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Chapter 5, Approaches to Media Texts **Ruth Wodak and Brigitta Busch**

Introduction

In our contribution, we focus on qualitative linguistic approaches to media texts – especially on the approaches developed within critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. There are several important reasons for this choice: In recent decades, there has been a significant increase in international interest in applying qualitative research methods to the study of social and cultural processes. Although the traditional empirically oriented approach to media texts, mainly represented by quantitative content analysis, is still widespread in mass communication research (McQuail, 2000, p. 235), some observers (e.g., Jensen & Jankowski, 1991) speak of a "qualitative turn" in media studies. This shift of paradigm is not a question of preferences for particular methodologies but corresponds to conceptual and theoretical frameworks distinct from the traditional sender-receiver model.

We cannot, however, elaborate on all the important research in conversation analysis (CA) and sociolinguistics, which has been concerned with media analysis, due to the shift of paradigm mentioned above. CA emerged in the 1960s (see Titscher, Wodak, Meyer, & Vetter, 2000, for a summary). It is based on Ethnomethodology the leading journal *Discourse & Society* are based on media texts. In this chapter, we argue that the agendas in both disciplines are obviously converging and that interdisciplinary approaches to media texts can offer deeper insights. (Garfinkel, the leading journal *Discourse & Society* are based on media texts. In this chapter, we argue that the agendas in both disciplines are obviously converging and that interdisciplinary approaches to media texts can offer deeper insights. 1967; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) as an interpretative approach to sociology, which focuses mainly on the organization of everyday life. Despite the specificity of its name, CA represents a generic approach to the study of social interaction. Much of the media text research in this field focuses on relevant aspects of broadcast news interviews (Greatbach, 1986; Heritage, 1985), talk radio (Hutchby, 1991), and talk shows (Gruber, 1991; Kotthoff, 1997). CA describes the formal structure of conversations (openings, turn takings, closings, topic control, interruptions, etc.) and analyzes how they operate under the institutional constraints of media. The strength of CA is based in detailed linguistic description, focusing on the organization of interaction, without considering the context. Context is defined within the text, dependent on the explicit mentioning of relevant factors by the speakers (see Schegloff, 1998).

In recent approaches to media texts mentioned above, however, the "text" as such has been somewhat "decentralized", and the focus of interest has shifted to the (social, cultural, political) context and to the "localization" of meaning. A similar change of paradigm in approaches to texts has been occurring in linguistics. Media texts are also frequently being used as data corpora in linguistic analysis. In the leading journal *Discourse & Society* are based on media texts. In this chapter, we argue that the agendas in both disciplines are obviously converging and that interdisciplinary approaches to media texts can offer deeper insights. Garrett and Bell (1998, p. 6) point out that more than 40% of the papers published in the leading journal *Discourse & Society* are based on media texts. In this chapter, we argue that the agendas in both disciplines are obviously converging and that interdisciplinary approaches to media texts can offer deeper insights.