

Beyond Audience Design: Standard and dialect in broadcast political speech in Murcia, Spain

Juan Manuel Hernández Campoy
Departamento de Filología Inglesa
Facultad de Letras
Campus de La Merced
Universidad de Murcia
30071 Murcia
Spain
E-mail: jmcampoy@um.es

Juan Antonio Cutillas-Espinosa
Departamento de Filología Inglesa
Facultad de Letras
Campus de La Merced
Universidad de Murcia
30071 Murcia
Spain
E-mail: jacuti@um.es

Natalie Schilling-Estes
Department of Linguistics
Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA
E-mail: ns3@georgetown.edu

Type of Presentation: PAPER

Increasingly, researchers have moved from viewing stylistic variation as a primarily reactive phenomenon, conditioned by matters external to speakers such as audience (Bell 1984) and formality (Labov 1972), to more proactive approaches, in which speakers use stylistic resources to project and create identity, as well as to accomplish conversational and longer-term goals (e.g. Coupland 2001a, 2001b, forthcoming; Eckert 2000; Schilling-Estes 2002). In the present study, we extend this constructivist approach to style shifting by demonstrating that even in seemingly highly constrained stylistic contexts, namely publicly broadcast political speech, people make personal, strategic, and sometimes quite surprising, stylistic choices.

The paper focuses on the unexpected (and controversial) use of a number of features of the local dialect by a female former President of the Local Government of Murcia, in southeastern Spain. The Murcian dialect is stigmatized within Spain but also carries covert prestige for Murcians as a marker of local identity and solidarity. The former President commands standard Castilian as well as Murcian Spanish. The data consist of archived radio broadcasts of the President's speech in a number of public venues, ranging from less formal interviews to a very formal discussion of her investiture (i.e. inauguration). The President's broadcast speech is compared with that of other Murcian female politicians, Murcian male politicians, Murcian male non-politicians, and non-Murcian male politicians. Quantitative analysis of usage levels for eight consonantal features of the local dialect shows that the President and others indeed

avoid certain highly stigmatized features such as word-final postvocalic /r/ and /l/ deletion. Surprisingly, though, she and other Murcians *do* use other dialect features in broadcast speech, especially those which have a long history in Southern Spanish dialects and hence have become integral markers of Murcian sociolinguistic identity (e.g. word-internal consonant assimilation, as in [kae'naetta] for [ka'nasta], *canasta* 'basket', or [aekki'ri] for [adki'rir], *adquirir* 'buy, acquire').

Even more surprisingly, the President shows higher usage levels for Murcian dialect features than any of the other groups, including male Murcian non-politicians. In addition, her most dialectal speech occurs in the highly formal investiture discussion. The president's use, and indeed hyper-use, of Murcian dialect features in even very formal media broadcasts indicates that she is *not* shifting her speech in reaction to formality, or even in accommodation to the many Murcians in her audience, whose radio speech is more standard than her own. Rather, she is purposely designing her speech to project an image that highlights her Murcian identity. In addition, she seems to be using dialect features to stress her socialist ideals, since the Murcian dialect is associated with working class as well as regional identity, and also with progressive ideas.

The fact the even prominent politicians use stylistic resources in ways that are most fully explicated by appealing to speaker-internal as well as speaker-external, situational factors lends further support for viewing style as a matter of 'Speaker Design' (e.g. Coupland 1996, Schilling-Estes 2002) as well as Audience Design (Bell 1984).