



SWEDISH
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REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Session: Sociology and Sociolinguistics of Mass Media after Western Hegemony

Session Convener(s): Nino Daraselia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Chair: Nino Daraselia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Comments: -

I) *Towards the Linguo-Visual Realization of Journalist Code of Ethics in Internet News Stories*
Nino Daraselia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

II) *Reading from Left and Right: A Comparative Study of Partisan Newspapers across Europe*
Paula do Espírito Santo, Technical University of Lisbon

III) *Semiotics of Verbal and Visual Landscapes in Internet News Stories*
Natalia Baghdavadze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

ABSTRACTS

Session description

The session will be devoted to the discussion of sociological and sociolinguistic dimensions of mass media in the modern world. On the one hand it will be an attempt to explore the role of mass media in the process of globalization, and on the other, it will focus upon the changes mass media has already undergone and possible or desirable alterations it should undergo in the future to serve the needs of the united world.

As is known, globalization is a painful process, prolonged in time; the striving towards the world based on the principle of equality, tendencies towards interconnectedness and interdependence of contrasting cultures and societies, readiness for new cultural and civilizational encounters are accompanied by significant changes in mentality and world outlooks, hence the process of globalization can be viewed as decolonization and liberation of minds. What is the function of mass media in the given process?

To modify B. Anderson's words said in reference to nation, can the globalized world be presented as a mental construct, an imagined community united by mass media? Can mass media serve as a means for uniting the world or as a tool for breaking it up? Can it become trans-cultural and global? How could different media technologies be employed to achieve harmonious coexistence of different cultures? Should there be any alterations made in news values and journalist code of ethics as well as in the principles of the linguistic realization of the news? These are some of the issues the session aims to deal with.

Papers

1) *Towards the Linguo-Visual Realization of Journalist Code of Ethics in Internet News Stories*

Nino Daraselia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

The paper aims to show how Journalist Code of Ethics is (mis)represented linguistically and visually in internet news discourse. The empirical data (English and Georgian internet news stories for 2011, 300 news articles in all) have been analyzed from the standpoints of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1978), Critical Discourse Analysis (van Dijk 1993, 1998) and Media Studies (Fowler 1993, Hartley 1982).

As is known, Journalist Code of Ethics worked out by The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ 1996) summarizes the basic principles of journalistic ethics under four headings:

- 1) Truthfulness in gathering, reporting and interpreting information;
- 2) Harm limitation principle i.e. showing respect towards sources, subjects and colleagues;
- 3) Independence - journalists should be free of obligations to any interest other than the public's right to know.
- 4) Journalists' accountability to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other. Each of the aspects is further subdivided. According to these principles news coverage of world events should be presented as the unbiased recording of hard facts "in language designed to be unambiguous, undistorting and agreeable to readers" (Fowler 1993:1). However, due to the specificity and complexity of internet news discourse, observation of the given principles is connected with certain difficulties. The analysis has proved that peculiarities of linguo-visual realization of journalism ethics and standards are determined by different sets of constraints: 'contextual features' (D.Hymes), 'news values' (J.Galtung&M.Ruge). Moreover, similar to any code, Journalist Code of Ethics implies relations between people and groups (these also serve as constraints); the following types of relations can be singled out: journalist – target reader; journalist – audience; journalist - referent; journalist–colleagues; journalist – sources.

Because of this diversity of constraints and relations the linguo-visual representation of the Journalist Code of Ethics acquires a peculiar configuration, as a rule it is culturally tinged. The paper focuses on the linguistic tools and visual techniques employed by the English and Georgian internet news sites to express the concepts (truthfulness, impersonality, impartiality, objectivity, compassion etc.) reflected in Journalist Code of Ethics.

II) *Reading from Left and Right: A Comparative Study of Partisan Newspapers across Europe*

Paula do Espírito Santo, Technical University of Lisbon

Publishing political issues in the period of a long and deep political and ideological crisis implies the use of challenging strategies by partisan newspapers. The latter are undergoing drastic social and economic changes in their effort to attract supporters. Political apathy and disinterest are a transversal feature linking the preoccupations of political parties in western democracies. The objective of the present paper is to analyse the content tendencies of several partisan newspapers from a number of European countries, special emphasis has been placed upon the newspapers with different ideological bases. In methodological terms, the technique applied is the content analysis embracing categorical, qualitative as well as quantitative approaches. The results expected will contribute to a better understanding of differences and similarities between the strategies employed by different partisan newspapers during political communication, for the purpose of approaching, maintaining and reinforcing the identity of various types of parties.

III) *Semiotics of Verbal and Visual Landscapes in Internet News Stories*

Natalia Baghdavadze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

The paper discusses syntactics, semantics and pragmatics of verbal and visual landscapes encountered in internet news communication. The aim of the study is:

1. to reveal the relations between verbal and pictorial landscapes and their referents
2. to single out functions of verbal as well as visual landscapes in internet news discourse.
3. to state the role of landscapes in creating the overall mood in news stories

The empirical data comprises 200 articles in the period between 2010-2011, from the following Internet sources:

www.washingtonpost.com, www.guardian.co.uk, www.dailymail.co.uk, www.time.com, www.nytimes.com, www.bbc.co.uk, etc.

The study has proved that in internet news discourse the visual landscape represents a triad comprising:

1. the non-coded iconic message, which is the literal visual message. It is used to support the symbolic message of a photograph/landscape and is completely spelled out for the audience or viewers
2. the coded iconic message, which is the symbolic message of the visual landscape. It evokes associations and intertextual links.
3. the linguistic message, which could be expressed via a title, caption, etc. It links the image with its context, providing certain relevance to the reader; also, it involves a reciprocal relation between a text and a picture, each contributing to the overall message
4. As regards verbal landscapes, they operate on two levels expressing two kinds of meaning:
 - a. denotative, by showing directly what happened – describing a particular event.

b.connotative, by signifying or implying the prevailing mood and possible consequences of an event with the help of various stylistic devices and figures of speech.

Verbal and visual components of the landscape are dialectically connected; to be precise, visual and verbal landscapes are different media into which “the extralinguistic landscape” can be 'translated.' In this process the landscape acquires visual/photographic and verbal/ literary meanings, to these two the interpretative meaning of the viewer/ reader is added.