

# The style and stylization of old news reading in Danish

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## INTRODUCTION: MEDIA AND LANGUAGE CHANGE

Like the other contributions to this collection, this chapter will discuss the interplay between language change and ‘talking media’. By ‘talking media’ I mean broadcast media in which spoken language is used. The role of ‘talking media’ in language change is contested, both in terms of its effect and in terms of the means by which this effect may be exerted. Views range from the popularly held belief (in Denmark at least) that TV is a primary force of language change to Chambers’ (1998) blanket refusal of media’s role in language change. The question of *how* media may have an effect on language change is often discussed in Milroy’s (2007) terms of ‘off the shelf’ vs. ‘under the counter’ features. ‘Off the shelf’ features are highly salient, typically words or phrases picked up and used constructively by language users. Media have long been admitted to provide ‘off the shelf’ features for language users, and thus to provide material for language change. It is argued, however, that the significance of these changes is negligible because they are not part of the core grammar of the language. ‘Under the counter’ features on the other hand, may be core features of phonology, syntax etc. These are far less conspicuous to language users. Language change exerted by ‘under the counter’ features disseminated through media is considered more linguistically significant; it is however also more contested whether such an effect is present (see Coupland 2014a and the special issue of *Journal of Sociolinguistics* in which it appears for elaborate discussions of these issues; see also the introduction to this volume for an elaborated discussion). Writers who argue that an ‘under the counter’ effect is in play (e.g. Kristiansen 2014a, 2014b; Ota and Takano 2014) propose that the overall effect on language change is one of dialect levelling and standardization. It is, however, rarely specified exactly how standardization through media is supposed to occur on the level of the individual (although see Stuart-Smith and Ota 2014 for a discussion). Why do speakers (deliberately or not) change their language style under the influence of the language they hear through media?

Speaking from a position within media studies, Gerbner et al. (1980) argue that broadcast media work to ‘mainstream’ the audience, minimizing variation in viewers’ attitudes and world views by repeatedly presenting them with a mainstream norm: “[t]elevision’s images cultivate the dominant tendencies of our culture’s beliefs, ideologies and world views” (Gerbner et al. 1980: 14). It is not that viewers are brainwashed into mindlessly accepting one particular view on the world, but the breadth of ostensibly ‘sensible’ views on a matter is being narrowed, *mainstreamed* in a word. Viewers who already share the world view(s) of the media are subject to “resonance”: “when what people see on television is most congruent with everyday reality (or even *perceived* reality), the combination may result in a coherent and powerful ‘double dose’ of the television message and significantly boost cultivation” (Gerbner et al. 1980: 15).

Applied to language variation, then, Gerbner et al.’s theory would imply ‘mainstreaming’ of language variation. No medium can ever represent the entire range of possible language variation. *Some* selection and de-selection is always in effect, whether it be de-selection of L1-accented speech, of speech which is deemed in some way functionally impaired (lisped, hoarse, etc.), or whether it be selection and de-selection of certain social and regional varieties. Broadcast media’s limited range of spoken language styles may come to mainstream the possible range of legitimate official language; and language users who already accept this view (and speak one of the styles), are confirmed in their conviction. The actual breadth of variation in the language spoken of the talking media of course vary from one time-frame to another and from one speech community and/or nation state to another. Speaking in broad terms, we would expect relatively larger homogeneity in nations like Denmark and Great Britain, nations traditionally holding strong ‘standard language ideologies’ (Milroy 2001) compared to e.g. Norway (see Nesse this volume). Similarly, the 1950s are typically seen as an era of very strict linguistic standardization within Denmark and Britain, whereas standards appear to be more lax today, both in terms of actual linguistic variation and in terms of language attitudes (see Thøgersen and Kristiansen 2013). In other words the mainstream will have been narrower at some historical times and places than others. However, at all times a selection of approved speakers does occur. Some speakers are chosen to lend official voice to the broadcasters, others are deemed so far off the mainstream that they require interpretation or subtitling.

On a more abstract level, Gerbner et al.’s theory of *mainstreaming* and *resonance* may be applied to language attitudes and the indexical values of varieties, as e.g. sophisticated, naïve, snobbish. It is the underlying premise of this chapter that the Danish National Broadcasting Corporation (DR) has played and is playing a role in mainstreaming the indexical values of different language varieties. It does not do this alone. The schools, for example, have played a similar role (as analysed by

Kristiansen 1990) in implicitly establishing dialects as unsophisticated and improper for public communication and insufficient for individuals with aspirations beyond the most local area, and the Copenhagen-based standard as the only sophisticated language variety which should be adopted by ambitious students.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: On the one hand it will present a longitudinal study of phonological change within a language variety with indexical values of formality and correctness, *viz.* that of news reading. On the other hand it will present stylistic performances of a style I will refer to as ‘old news style’, or simply ‘old style’, as used within a satirical frame. The overarching aim is to show the permeability of language styles and indexical values by showing how a performance which previously indexed seriousness and formality is now perceived as hyperformal to the extent that it is used for comedic effect; and how, on the other hand, the style that indexes formality and seriousness is also open to (slow) innovation of new features. The claim is that media thus participate in a sociolinguistic change, *i.e.* a change in “the relationships between language and society” (see the introduction to this volume).

## STANDARD LANGUAGE AND THE NEWS

Denmark and the Danish language community may be taken as a prototypical example of Milroy’s (2001) ‘standard language culture’. The uniformity of Danish is well-established and increasing (*i.e.* the dialectal differences are relatively small and diminishing). As documented by Kristiansen in a number of studies, only two varieties of Danish hold some degree of status: The conservative Copenhagen-based standard which is associated with affluent speakers in a traditional class-based society is evaluated relatively positively in explicit evaluations surpassed only by each location’s local variety. In implicit evaluations, a modern, traditionally working class, Copenhagen-based standard which is associated with the ‘dynamism’ of a modern ‘media society’ is evaluated more positively. Language varieties which deviate from these perceived standards are generally discredited and ridiculed (*e.g.* Kristiansen 2003; Pedersen 2003).

The popular narrative of Danish (in particular spoken Danish) is a story of decay. Danes in general consider Danish to be a particularly ugly, illogical, difficult and largely dysfunctional language; and they are supported by popular commentators on language in the view that younger generations are vandalizing the language with their sloppy language use. As a case in point, *Modersmål-Selskabet*, a private campaigning group which aims to “promote clear, expressive and varied use of the language” (<http://www.modersmaalselskabet.dk/vedtaegter/>), *i.e.* promote conservative standard norms, has around 500 members (out of a total population of 5.6 mil-

lion) (chairman Jørgen Christian Wind Nielsen, personal correspondence), and the state and status of Danish has at times even been a matter for parliamentary debate and several ministerial enquiries (e.g. Lund 2004, 2008).

Against this backdrop, the language of certain media has taken on a special status, not least because of the historical media landscape of the country. Denmark had a radio (and later TV) monopoly from the establishment of the National Broadcasting Corporation, *Danmarks Radio* (DR), in 1925 until the late 1980s. The DR was deliberately modelled on the British BBC with respect to its public service agenda of popular education and promotion of fine arts and with respect to seeing itself as a model for ‘good’ language (see Michelsen 2015; Svendsen 2015 for discussions of the DR; and Mugglestone 2007; Schwyter 2008 for discussions of the BBC). Of course, this language-ideological stance is familiar in other contexts as well (see e.g. Moschonas 2014, for comparable Greek examples; Moschonas and Spitzmüller 2010 for a comparison of Greece and Germany; cf. also Bell’s 1983: 29 view that: “In many countries, the language of the broadcast news is regarded as the embodiment of standard speech”).

So large has been the success of the DR in establishing itself as upholder of ‘good’ language norms, and so strong is standard language ideology in Denmark, that the DR’s requirement to use language of “high quality” is even defined as a legal demand (Danish Ministry of Culture 2011; Thøgersen and Kristiansen 2013). Interestingly, the previously mentioned *Modersmål-Selskabet* acknowledges the status of broadcast media *vis-à-vis* the standard language in their statute which contains a clause that instructs the organisation to “constantly remind mass media about the importance of using a, clear, intelligible and varied language” (<http://www.modersmaalselskabet.dk/medlemskab/>).<sup>1</sup>

In this view, particularly high demands are put on ‘serious’ media genres such as news reading, which are expected to represent the most ‘correct’ (i.e. conservative) pronunciation and style in the language community (see e.g. Breidahl and Ree 1940: 159; Lund 1992; Thøgersen 2011: 186). The DR have published several language manuals, aimed at employees but also popular among ‘ordinary’ Danes. These (e.g. Albeck 1942; Skyum-Nielsen 2008) are remarkably stable in their prescription. Reading only these guides, one could be forgiven in thinking that (serious) media Danish had changed very little since the 1940s (see also Cotter 2014 for a similar argument about Associated Press’s style guidelines).

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘varied’ (*varieret*) would seem to suggest the opposite of the standard language ideology, an ideology of non-standardization. In this context, however, I believe it draws upon the underlying assumption that the standard language (and its middle class speakers) master a wider stylistic range and is appropriate for a wider range of discourses than ‘inferior’ languages like the Copenhagen working class sociolect.

Apart from the issue of pronunciation of (English and French) loan words, two phenomena have raised particular awareness: One of these, treated in depth by Heegård and Thøgersen (2012, 2014), is that of syllable reduction in polysyllabic words, known popularly as ‘swallowing syllables’ or ‘cutting off endings’, or in Skyum-Nielsen’s (2008: 432ff.) word, *stavelseskannibalisme* ‘syllable cannibalism’. In spite of prescriptivism, Heegård and Thøgersen found a marked increase in the degree of syllable reduction over six decades, in part, presumably, as a consequence of the fact that the rate of speaking has increased up to 50% depending on the measure used (Thøgersen 2011).

The second major theme of prescriptivism concerns the pronunciation change popularly known as ‘flat a’, or in more general terms with another of Skyum-Nielsen’s neologisms: *vokalforurening*, ‘vowel pollution’ (2008: 355ff.). The Danish /a/ phoneme has two bound allophones dependent on the linguistic context: [a] before labials and dorsals and [æ] in all other contexts. Length is phonemic in Danish, complicating the matter and resulting in the precise definition of ‘flat a’ varying from author to author since they don’t agree whether only short vowels can be ‘flat’ or whether long vowels can be ‘flat’ as well. For the purpose of this discussion, I will treat long and short /a/ together and focus on the common point of all definitions, that ‘flat a’ is a markedly raised pronunciation of the allophones (æ) and (æ:), to roughly around [ɛ], although exact phonetic quality must be taken with a grain of salt because the pronunciation is gradually changing, as will be apparent. I will leave the question of the (sub)phonemic status of the variable and simply discuss it as a sociolinguistic variable and therefore use the notation (æ) for the variable from now on.

The ‘flat a’ pronunciation appears to have started in Copenhagen in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the first mention seems to be in a comic strip from Copenhagen cartoonist Fritz Jürgensen from the 1860s in which one young female speaker says to another (referring to a young man): *Gud! Caveline! hørte Du hvad han sæh?*, ‘My God! Caroline! Did you hear what he just said?’ The ‘flat a’ is indicated by *sæh*, a monosyllabic pronunciation with raised (æ) compared to standard bi-syllabic spelling, *sagde*. The spelling *Caveline* (for *Caroline*) seems also to illustrate non-standard pronunciation.

To Jürgensen, [ɛ] pronunciation seems to have been indexical of young female Copenhagen speakers. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the raised pronunciation of (æ) seems to have lost its female connotations. When professional linguists took an interest in the phenomenon in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. Brink and Lund 1975), it had come to be indexical of (adolescent) Copenhagen working class speakers of both sexes. Being associated with urban youth, it is perhaps not surprising that ‘flat a’ was condemned in quite strong terms: “Vi maa inderlig ønske, at Tidens skandinaviske Strømning kunde hjælpe til at udrydde den uhyggeligt tiltagende æ-udtale (i Gade og glade), en

ildelugtende Svamp i Sproget”, ‘We sincerely wish that the Scandinavian movement of our times may help eradicate the terrifyingly increasing [ɛ]-pronunciation (in *gade*, *glade*...), a stinky fungus in the language’ (philologist Brøndum-Nielsen, 1940, quoted from Jacobsen 1973: 176). Well into the 1970s speech therapists considered (æ) raising to be pathological and potentially a sign of deep-rooted psychological problems. Analyzing the Copenhagen dialect of a young man, Vanggaard (1970: 82–83) describes his (æ) pronunciation as *fordrejet*, ‘distorted’, and concludes that, because of this vowel and his other Copenhagen dialectal features, he was ‘unable to speak in a relaxed way or express any emotional impulses’, [*h*]an kunne ikke hvile ud, medens han talte, endsige udtrykke en sjælelig impuls (see also Kristiansen’s 1990 analysis of speech therapists’ pathologization of the Copenhagen dialect).

Needless to say, then, raised or flat *a* is not the kind of feature one would expect to find in news readings. The purpose of the next sections is to show how flat *a*, or more precisely phonetically raised pronunciations of (æ), does in fact find its way into news reading. Crucially, however, the indexical value of a given phonetic utterance and the boundary between ‘normal’ and ‘marked’ (æ) pronunciation is constantly shifting.

Silverstein (2003) uses the concept of ‘indexical orders’ to describe how new social meanings are layered on older ones to modify the core social value of a feature. I am not, however, certain that the sociolinguistic change we are witnessing here is best conceptualized through the ‘lamination’ or ‘sedimentation’ metaphor inherent in ‘orders of indexicality’, or whether it is better captured in the Jakobsonian idea of ‘markedness’ (e.g. Bybee 2010). In this context, it seems as appropriate to speak of a feature losing its indexical value (of working class inner city speech) as to speak of a feature being ascribed new indexical values (of neutrality, standardness, etc.). However we conceptualize the change, the sociolinguistic consequence is that news readings almost by definition use ‘the standard’ (cf. also the quote from Bell above); whatever is in the news must be within the standard. Consequently, the indexical value of [ɛ] and [æ] respectively are being re-negotiated, as it were, opening the way for [ɛ] in formal speech and lending new social meaning to [æ] (see also Thøgersen 2013, Thøgersen and Pharaoh 2013 for more elaborate discussions).

## **PRESCRIPTIVISM AND LANGUAGE CHANGE**

Comparing the actual pronunciation of radio newsreaders in a longitudinal study with the pre- and proscription of language manuals shows that newsreaders’ language has in fact changed in spite of prescription. Restricting the discussion to the

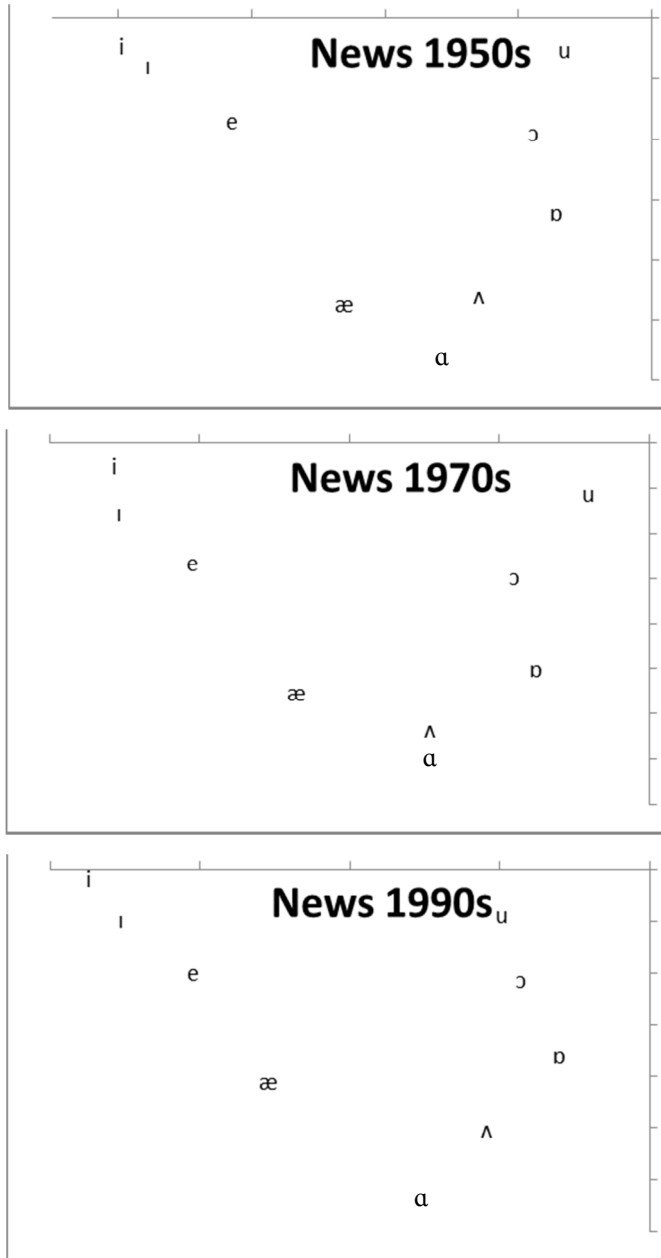


Figure 1-3: F1/F2 plot of vowels in authentic news readings from the 1950s, 1970s and 1990s (Lobanov normalized)

flat a, Figures 1–3 show F1/F2 formant plots of a subset of Danish vowels produced by around 40 newsreaders spanning 5 decades (1950s to 1990s). Each speaker's vowels are normalized using Erik Thomas and Tyler Kendall's NORM suite (Thomas and Kendall 2012). The purpose of the normalisation procedure is to eradicate differences that are due to the physiology of the speaker and not (socio)linguistically relevant. The formants are extracted using a semi-automatic procedure (described in Thøgersen and Pharao 2013). The calculations are based on 1948, 561 and 2756 vowel tokens respectively.

Two vowel changes are particularly noticeable. One occurs with the (æ) vowel, the condemned flat a. The (æ) rises from a low-front to a mid-front vowel over the period. The other is the (ʌ) vowel which is first fronted and then backed. The apparent changes with the (u) vowel may be an artefact of the semi-automatic procedure. It proved very difficult to get reliable measures of (u) with this method which often collapsed F1 and F2 or mistook F2 for F1. Because of these problems (and the smaller data set) a manual procedure was used for the subsequent formant measurements shown below.

## PERCEPTION OF LANGUAGE CHANGE

An aspect of language change which is sometimes overlooked is the perceptual element, i.e. whether language users are able to perceive the phonetic changes that have occurred or are occurring. In order to judge whether Danes in the early 21st century are aware of the language changes in radio news readings of the 20th century, I played a number of single words (41 words, mean length 520 ms.) to two classes of first-year university students with no training in linguistics ( $n = 72$ , mean age  $\approx 22$  years). Figure 4 shows the students' estimations of the decade in which the word token was spoken with true decade on the x-axis and mean estimate on the y-axis. The correlation between real and perceived age is high and highly significant, Spearman  $\rho = 0.63$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Figure 5 shows the margin of error of the guesses, and Figure 6 shows the margin of error accumulatively, indicating how 23% of the guesses were correct, 62% were 1 decade or less off the correct age, etc.

This experiment shows that young Danes with no special training in linguistics and no specialist knowledge of language change are quite capable of estimating the broadcast decade of a piece of news reading, even if this news reading was performed several decades before they were even born. This raises the question of what this tacit knowledge is based on, or in other words what features of the sound files the young students were basing their judgment on. One immediately noticeable difference between new and old recordings is the sound quality of the recordings.



Recordings from the 1930s were recorded on wax records with equipment of far lower quality than the equipment used since the 1950s.

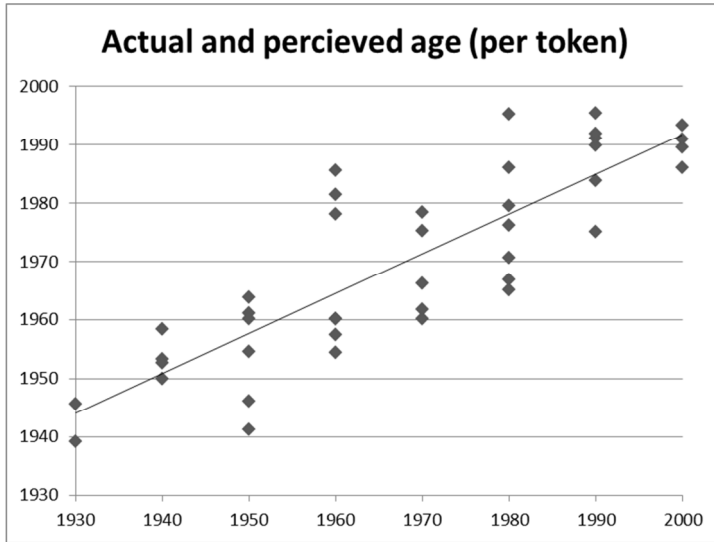


Figure 4: Correlation between true age of word tokens from news readings (x-axis), and the mean of the age perceived by students (y-axis).

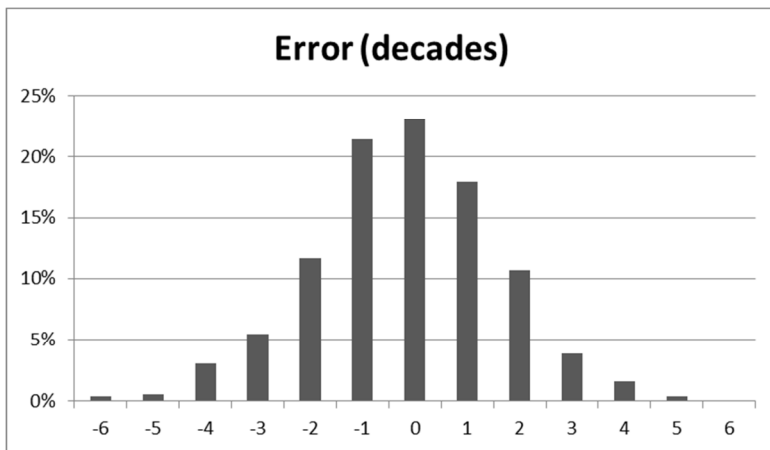


Figure 5: Margin of error in the perception of age of word tokens from news readings. Negative values mean that tokens were judged too young, positive that they were judged too old.

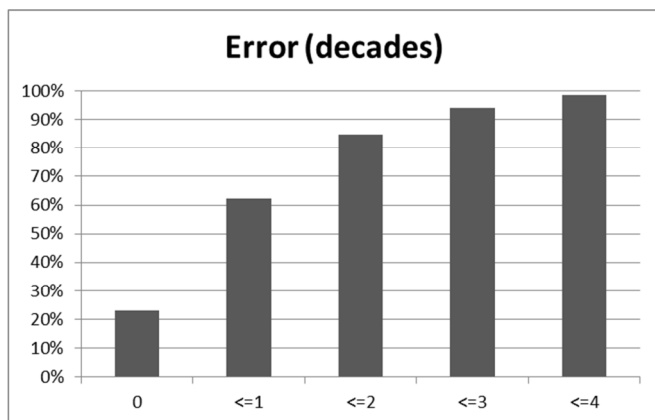


Figure 6: Margin of error in the perception of age of word tokens from news readings. Cumulative frequencies

With the introduction of reel-to-reel tape recorder in the 1950s, quality differences becomes far less of an issue. Even old tapes are free from the tell-tale clicks and pops of wax records, and although they may sound a little muffled compared to modern recordings to the discerning listener, the differences are small. The evolution of microphones is even less of an issue. Vintage microphones such as the Neumann M49 (introduced in 1949) are still highly sought after and widely used, showing that old doesn't necessarily mean sub-standard when it comes to microphones. The students were immediately aware of record noise and the overall timbre of the old recordings (i.e. 1930s and 1940s), but did of course not know exactly how old these were. Judging this with confidence would require specialist knowledge of the technology used by the DR throughout its history. Interestingly, another feature which the students reported to immediately notice was the (æ) vowel in some recording which sounded 'old' to them – again of course without them knowing exactly *how* old. It may be rather trivial to establish that media consumers have some tacit knowledge about the quality of audio recordings, namely that 'new' recordings are of superior quality to 'old' recordings. The students noticing that some vowel pronunciations sounded 'old', however, seems less trivial. It is not surprising that they can recognize a pronunciation as deviant from their own, but how do they know to consistently associate this deviance with 'oldness'? How, in other words, do 20 year-old students know that newsreaders in, say, the 1950s pronounced their (æ) lower than do modern newsreaders?

I propose that the reason lies in 'old news style' being performed recurrently in the Danish media. 'Old language', in other words, lives with us as a modern register with associated meaning potential. The style is used for stylistic effect, e.g. in commercials and in other media performances, one regularly hears radio presenters

shift in and out of the style for symbolic effect, and I have heard teenagers use it in their conversations. To explore performers' awareness of language change and the meaning potential of the old news style I turn now to the weekly satire program *Selvsving*, 'Self-oscillation', 'Feedback', and its use of the recognizable style of 'old news'.

## STYLIZING OLD NEWS

The section above (on phonological changes in actual news readings) tried to establish how a previously stigmatized variant, [ɛ], gradually gets incorporated into the standard register of news readings. Through this, the variant gets ascribed a new indexical value, e.g. one of correctness or formality, and its previous indexical value gets eradicated. While this process goes on, a reverse process seems to be affecting the [æ] variant, the previously unmarked (and still officially recommended) variant.

Tracking these changes, we may think of this as a longitudinal study of changes in orders of indexicality (Silverstein 2003). We see how a certain "way of saying 'the same thing'" (Silverstein 2003: 216 quoting Labov 1972) becomes indexical of a certain period in time within the evolution of the register of news reading. At a higher order, this indexical quality of time becomes indexical of a certain 'zeitgeist' (again within the register). This is not unlike Labov's notion of "stereotypes" or Johnstone's (2011) interpretation of "third-order indexicality", with the one major difference that what is being projected by the inauthentic performances of (æ) is not living speakers of a different dialectal variety, but historical speakers who are (most of them) long gone. By being associated with a particular mediated speech register, certain vowel qualities (or more correctly the deliberate modification of certain phonemes away from the vernacular of the speaker towards a prototypical aim) become indexical of the speaker's stance to the text being read and thus, here, act as vehicle for satire.

The media's role in establishing knowledge of the register as well as negotiating the indexical meaning potential of it, i.e. the media's role in this 'enregisterment' to use Agha's (2007) term, is obvious. Since the authentic speakers of the variety are long disappeared, authentic performances exist only in mediated form (i.e. in sound and film archives). Also when it comes to the use as third-order indexical signs, the media are instrumental in the dissemination. The repeated media representation of an enregistered variety, 'old news language', gives speakers of Danish the possibility to exploit the indexical value of 'old news' in their daily practices and thus participate in an on-going sociolinguistic change, a process of "changing relationships between language and society and their instantiation at the level of practice" (Coupland 2014b: 70). In other words talking media present us not only with language to

hear, but also with frames for interpreting what we hear, ‘how we should hear it’. “Mass media are changing our terms of engagement with language” as Coupland and Kristiansen (2011: 31) say. And changing our engagement with language variation and change, we may add.

### COMPOSING ‘OLDNESS’

The satire show *Selvsving* is written and performed by a trio of writers/actors, Lars le Dous, Oliver Zahle and Jens Korse. It started in 1996 on the ‘youth’ national DR channel, *P3*. After about two years it was cancelled, but it was rebooted in 2006 and is still running at present, 2016. It is now broadcast on the ‘talk’ channel, *P1*. A new eight-minute instalment is broadcast weekly. The show is very popular. It was the 8<sup>th</sup> most downloaded podcast from the DR in 2013 (<http://www.dr.dk/DRPresse/Artikler/2014/02/19/111152.htm>). A recurring segment from the earliest episodes until recently (although according to its creator, Lars le Dous, now cancelled) was a lampoon segment called *Ugerevyen*, ‘The News Reel’, ‘News of the Week’, which stylizes cinema newsreels from the 1930s or 1940s like those produce by e.g. *British Pathé* (see also Coupland’s chapter in this volume on stylized WWII films). The topics taken up in *Ugerevyen* are current affairs, often politicians’, state institutions’ or some celebrity’s gaffes (see Excerpts 1 and 2 below). *Ugerevyen* is a (multi)modal composition consisting of many different auditory elements which all combine in setting the interpretative frame for what is being read. Exactly what this interpretative frame may be, I will discuss in the conclusion of this chapter. Before that, I believe it is relevant to dissect the segment and analyse its parts before turning to the phonetic analysis. The point being, of course, that all elements in the composition are presumably there for a reason, namely to create a coherent *gestalt*. It seems fruitful to investigate the other elements in the composition in order to understand the indexical value of the language style and then the combined meaning potential of the framing.

The segment is introduced by a short signature tune and the introduction: *Dansk Radiofonisk Selskab præsenterer Ugerevyen*, ‘The Danish Radiophonic Society presents The News Reel’. Before the DR became the DR (Denmark’s Radio) it was known as *Statsradiofonien*, ‘The State Radiophony’. The use of antiquated term ‘radiophonic’ in the fictional ‘Danish Radiophonic Society’ thus frames the text as old. Music is playing all through the segment. The genre can maybe best be described as soft swing jazz. Again this is designed to underline the 30s–40s feel of the segment. The framing as a mock cinematic newsreel is apparent in the recurring use of language referring to (non-existing) pictures, such as ‘but look at this’, ‘now watch as...’, ‘here we see...’. More significantly, the recordings of the readings

have been manipulated apparently in order to tailor the construction to a general idea about how the news reels sounded. Noise has been added. I interpret the noise as imitating the rattling noise of a film projector – again to emphasize the cinema metaphor – an interpretation supported by the program’s technician (Peter Lous, personal correspondence) who also refers to the noise as the noise of a film projector. The sound appears to have been bandpass-filtered to get a certain ‘tinny’ quality to it. It is hard to discern the exact manipulation, but it seems similar to landline telephones, i.e. approximately 200–3000 Hz, possibly with a boost around 1–2 KHz. My immediate impression was that the reading has been speeded up. The reading voice has a certain ‘helium’ quality to it, especially when directly compared with other samples of Lars le Dous’ voice. However, Peter Lous (personal correspondence) informs me that it hasn’t. The effect is largely, he believes, due to the equalization and the use of a particular microphone (an AKG D-58), as well of course as le Dous’ vocal performance. The reading is (attempted to be) hyper-articulated, and the voice quality is quite compressed and tense compared to what is usual for modern radio speech. For an example of the ‘ideal’ historical precedent for the vocal manipulations done by Lars le Dous, try to listen to Bob Danvers-Walker’s presentations for *British Pathé*.<sup>2</sup> The higher pitch of ‘old’ reading voices, incidentally, is also consistent with an analysis of actual radio news readings from the 1930s and 1940s (Thøgersen 2011). *Ugerevyen* apparently utilizes this tacit genre knowledge to create the immediate illusion of old sound.

Linguistically, le Dous performs the style with some striking and probably deliberate tokenistic uses of lexical, syntactic and phonetic features, as well as a more systematic modification of his entire phonological system. The analogy to Milroy’s ‘off the shelf’ and ‘under the counter’ features seems obvious, and also Östman’s proposal (this volume) that styling can be done “explicitly by choosing particular lexical items or by making conscious pronunciation efforts” or subconsciously “as characteristic features that one subconsciously starts using when taking on the role of a particular persona, accommodating towards a holistic picture of that persona”.

Turning firstly to lexis, some words seem to be chosen for their marked ‘anti-quotedness’. They are comprehensible, but contemporary news readings would have modern alternatives. In one episode (13 November 2007) *medarbejderne ved ordensmagten*, ‘employees at the powers of law enforcement’, is used for *politiet* or *betjentene*, ‘the police’, ‘police officers’. In the same episode the old and full pronunciation of the number “70” is used, *halvfjerdssindstve*, literally ‘half-four times twenty’, where the modern form is the abbreviated *halvfjerdss*. The pronunciation of the number “70” is marked but shows little creativity. At other times, the choice of lexis seems more to be a vehicle for showing linguistic creativity than for using

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<sup>2</sup> Hear some examples of Danvers-Walker’s personal style at the *Pathé* website: <http://www.britishpathe.com/workspaces/rgallagher/Bob-Danvers-Walker>

authentic old lexis. In one episode (13 April 2012) members of *Hells Angels* are referred to as *oksehudsbeklædte cykelkædevirtuoser*, ‘ox-skin-clad bicycle chain virtuosos’. Members of *Hells Angels* were never authentically referred to as ‘bicycle chain virtuosos’ (partly because they were not a Danish phenomenon until 1980). However, le Dous’ use of a neologism, ‘ox-skin-clad bicycle chain virtuosos’, for what would unmarkedly be called ‘gang members’, projects a persona which is unfamiliar with the concept of Hells Angels. We are transferred to a fictional society in which reports on gang activity is a novelty requiring linguistic marking in the form of explication. The result is that even using highly creative, and humorous, neologisms contribute to framing the reading as coming from a remote time (cf. also Bell’s point in this volume about the *verfremdung effect* of satire).

Compared to modern news readings, there is an over-representation of evaluative descriptions, especially of the persons being described. Reporters are (ironically) referred to as *pressens dygtige reportere*, ‘the skilled reporters of the press’ (16 November 2007). In a story outlining the recent history of the Conservative party, major scandals and political back-stabbing is referred to as *mange dejlige minder*, ‘many fond memories’ (23 November 2007) (see also Example 1 below). Such explicit expressions of evaluation of the stories reported upon stand in stark contrast to ideals of journalistic neutrality. The symbolic meaning of this breach of neutrality may be seen as indexing the particular genre which is being mocked here. Although the stories that are being told are often stories which are also treated by serious news shows, in *Ugerevyen* the evaluative language frames the stories as celebrity news rather than hard news. Whether this ‘bias’ of the news reporting also indexes ‘oldness’ is unclear. It is evident that *Ugerevyen* manages to establish a certain nostalgic tone (more on this below); but it is hard to establish whether the biased reporting contributes to this. It may be that it evokes a picture of old news being less ‘hard’ because the old days were a more innocent time, less requiring of neutral reporting, or, for that matter, a time before neutrality had gained ground as a journalistic ideal.

Somewhere between lexis and phonology lies a series of emblematic token words used by le Dous in almost every episode. The connectives *men, jo, næ*, ‘but’, ‘yes’, ‘no’ are pronounced very elongated and with a peculiar trembling voice – not unlike Daniel Jones’s voice in his reading of the cardinal vowels. The *jo* is further marked by being pronounced with a monophthong [jɔ:] instead of the standard diphthong [jɔʊ]. If there is one thing listeners remember from le Dous’ linguistic performance, it is these characterological pronunciations (see Quist’s discussions of similar characterological phrases in her analysis of *multi-ethnic youth style*, this volume).

Some words are given a particular antiquated, Copenhagen, pronunciation, that seems to be consistent with actual old Copenhagen speech if not with actual news

readings. Among these are *cykel*, ‘bicycle’, pronounced [siŋ] for modern [syŋ], *musik*, ‘music’, pronounced [mu’siŋ] for modern [mu’siŋ] and *arbejde*, ‘work, job’, pronounced [ɑ:ħɑ:’ðə] for modern [ɑ:ħɑ:’ðə]). English loanwords, when they are not circumscribed with innovative neologisms like the *Hells Angels* example above, are often pronounced with Danish rather than English phonology which would be the norm in modern Danish, e.g. *burger* pronounced [ħæŋŋ] for [bœ:ŋ].

Some sentences are marked with elaborate syntactic complexity. This is somewhat consistent with longitudinal comparisons of syntax in old and new news readings (Blom 2009). Many word endings are pronounced with less syllable reduction than would be expected (although not fully consistently so). This plays on Danes’ common knowledge that modern Danish is highly reduced and that older Danish was less reduced. As mentioned above, this is not entirely wrong, but the reasons for the increase in reductions, e.g. rate of delivery and a norm of more ‘vernacular’ Danish in the media, are often interpreted in the general narrative of linguistic decay, i.e. ‘young people nowadays speak horribly sloppy’.

Excerpts 1 and 2 give some examples of the typical stories being treated, before turning to the phonetic details of the performance:

### Excerpt 1

13 April 2012

*Først til kulørte presses verden. I dag åbnede Tivoli i kongens København, og traditionen tro var der liv og glade dage i restaurant Grøften hvor de kendte flokkedes. Der opstod et kort øjeblik tumult da en jetjager landede midt i buffeten. Men se så bare her. Ud af flyvemaskinen træder den bedårende Jannie Spies og hendes fraskilte mand, den yndige Christian Kjær. Parret benyttede sig af en pause i deres henrivende retssag til at flyve en tur i Grøften for at bestille en burger.*

‘First to the world of the tabloid press. Today, Tivoli in the King’s Copenhagen opened; and as is traditional, there was mirth and merriment in restaurant Grøften where celebrities were gathering. There was a short moment of disturbance as a jet airplane landed in the buffet. But now look. Out of the aeroplane steps the enchanting Jannie Spies and her divorced husband, the lovely Christian Kjær. The couple make use of a recess in their charming divorce trial to take a flight to Grøften to order a burger.’

The story revolves around the celebrity couple, Spies and Kjær, who were at the time in the midst of their divorce trial. He is a rich lawyer, politician and business man, and a friend of the royal family. She, who is 20 years his junior, made her

fortune when, at the age of 21, she married the business man Simon Spies who was 40 years her senior. Restaurant Grøften in the amusement park Tivoli is known as a meeting place of politicians and celebrities, and therefore a likely setting for a story about the jet set. The jet aeroplane presumably mocks Spies and Kjær's extravagant lifestyle. Describing Christian Kjær as *yndig*, 'lovely', 'delicate', seems a tongue-in-cheek mocking of Kjær. Kjær was around 70 at the time and quite corpulent, not someone being prototypically referred to as *yndig*, an adjective usually reserved for young women.

As mentioned, the other main targets of satire are politicians, here a politician from the nationalist party *Dansk Folkeparti*:

### Excerpt 2

16 November 2007

*Og så til Mogens Camre der alligevel ikke vil i Folketinget, men foretrækker at blive i Europaparlamentet. Først forklarede hr. Camre sig med at valget kom før han ventede det, men nu undskylder han sig med at den forklaring var en løgn. Dog understreger han at det var en hvid en af slagsen, og enhver ved at sådan en er mere ærlig end en sort. Det er tæppehandlerlogik for burkahøns.*

'And then on to Mogens Camre who does not want a seat in the Parliament after all, but would prefer to stay in the European Parliament. At first, Mr. Camre explained his decision by saying that the election came sooner than he had anticipated, but now he explains that this excuse was a lie. He does however emphasize that it was a white lie, and as everyone knows, those are far more honest than blacks. Even a fool knows this.'

The story teases Camre for changing his statement, but the story also allows for a pun on 'white lie' and 'black(s)'/ 'white(s)' as more or less honest, a remark on Camre's borderline racist policies – only parliamentary immunity has kept him from being charged with racism on several occasions. The story ends with another pun on his policies by paraphrasing the cliché *logik for burhøns*, 'plain as day', literally 'logic for caged chickens', substituting *bur-*, 'caged', with *burka-*, 'burqa', and adding *tæppehandler-*, 'carpet salesman', two highly 'ethnicized' words.

It is clear that Lars le Dous' performances are *stylized*. In accordance with the introduction to this volume, I take stylization to be "the knowing deployment of socially familiar semiotic material where the speaker strategically complicates and ambiguates her or his relationship with that material" (see the Introduction to this volume). The performances are 'double-voiced' in Bakhtin's terms. They contain, on the one hand, what appear to be sincere news stories as keyed by the content and



syntax of the readings; on the other hand, the lexis, the stock phrases and in particular the phonology add a second layer of meaning, framing the first voice as a parody. A key function of the double-voicing seems to be that it adds a quality of ‘estrangement’ to the reporting; it invites the listener to see the news stories from afar and to critically assess whether they are really as important as other, serious, news reporting would have us think. In that sense they add a critical edge both towards the people and event being reported on, and on (other) mainstream media. More precisely what the (meta)pragmatic meaning of the double-voicing is in the individual case is less clear. Indeed, it may be quite ambiguous and even in some sense contradictory. In the conclusion of the chapter I will return to the question of the meaning of the stylization in more detail, but in relation to the two examples here it seems reasonable to say that adding the old news voice presents the people in the stories and their concerns as antiquated and odd, not to be taken seriously by contemporary listeners. The marital quarrels of the celebrity couple of the first example is ridiculed – or perhaps better, exposed for how ridiculous it is to treat them as serious. In the case of the arguably racist politician, it is tempting to think that framing his views as old lends a sense of them being antiquated, not in line with the way ethnic and racial categories should be treated by a modern, well-informed politician. Presenting political views (although they are here in fact a hyperbolic version of the politician’s views) through stylized old language, presents the politician as a dinosaur. Framing the stories as ‘old news’ may in effect say: ‘if this were the thirties we might take you seriously...’.

The awareness of systematic language changes – among performers and recipients alike – are particularly interesting for this study. It is one thing that an actor can perform a handful of shibboleths and that a technician can manipulate the sound quality to sound old, but the ability to consistently modify his or her grammar or phonology is something different and altogether closer to understanding media performances’ role in language change.

The classic sociolinguistic view has been that speakers cannot systematically change their phonology. Speakers are able to change single sounds when these are salient and when the speaker focuses awareness on his or her speech. As awareness shifts from speech because the speaker gets involved in the conversation, they will tend towards their ‘vernacular’ style in Labov’s (1972) terms. However, Schilling-Estes (1998) has shown that speakers are indeed capable of systematically changing their phonology. And anyway, we may argue that media performances such as the ones studied here are a case in which attention to speech is always maintained. Similarly, audiences’ ability to decode a modified grammar or phonology as a case of deliberate and strategic stylization, and not simply as a speaker showing very idiosyncratic idiolectal traits, is significant. To understand stylizations in media performances we need to appreciate not only what the performer does, but also that

the listener is capable of interpreting the performance not only as deviant, but as a deliberate use of a style which is not the speaker's vernacular. Decoding readings of *Ugerevyen* as old style rather than simply 'the style used on that programme' requires tacit knowledge of salient features of the phonology of old newsreaders, while at the same time the readings reconfirm and renegotiate what these salient features are, e.g. by incorporating lexical markers which are historically inauthentic.

In the next section I will look at Lars le Dous' phonology, specifically his vowel inventory, in three different media genres to explore the plasticity of the vowel inventory and thereby the stereotypical vowels of recognisable old news style.

### VOWEL INVENTORY IN STYLIZATION

In order to see which vowels index old news style, three samples of speech by Lars le Dous are compared in this section. One consists of readings of *Ugerevyen*; a second sample consists of extracts from a contemporary radio interview with le Dous and his colleague Jens Korse; and a third sample is drawn from le Dous' past as a radio DJ. The theme of the interview sample is the *Selvsving* programme and the performers behind it. The interview was broadcast in July 2013. The persona played by le Dous in the interview is ambiguous – a fact that he also comments on in the interview – between le Dous the creator and performer of *Selvsving*, and le Dous the private man. This ambivalence and the linguistic variability it encourages is well known from previous studies of media language (e.g. Coupland 1985; Johnstone 2011), and le Dous also uses the interview as vehicle for clearly stylistic performances. At one point, he is even encouraged to perform one of his characters. Passages that I judged to be clearly 'acting a role' I omitted from the comparison. Comparing read passages (in *Selvsving*) with spontaneous speech in the interview of course introduces variation beyond the deliberate stylization of a particular register. It is trivial to remark that spontaneous speech is often faster than read speech. As a result it would be likely to see phonological *undershoot* amounting to centralization of vowels as a mere artefact of the higher rate of articulation (Lindblom 1963). For this reason, the third sample of read performances from le Dous' past as a radio DJ was included. These samples are read aloud, similarly to *Ugerevyen*, not stylized as old, but in the style of an afternoon DJ. The recordings are however 20 years old, introducing the new variable of time. The readings present le Dous partly as a pop DJ, presenting the next song and telling his audience about the artist, partly as a satirical commentator on current news, including a couple of caricatures (also omitted from the comparison). If the interview was ambiguous as to whether the speaker was a character or a private person, the DJ sample clearly shows le Dous in character as a run-of-the-mill DJ.

Table 1: Data in comparison of Lars le Dous' media styles.

Style	Year	No. of programmes	Total length of excerpts	Vowel tokens
Old news	2007, 2012	4	498.4	680
DJ-style	1992	4	373.4	573
Interview	2013	1	680.0	752

Table 1 shows the data that are included in the comparison of vowels including the total length of the recordings and the number of vowels measured.

Figures 7–9 show logarithmic F1/F2 plots of Lars le Dous performing the three different styles, namely as a DJ in the 1990s, in a broadcast interview about his work, and as 'old newsreader' in *Ugerevyen*. The plots are comparable to the F1/F2 plots in Figures 2–4; however, more vowels are included here because of the significantly smaller data set, and the formant values are not normalized because only one speaker is measured.

Comparing the vowel configurations in the three different speech styles side by side, two things are immediately apparent. The relative locations of the vowels in the interview style (Figure 7) and the DJ style (Figure 8) are very similar. The (æ) appears to be slightly raised in the DJ style. Apart from that, the vowel locations are very similar. The scaling, however, is quite dissimilar. In the spontaneous speech of the interview the vowels are centralized compared with the read passages of the DJ style. This is most pronounced for the low [a] which has a mean difference in F1 of about 100 Hz. This result is also confirmed when computing the size of the vowel space using mean euclidian distance from the centroid of all vowel to the mean of each vowel. In the DJ style, the mean distance is 502 Hz, in the interview, it is 454 Hz.

The scaling of the entire vowel space is, however, quite similar between the two read-aloud samples, the old news style (Figure 9) and the DJ style (Figure 8). The one difference lies at the low F1 end; the old style never reaches F1's as low as the two other styles. This means that (i) and (y) show higher F1's in the old style. This may be an artifact of the bandpass filtering of the signal mentioned above. A noticeable part of the low range of the audio signal has been removed, and this may skew the measurement of the low F1's. The vowel space measured as the mean euclidian distance from the centroid to the centroid of each vowel is very similar in the two read aloud registers: 500 Hz in the old style, compared to 502 Hz in the DJ style.

The relative vowel placements between the old style and the two other samples, however, show some remarkable differences. Remember that the underlying

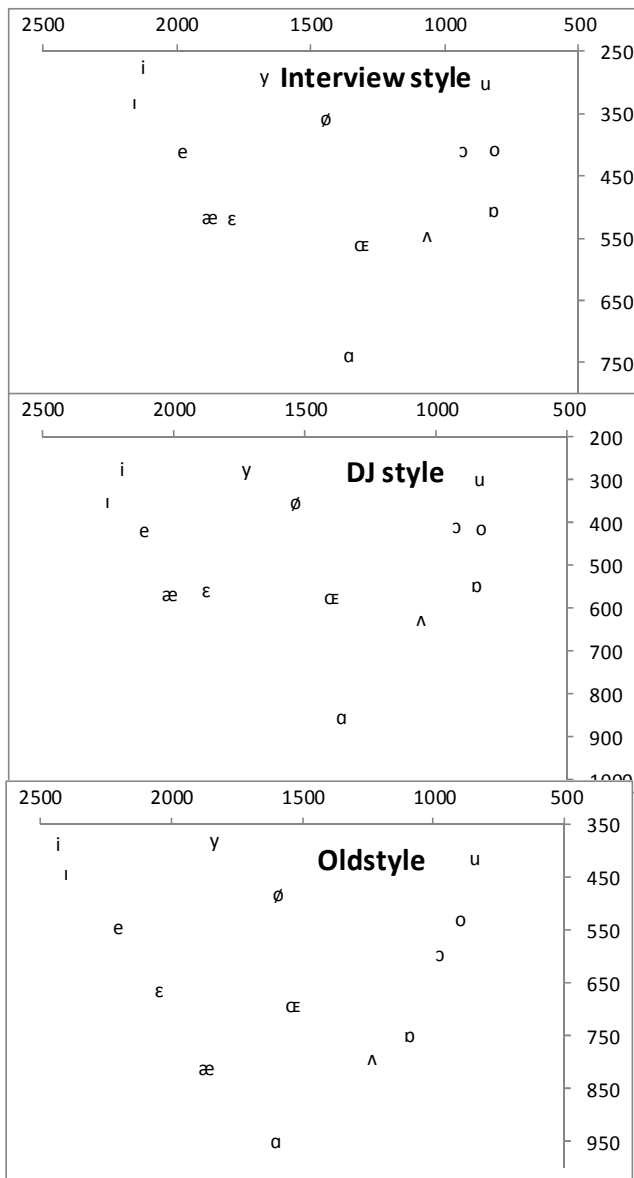


Figure 7–9: Lars le Dous participating in an interview, as DJ and performing old news style.

assumption of the comparison is that it is these phonemic differences which tacitly constitute the old news stylization. The (æ) is lowered quite dramatically.

Interestingly, even in the ‘old news’ style, the (æ) is not quite as low as in authentic news readings from the 1950s (see Figure 1). This may be due to quite large variation in the production of (æ)’s, a point I will return to below. We must assume, however, that the lowering of (æ) is large enough to be accepted as sounding old (cf. also the experiment with student listeners reported above).

The (ɒ) is fronted, so too to a lesser degree is (ʌ). In fact le Dous has a (near) merger between the two vowels in his old style, a merger he does not have in his vernacular style(s). As shown in Figures 1–3 above, this change is somewhat consistent with authentic old news readings. The (ʌ) has in fact been backed over the last decades. From the news readings analysed above, it would however seem that le Dous’ performance is hyperbolic, or maybe that he has projected linearly backwards in time from the evidence of the last 3 or 4 decades, when the change of the (ʌ) seems to have reversed. The (ɛ) is raised and fronted in the old style. I cannot formally compare this with authentic radio news since this vowel hasn’t been measured. Impressionistically, it could be reflecting authentic sound changes. The same goes for the (o) vowel. In general, le Dous seem to pronounce the vowels in the high back area more tensely when performing old style. This again seems impressionistically consistent with radio news from the 1930s and 1940s.

Again impressionistically, le Dous is quite consistent in the adjustment of his vowels. However, as mentioned, a standard assumption of Labovian sociolinguistics is that only a person’s vernacular speech style exhibits consistency (e.g. Labov 1972). When a speaker modifies his or her vernacular, we would expect to see larger variation in the performance, lapses towards the vernacular as it were. To test whether this is also the case for le Dous’ stylized performance, Table 2 shows the dispersion of tokens of the individual vowel from the centroid of that vowel. The measure shows the mean euclidian distance from each token of a vowel to the mean F1/F2 value of that vowel. A high number indicates high dispersion and thus high heterogeneity; a low number indicates low dispersion and comparative homogeneity.

According to the hypothesis of the vernacular, we should expect to see higher dispersion numbers in the inauthentic old style than in the spontaneous interview and (to a lesser degree) DJ styles, and presumably especially for the vowels that are

Table 2: Dispersion of vowel tokens as euclidian distances in Hertz

	æ	ɑ	ɔ	ʌ	ɪ	e	i	o	ɒ	ø	u	œ	y	ɛ
Old style	257	162	129	143	149	166	137	141	128	137	142	176	185	147
DJ style	133	93	136	144	172	142	140	123	122	107	114	141	97	195
Interview	109	97	117	148	169	120	143	118	126	94	102	120	118	177

manipulated in performing the style, the (æ), (ɒ), (œ) and to an extent the (o) and (u). To a certain extent this hypothesis is confirmed. In particular the (æ), the (potentially) flat a, shows remarkably high variability in the old style, but so does the (u), (o) and (œ), and curiously the (ɑ). This indicates that even a highly skilled ‘linguistic chameleon’ like le Dous oscillates between pronouncing his vowels in an assumed linguistic guise, here old news, and in his vernacular (interview) style. It is tempting to view this variability as a lack of competence or as lapses when he loses attention to his own speech. One could also speculate that the variability might be indexically functional in that it helps the listener to decode the performance as a deliberate manipulation of vowels rather than simply a speaker with a highly deviant vowel configuration.

These deliberate vowel manipulations, then, appear to reflect the folk linguistic knowledge about language change over time within the broadcast news genre. Furthermore, this awareness must be shared between performer and audience in order to work as stylization. It may be that only very competent performers, like le Dous, are able to modify their pronunciation to old style, but his listeners must have an equal perceptual capacity to appreciate that this is what he is doing. In Asif Agha’s (2007) term, the style must be ‘enregistered’. I will return to the theoretical aspects of enregisterment below. First I will try to approach the question of what the style signifies.

### THE INDEXICAL FIELD OF [ɛ]

The analysis of phonological change in news readings showed how one variant of the (æ) variable, [ɛ], lost its indexical value of being a stigmatized, substandard pronunciation by being incorporated into the formal standard of new readings. As a consequence, the other variant, [æ], became available for the ascription of new indexical values. The analysis of stylization of old news style showed how a performer utilized this potential to exploit a different order of indexical values. On one level, lowered (æ) is used to signal ‘old’ (or rather ‘fictionally old’); on a higher level this ‘oldness’ becomes indexical for other social meanings. Exactly what these meanings are, in other words what defines the indexical field of old news style (Eckert 2008), is difficult to pin down. To get some indication, I asked colleagues to write down their immediate thoughts when I played them the different parts that go into composing *Ugerevyen*: the introduction, the background noise, the background music, le Dous’ reading, etc. (see the section on ‘Composing oldness’ above).

Samples of each auditory layer were kindly supplied by Peter Lous. Figure 10 brings out some of the more frequent labels that were brought up. This, of course, is

self-ironic

authoritative    entertaining

mechanical    everyday life    grandiose

militant    cosy    ironic    sensation-seeking

non-serious    orderly    serious    idyllic

                  uptight            snob            jolly

official            feeling superior    simple life

optimistic            rose-tinted    harmony

light            exciting    unassuming

thinks high of himself

Figure 10: Indexical field of old news style

no attempt at exhaustively exploring the indexical potential of old news style, but it gives some indication of the meaning potential and its complexity. I do not attempt to tease out hierarchical levels of meaning – the orders of indexicality – within these labels, but present it as a complex field of meaning potential. I trust that the reader will lend her or his own cultural knowledge to the interpretation, as I am sure similar media products and values exist in other communities. (Sarah van Hoof, personal correspondence, e.g., has mentioned *Het gesproken dagblad*, ‘The Spoken Newspaper’, a very similar program in a Flemish context; see also Coupland, this volume.)

In essence, the indexical field is complex and somewhat contradictory. The style is simultaneously ‘militant’ and ‘rose-tinted’, ‘uptight’ and ‘ironic’, etc. Some of the discrepancy can be explained by assigning labels to different orders of indexicality or different interpretative frames. Describing the speaker as ‘serious’ and ‘official’ may describe the voice of the (fictional) authentic speaker’s view of himself and his own role; describing him as ‘militant’ and ‘authoritative’ describes the speaker as seen by an outsider; describing him as ‘feeling superior’ and ‘sensation-seeking’ shifts the interpretational frame yet another order away from the speaker by inscribing his performance with a personal ethos; describing him as ‘entertaining’, ‘non-serious’ and ‘ironic’ again shift the focus to the view of the stylization as deliberate performance, whereas labels like ‘cosy’, ‘rose-tinted’ and their synonyms may best describe the intpretation of the stylized performance within the frame of a contemporary radio show.

## CONCLUSION: MEDIA AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC CHANGE

Unravelling the symbolic meaning potential of (æ) (among other features), then, involves layers of tacit sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge. To fully appreciate Lars le Dous' stance towards the stories he reads, the listener must be able to recognise the pronunciation of (æ) as 'old' and, within the frame of 'old', as indexing a persona with a certain role, stance and ethos. Interpreting this persona in a modern context requires a shared cultural understanding of the prototypical – if purely fictional – newsreader of yesteryear and the modern interpretation of his ethos. These multiple interpretative layers add to the understanding of the stance towards the contemporary story at the heart of the performance. Jaffe (2009: 1) defines stance as the positions which speakers take up *vis-à-vis* the expressive, referential, interactional, and social implications of their speech. It seems as if the interpretative stance towards the reader which is being called forward (i.e. as ridiculous) is contagious with respect to the protagonists of the story. If the fictional newsreader is ridiculous and pompous, then maybe so are the persons in the news stories. It is hard to not read a certain ridicule into the whole presentation. Seeing current affairs from a distance, they seem less important, and the protagonists seem less serious than they might when one views them as currently newsworthy affairs. Seen from afar, media attention appears as media hype. And dressing up in an 'old' language style gives the readings exactly this level of *verfremdung*, estrangement.

Mock journalists are not a rare phenomenon in the contemporary media landscape. At least since *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, mock news and mock reporting have been a staple of TV and radio satire. It is an open question whether other estrangement frames work in the same or different ways with respect to the main story. As a case of comparison, English comedian Sacha Baron Cohen has created several culturally ignorant interviewer characters to expose different sides of western societies. Ali G (see Sebba 2003) is/was a fictional gangster of ambiguous non-Anglo decent who interviewed several British celebrities and politicians, and in the best of his interviews manage to expose his victims' "ignorance, insularity and self-importance through apparently naïve questioning" (Sebba 2003, 51). Borat is/was a fictional reporter from Kazakhstan who traveled through the USA, and again successfully exposed prejudices in the people he met, as well as highlighting oddities in American culture. Both characters allow the viewer an outsiders' view of their own culture and the possibility to naively question values and customs that are normally taken for granted.

Folk knowledge of old news style appears to be similar to folk knowledge of dialectal varieties described e.g. in Niedzielski and Preston's (2000) analyses of folk dialectology and in Johnstone's (2011) analysis of strategic and stylized uses of Pittsburghese. That is, language users are aware of certain markers of language



varieties which may or may not be authentic features of the variety. The analysis of Lars le Dous' imitation of old news style proves that he is in fact fairly capable of reproducing several features of authentic old news reading language; in other words, he is to a large degree capable of deconstructing half a century's language change. A finding here is that language users apparently not only operate with knowledge of and stereotypes associated with the language use of other living (stereotyped) speakers, but also with awareness of and stereotypes associated with the language style of previous times. This knowledge, I believe, is available only because of mediated access to authentic old recordings of spoken language and because of continued performance of the sociolinguistically salient features of 'old style' and its associated symbolic values in media performances. Le Dous' performance, in other words, not only displays the register knowledge, it also re-affirms the register. As do mediated uses of authentic old language, e.g. in the form of repeat broadcasts of old films, etc.

If we are looking for cases in which broadcast media play a role in sociolinguistic (if not linguistic) change, here, I argue, is one. We have a case in which language users' only access to the register is through media, and in which old news style is clearly 'enregistered' (Agha 2007) with a significant, albeit complex, social meaning potential. Clearly, broadcast media are not alone as instruments in the enregisterment of old news style or in establishing the indexical meaning of the style. Performances need an audience that will appreciate the meaning in order to work, and as we saw, the enregisterment of [ɛ] as deviant and sociolinguistically salient preceded broadcast media by decades (though of course these performances exploited other media and performed for other knowledgeable audiences).

We may hypothesize a developmental history along the following lines. Through the media treatment it receives, as well of course as changes in the surrounding society, the style of news reading goes through a cycle of indexical value development: It was selected first as the register appropriate for news reading presumably because it indexed 'Copenhagen-based professionals'. By its association with the formal and serious business of news it became indexical of 'good and confident language user', which in turn became synonymous with 'standard language user'. Standard language user became synonymous with 'user of *the* language (as opposed to speakers of an inferior variety)'. Somehow, possibly because of larger political changes, the standard speaker of the state radio became indexical of a paternalistic, bureaucratic state apparatus, and the persona associated with the register became rather that of the 'patronizing speaker' than that of the 'correct' speaker. Speaking formally came to mean being 'pompous', and being pompous in a deliberate performance of a fictional persona therefore comes to be a frame for caricature. Crucially, the (state broadcast) media play a role in every new

layer of indexical meaning which is added or which supercedes previous meanings. The indexical meanings draw on shared cultural knowledge about media personas.

In the case of *Ugerevyen*, the use of old news style is clearly humorous and the performance of a caricature. The indexical frame of presenting current affairs in old news style is one of insincerity. Stories come across as less serious than they would have been if they were read in an unmarked style, and the protagonists are ridiculed. I believe this plays on a more general trope of the past (and the media landscapes in the past) as more innocent and less cynical than modern media. A further effect of old style in the treatment of current affairs is that it lends an outsider perspective to the stories. By the use of innovative neologisms, current affairs are being treated as seen for the first time. In an example presented above, Hells Angels are referred to as ‘ox-skin-clad motorcycle virtuosos’, a description much less frightening than ‘motor cycle gang’, and somewhat ridiculing at that. We can interpret this in terms of reflexivity. These media representations invite (or demand) a reflexive interpretations by their viewers and listeners. *Ugerevyen* is not fully understood if we see it merely as a media text. It is a media text about media texts, and only interpretable by being seen as negotiating its position against a backdrop of other media texts. To the extent that this phenomenon is typical of (late-)modern media – and this volume as well as its partner volume (Mortensen, Coupland and Thøgersen 2016) lend some support to believing it is – we may speak of a process of media ‘reflexivization’.

Consequences for language change follow by implication. In an historical perspective variants that were unmarked and predominantly standard (even if they were not variants which the numerical majority of speakers ever used) have become rare to the extent that they are no longer indexical of ‘proper spoken Danish’, but rather of ‘antiquated (or pedantic) spoken Danish’. Any speaker using these variants is prone to be interpreted as doing stylization or performing a persona for some interactional effect. Whereas most debates on the role of media language in societal language change have involved looking at media speakers as some sort of coveted ideal, a ‘pull effect’ attracting young speakers towards the image of the hip (e.g. Kristiansen 2001), the point here is that media may also exert a ‘push effect’, placing negative social value on speakers who would be using the variants. The push effect may be generally accepted when it comes to explaining the general trend of language standardization of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see e.g. Stuart-Smith and Ota 2014: 129–130 for an overview). When speakers stop using dialects, it is equally because of the attractiveness of speaking the standards and because of the stigma of speaking a dialect. Here, however, the effect would lead not (only) to standardization, but towards a more modern and vernacular style.

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