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**10. Gerhardt, Cornelia. 2008. Talk by television viewers watching live football matches: Coherence through interactionality, intertextuality, and multimodality. Ph.D diss., FR 4.3 Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Anglophone Kulturen, Universität des Saarlandes, 368 pp.,**

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This dissertation, a linguistic study of the reception situation, describes linguistic and other means by which television viewers appropriate the television text. The larger context of this work thus lies at the hinge between mass media and everyday face-to-face interaction. The aim of this project is to give a micro-analytic description of the verbal strategies of the television audience with a special focus on the connections between the participants' talk and the media text (cf. Gerhardt 2009, Gerhardt 2006).

Such an endeavour is relevant for a number of reasons: first, linguistics should be able to draw a comprehensive picture of all ways in which language can be used. Despite the ubiquity of the television, there is an obvious gap here, albeit other supposedly mundane settings such as dinner talk have been studied. Furthermore, the setting with the television as an integral part necessitates an inclusion of multimodal and intertextual issues. Both concepts have received a lot of recent attention. In addition, media studies describes how talk on television puts the viewers into a 'quasi-interactive' position, inviting in a conversation between those on television and those in front of it. (Horton et al. 1956 'para-social interaction') However, in how far this invitation is taken up

by the viewers has still not been answered satisfactorily: “Do some viewers sit at home returning those greetings to the faces on their TV sets?” (Tolson 2006, 10) Linguistics too laments this very gap: “there have been virtually no studies of the social practices by which the discourses of the media are appropriated in common face-to-face interactions” (Scollon 1998, vii).

The ATTAC-corpus (Analysing-The-Television-Audiences’-Conversations), the basis for the dissertation, endeavours to bridge this gap between talk-in-interaction on the one hand and mass media on the other. It consists of the conversations by mainly British English native speakers (ranging from children to senior citizens) who were video-taped while watching the men’s football World Cup live on television in their homes. The transcriptions of their talk consisting of roughly 45,000 words have been complemented by transcriptions of the games proper, i.e. sports announcer talk. Furthermore, the pictures on television and the embodied nature of the viewers’ interactions (Goodwin 2000) visible on the tapes provide the basis for all questions pertaining to multimodality.

In the following, the main sections will be summarised. The first analytic chapter follows Halliday and Hasan’s eminent work on *Cohesion in English* (1976). It traces the cohesive ties used by the viewers to create texture between their own talk and the media text. Links to the pictures on television are referred to as multimodal connections. To give two examples, the demonstrative pronoun *that* is often used as an increment to reconnect to scenes in the match as they were witnessed rather than to any ascriptions assigned to them through later talk. Compare its use in line 11 where *that* interrupts the referential chaining of *it* (lines 1, 2, 6 and 10) and reconnects the talk to the pictures:

**Example 1**

1	TV	<i>it was untidy,</i>
2	Tom	<i>it was untidy,</i>
3		<i>[yeah.]=</i>
4	Frank	<i>[yeah,]</i>
5	Tom	<i>but I'm not sure,=</i>
6		<i>=it was any worse than that,</i>
7		<i>(1.1)</i>
8	Frank	<i>u:h,</i>
9		<i>maybe,=</i>
10		<i>it didn't deserve a booking,</i>
11		<i>that,</i>

Links to the language on television, on the other hand, are understood as creating intertextual cohesion. In those cases, the viewers refer to entities which have been made salient by the commentators. This allows the fans to continue in a given-new pattern by turning the commentators’ ‘news’ into ‘givens’ as in the following example:

### Example 2

1	TV	just announced the official attendance, =
2		...
3		=apparently that means aGAin,
4		there have been tickets not taken up,
5		(0.6)
6	Wilma	that's riDIculous.
7		[isn't it.]
8	Darrell	[yeah.]

The antecedent of Wilma's *that* (line 8) is located in the sportscasting and an intertextual tie is established. In some cases, such as the use of 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine pronouns, often the data do not allow the decision whether the antecedent can be found in the pictures or the talk on television. While reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion appear both multimodally and intertextually, because of their grammatical nature, substitution and ellipsis cannot be applied to connect the viewers' interactions to the pictures.

To continue the summary of the thesis, the second main analytic chapter is concerned with interactional ties between the television text and the viewers at home where coherence is created through sequentiality. (Schegloff 1990) Backchannelling and discourse markers are two means by which the viewers connect to the media text in striking up a conversation. The participants also construct adjacency pairs together with the commentators by skilfully weaving their talk into the ongoing TV text. At these moments, the commentators are treated as speakers in the participation framework (Goffman 1981) at home. The third analytic chapter focuses on multimodal issues such as the gaze behaviour of the viewers (Gerhardt 2007) or pointing to the screen. Finally, other signs of involvement by the viewers are described which are typical for the football reception situation. The viewers use an array of vocal and bodily means to signal their stance at the media text to their co-viewers: e.g. moaning, clapping or jumping up and down can be found. The dissertation concludes with a description of language functions specific to the television reception situation and the different roles such as England fan or football expert which are negotiated by the viewers in their talk.

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