

Languaging in Indian Broadcast Mediascapes – From Linguistic Diversity to Linguistic Hierarchy

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This paper examines the relationship between languages used in broadcast news media and the information it disseminates to the citizens who live in the multilingual, multicultural, diverse and democratic spaces of India. The data-set I use for this presentation includes recordings of news bulletins of six private broadcast news channels in three different language varieties. The analysis demonstrates that there is a direct and patterned relationship between the languages used by broadcast news media and the information it disseminates. Based on these findings, I highlight that linguistic diversity is transformed into linguistic hierarchies. The study, furthermore, demonstrates that democracy in a multilingual nation-state like India is threatened when its citizens are not able to consume media in more than one language.

The first part of my presentation is framed around an analysis of the prioritisation of news and how it flows. The presence and absence of both specific representors of sectors (politicians, for instance) and language-usage or “languaging” is also upfronted while discussing similarities and differences between the national and regional news broadcast media. In the second part, this is linked to issues of democracy – in particular – with regards to citizens who are the targeted consumers of the news. The analysis is also embedded in personalizing the issues of language diversity in the state of Maharashtra in India. Drawing upon the work of Bagga-Gupta (2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2018) in the third part of my presentation, the ‘performatory dimension of languaging’ is discussed and illustrated which highlights the complexities of language-user profiles and the language hierarchies created within the “Indian” broadcast mediascapes.

References

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