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Interactions between politics, media and discourse

Abstract

Media texts are frequently being used as corpora in linguistic analysis, treating politics- and policy-related questions such as social inclusion and exclusion, stereotypes and constructions of national or ethnic identities (Wodak & Busch: 2005). For instance, over 40% of the papers published in the journal *Discourse & Society* are based on media texts (Garrett & Bell 1998: 6). There are different reasons for this: given their public nature, media texts are easily available and accessible, offering even a historic dimension through archives. Media texts can be assumed to have an impact as they address and reach multipliers or a more general large public. It can be assumed that they receive attention by their audiences, as their reception is voluntary. Media texts, as other texts in the public domain, provide discursive and linguistic resources which can be seen as authoritative voice (Bourdieu: 1982). Although also in media studies news is one of the most widely studied media forms, the connection between media and politics has not been sufficiently investigated (Fiske 1987: 281), and no coherent theory that integrates media theories, political theory and social change has been developed so far.

The first part of this article discusses the correlations between media and politics. The historical perspective on developments in Western Europe shows a change of paradigms that becomes visible in the media order, in conceptions of the public sphere, and in media theory more generally. The second part focuses on approaches to the analysis of political discourse in the media. Given that the political field and the media field both undergo a process of rapid change, a flexible framework is needed, which is not based on fixed categories such as ownership or media genre and which establishes close connection between media texts and contexts of production and reception. The article therefore foregrounds approaches developed within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).