *evening*! !'
3. mwrhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!ti kaneis?. h noula?... xa8hkateeeee!
   '*hey you*!!! how are you?. what about [friend's name]?... we *lost* you!'
4. to na mou les psemmata...enw ta kserw olllllllla....
   'that you are lying to me...while I know *everything.....*'
5. hahahah ooo yesssss xD
   'hahahah *o yes* xD'
6. ICH BIN TOOOOOOOOOOD !!!! DAS WAR SOOO WITZIG GESTERN HAHAHAHAH
   'I'm *dead* !!!! That was *so* funny yesterday hahahahah'
7. LLLEEEEECCCKKKKERRR !!!
   '*tasty* !!!'

In social media conversations, utterances of this kind are generally understood as expressing an emotional stance towards the interlocutor and/or the propositional content of the contribution. A phonocentric analysis seems to work well for some iterations. For example, *partyyyy* in (1) or the term of address *mwrhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh* in (2) will be understood as conveying a vowel lengthening the speaker/writer would have produced in speech. It works less well when the iterated graphs are less likely to represent phonation, as with noncontinuant consonants in the examples (4), (5), and (7). Considering the last example, the expressive surplus of *LLLEEEEECCCKKKKERRR* is obvious, thanks to an iconic analogy of more graphs equating more expressive emphasis. However, its phonic correspondent is less straightforward. The hyperarticulation of the onset lateral is phonically plausible, but less so that of the mid-word /k/. In German, /r/ is usually vocalized in postvocalic final position, [ɐ], which is often lengthened for emphasis. However, the writer here does not attempt to represent in spelling the vocalized pronunciation, [ɐ], which could look like <leckaaa>, but keys expressiveness by modifying the word's orthographic shape. Tannen (2013: 106–108) comes to the same conclusion in a discussion of repetition as a marker of enthusiasm in digital media conversations. Some repetitions index a likely pronunciation; others work as a purely visual means of emphasis.

A phonocentric approach also comes to its limits with regard to the repetition of punctuation signs. For example, whether a contribution comes with two, four, or more <!> is iconically understood as conveying degrees of expressivity or emotional involvement, but probably less as conveying discrete differences in pitch or facial expression. Examples of this sort

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suggest that the direction of mediational mapping can be reversed: Instead of typing what they allegedly would have said, networked writers key their expressiveness and may perhaps retrospectively attempt to voice what they just spelt.

Clearly, much more research is needed in order to substantiate these suggestions. The point I wish to make here is that sociolinguistic approaches to networked writing require a framework that conceptualises visible language as a distinct level of stylistic practice in a third-wave sense (Eckert 2012; also this volume, Chapter 3). A broader premise here could be the hypothesis that mass digital literacy brings along a heightened awareness of visual aspects of linguistic signifiers (cf. Kelly-Holmes, this volume, Chapter 7). Put differently, the cultural sensitivity to the auditory channel for the perception of linguistic variation is being complemented by a visual sensitivity for the subtleties of graphic variability and the ways it sometimes indexes a primary phonic, itself socially enregistered, materialization of language, and sometimes emerges through the contrast of a particular graphic materialization to normative orthography or local conventions of digital written language. And even though this discussion focuses on interactive written language online, it should be obvious that such heightened awareness of visible language is also at play in other contemporary practices of typographic and scriptural design (see, e.g., Spitzmüller 2012).

4. Mediatization

The concept of mediatization has a range of understandings in communications studies and linguistic anthropology, and its reception in sociolinguistics is still diffuse (cf. discussion in Androutsopoulos 2014b). My aim is to discuss two predominant conceptions and consider their usefulness in opening up the black box of 'the media', not least in view of the need for new concepts and theoretical metaphors identified above.

The first conception is by Agha (2011a,b) who offers an explicit conceptual relation of mediation to mediatization. While mediation refers to semiotic realizations of language in communicative context, mediatization is understood as a "narrow special case of mediation" and refers to "institutional practices that reflexively link processes of communication to processes of commoditization" (Agha 2011b: 163). Agha writes:

> Today, familiar institutions in any large scale society (e.g., schooling, the law, electoral politics, the mass media) all presuppose a variety of mediatized practices as conditions on their possibility. In linking communication to commoditization, mediatized institutions link communicative roles to positions within a socioeconomic division of labor, thereby expanding the effective scale of production and dissemination of messages across a population, and thus the scale at which persons can orient to common presuppositions in acts of communication with each other. And since

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> mediatization is a narrow special case of mediation, such links also expand the scale at which differentiated forms of uptake and response to common messages can occur, and thus, through the proliferation of uptake formulations, increase the felt complexity of so-called "complex society" for those who belong to it. (Agha 2011b: 163)

Agha's mediatization is not limited to mass media in the narrow sense. At its core is the link of communication and commoditization, with the latter a much broader notion than consumerism (Agha 2011a). I focus here on those aspects in particular that tie in well with sociolinguistic interests. One is the dual focus on practices by institutions as well as members of a population. Institutionally, mediatized messages are designed for and oriented to large audiences, thereby expanding the dissemination of a message across a population and providing "massively parallel inputs to recontextualization" (Agha 2011a: 167). This does not preclude a variety of potential responses. Different people may respond to mediatized messages in many different ways, but they engage with the same messages and treat these "as indexical presuppositions of whatever it is they do or make" (p. 167).

The second take on mediatization originates in European communications studies where mediatization is defined as a large-scale, metaprocess of social and cultural change through the development of communications media (see Krotz 2009; Livingstone 2009; Hepp 2014; Lundby 2014). The central question of mediatization research is how changes in media bring about changes in human communication, cultural practices, and social formations. The notion of media deployed here is a broad one, which includes not only mass media but all kinds of mediational tools in a Scollonian sense (Scollon 2001). Mediatization as a long-term process, Krotz (2009) argues, begins with the development of secondary mediation technologies and extends to ever more complex configurations of mediated and mediatized communication, which, at the present historical stage, permeate all aspects of private and institutional life. In this sense the notion of 'mediatized childhood' refers to the ways in which media at large, that is, use of mediational tools as well as consumption of media content, transforms the social configuration of childhood, including the practices of communication to and among children. As this example suggests, mediatization research rejects a media-effects approach in favour of a view centred on communicative practices with media.

Both readings of mediatization incorporate mediation, though in a slightly different sense in each case. From a sociolinguistic angle, both can be useful in abandoning the 'media influence' view towards an understanding of how, to use Agha's terminology here, mediatized messages and subsequent acts of mediated communication are intertwined or, in a communication studies wording, how an increasing range of language practices becomes entangled in complex configurations of mediational tools and mediatization technologies.

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Elsewhere (Androutsopoulos 2016) I suggest that the communication-studies concept of mediatization together with a nexus-of-practice approach (Scollon 2001) are useful for the analysis of mediatized practices. By this I mean the recontextualization of communicative practices through the use of digital media: We write emails to do things we used to do in person, send text messages instead of calling, or complement audience talk by tweeting about the show we are watching. Some mediatized practices are modelled on pre-digital ones. For example, audience talk on Twitter resembles familiar practices of audience engagement in face-to-face interaction. Other mediatized practices constitute a new nexus of practice for new institutional activities, for example, new practices of online journalism, such as the management of user comments in social media sites (cf. Androutsopoulos 2016). In this sense, mediatized practices act as mediators, as it were, between macrolevel social processes of mediatization and microlevel patterns of digitally mediated language use.

Returning to Agha's theory of mediatization, I focus on two aspects: the implications of mediatized representations for the formation of registers and their 'exemplary speakers', and the implications of uptake for the circulation and diffusion of linguistic features. Agha's study of the enregisterment of Received Pronunciation in Britain (Agha 2003) established the impact of mediatized messages on the association of linguistic forms with social groups or activities. This association is constituted through metapragmatic stereotypes, which link speech forms with recognizable speaker stereotypes and social contexts of use (Johnstone 2011). They include the discursive construction of typical or exemplary speakers, which can change in the course of time (Agha 2003: 265). Typifications of a register can occur in a range of media genres, each having a specific scale of circulation; examples in Agha's data include newspaper glosses, weekly 'pennies', and schoolbooks. The relevance of this framework for contemporary audiovisual media (such as commercials, film, soap operas, or reality shows) is boosted by the observation that not only do mediatized forms of vernacular speech proliferate in these genres, but metapragmatic typifications are extremely common too. For instance, audiovisual fiction regularly draws on register contrasts as a resource for the mediatized presentation of social types and their interpersonal relations in a fictional narrative, and commercials regularly commodify features of regional dialects by linking them to advertized products (cf. Coupland 2009). What makes audiovisual media texts particularly relevant to the study of enregisterment is the visual presentation and embodied conduct of typical speakers, which may enable a richer construction of their characterological features.

Taking the study of enregisterment into the domain of audiovisual narratives requires taking into consideration how representations of linguistic differentiation are contextualized in terms of media genre, interactional key, and techniques of

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staging. Depending on genre, a dialect speaker can be keyed as, for example, funny, rustic, gross, or down-to-earth, with different implications for potential practices of uptake in which fragments of mediatized dialect can be evoked to perform a range of speech activities, for example, to categorise a speaker. By staging, I mean "all the representational choices involved in the production and editing of text, image, and talk in the creation of media products" (Jaffe 2009: 572; Jaffe herself uses here the term "mediatization"; see also Jaffe, this volume, Chapter 4). In audiovisual media, staging includes a variety of techniques of postproduction. In reality television formats, for example, utterances and interactions by lay participants (e.g. candidates in a casting show) are staged by means of montage, overlaid music tracks, written-language inserts or added subtitles. Such techniques of staging can act as contextualization cues that guide viewers' perceptions of media characters. For example, superimposed inserts typify speakers in terms of social categories or discourse positions; overlaid music can key an utterance as dramatic, witty, or dumb; intralingual subtitling indexes programme-makers' assumptions about the intelligibility of nonstandard varieties for the sake of a nation-wide audience (Vandekerckhove et al. 2009). To give another example, Cole and Pellicer (2012) show that the staging of a mediatized fragment creates constraints around interpretation. The case is Hillary Clinton's use of 'black' rhetorical forms in a campaign event, and the analysis shows that the televized mediatization of a decontextualized fragment of Clinton's speech leads to devaluing interpretations, which do not match those of the audience at the campaign event.

A sociolinguistic analysis of mediatized messages, then, can benefit from considering techniques of staging, in the context of media institutions and genres and in relation to enregisterment. Describing and understanding these processes requires, here too, a new analytical vocabulary, whose inception in current research draws, among other things, on the framework of performance and intertextuality proposed by Bauman and Briggs (1990). For example, the study by Cole and Pellicer (2012) introduces a set of terms such as "premediatized event" (e.g. a live speech), "premediatization audience" (the audience to this speech), "mediatized fragment" (e.g. an excerpt from that speech that is broadcast), and "postperformance mediatization" (the metapragmatic and metadiscursive processes that follow up on this broadcast).

Extending Agha's perspective, Cole and Pellicer (2012: 451) define uptake as "a kind of perception or awareness of a fragment of semiotic behaviour that can lead to the recycling or reinterpretation of the fragment". One way of examining practices of uptake is by focusing on here-and-now audience responses during reception, thereby following the ethnographic tradition of audience studies (see discussion in Androutsopoulos 2014b: 18–25). There is ample evidence in this research that fragments from

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mediatized texts are recontextualized in audience practices of voicing, quoting, evaluating, and so on. However, the subsequent trajectory of uptake fragments is often left to speculation. It is therefore theoretically and methodologically useful to examine uptake both as a practice of media engagement and as a series of subsequent mediatized messages, the two of them not being sharply separate. Understanding the trajectory from ad hoc moments of uptake to the broader circulation, and eventually diffusion, of mediatized fragments can only benefit by the availability of both types of data. This seems extremely pertinent in dealing with social media, where the boundaries between a mediated contribution (e.g. a status update, comment, or tweet) and its rescaling and mediatization on the part of institutional actors (e.g. journalists who quote this comment in their own online story) are particularly fuzzy.

A rare attempt to reconstruct this trajectory in detail is a case study by Squires (2014), which distinguishes between adoption (defined as direct uptake of a mediatized fragment by audience members), circulation (the "use-in-practice of the feature from adopters to new users, who are media consumers"), and diffusion ("spread of the feature from adopters to new users, who may or may not be media consumers"; Squires 2014: 43). The second and third steps differ from the first in that they detach the fragment from the context of its immediate reception, and the third step differs from the second in terms of a process Squires terms "indexical bleaching". In her definition, this happens when "a feature retains its semantic meaning and pragmatic force" but loses its social meaning" (p. 43). Through bleaching, Squires suggests, a features ceases to be part of "media language", that is, loses its metapragmatic connection to a specific mediatized representation and its characters, and enters the lexical or idiomatic repertoire of a speech community. Androutsopoulos (2014b: 23) terms this process "intertextual bleaching", defined as "decreasing interactional relevance of the fragment's intertextual link, so that its media origin is made ever less relevant in the actual instance of recontextualization"(p. 23).

In either wording, indexical/intertextual bleaching is a useful notion, as it lends itself to corpus-based operationalization. Squires (2014) does this with Twitter data, which recycle a phrase that originates in a television show, and distinguishes these tweets by discursive domain, topical reference, and formal variation. Other potential data come to mind, such as newspaper corpora or ethnographically documented everyday talk. Understanding how different types of postmediatized data can shed light to different facets of circulation and diffusion is a task for future research. Regardless of data, semantic and pragmatic criteria can be used to identify whether a mediatized fragment has reached the stage of bleaching. This is the case when the use of this fragment bears no cue to its mediatized

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origin, e.g. it is not part of media stylization and does not raise subsequent metapragmatic justification or hedging.

5. Conclusion

As it happens, the end of this discussion meets Trudgill's suggestions on media influence on the spread of lexical innovations: "People hear new words and phrases on the TV, and sometimes start using them themselves. That's about it"(Trudgill 2014: 220). The preceding discussion suggests there is much more complexity in this process and new ideas on how to uncover it. There is good reason at this point, therefore, to recall Blommaert's plea for a new vocabulary in sociolinguistics. "What is needed is a new vocabulary to describe events, phenomena and processes, new metaphors for representing them, new arguments to explain them" (Blommaert 2010: 1–2; cf. Blommaert, this volume, Chapter 11). I argued that sociolinguistics needs new vocabulary, metaphors, and arguments in order to cope with rapidly changing language practices involving media. That said, I take 'new' here to include a critique of received definitions and arguments, notably relating to media and its influence on language (Section 2) and a rediscovery of established concepts, such as mediation (Section 3).

As pointed out in the beginning, language and media research in sociolinguistics is in flux. There is a rising amount of research on both areas covered in this chapter, that is, interpersonal computer-mediated communication and mass-mediated discourse. My intention was not to suggest that these areas are still uncharted territory but to emphasise that results from this research have not yet become canonical knowledge in the discipline. The view of media as something distinct from everyday language, and peripheral to its development, is still around. Sociolinguistics is therefore still in the process of normalising media, mediation, and mediatization as aspects of language in society. Part of this process is to acknowledge that the use of mediational tools and the uptake of mediatized messages are common language practices in a mediatized society and fundamental to the circulation and diffusion of semiotic innovations in the digital age.

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