

APPENDIX

AUDIOVISUAL DIALECTOLOGY^[1]

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Abstract: In 1994 a dialectological and ethnological film project was launched by the Institute of Slavic Studies at the University of Klagenfurt under the heading “*Documentary records of past folk culture in dialect*”. It involves recording the language of bilingual dialect speakers from the southern parts of Carinthia and then producing documentary video films. The main aim of the project is audiovisual dialectology. Observations and experiences from everyday rural life, which is still characterized by the use of traditional farming skills and implements, are recorded on video in the form of dialogues and group discussions as well as monologues. Particular attention is paid to recording spontaneous spoken dialect in simulated yet natural situations. Since November 1998, the research project has concentrated on documenting both terminology and objects in audiovisual form. Specialist agricultural and handicraft skills in everyday life are documented in the immediate context of the objects which are being described. The aim of this demanding method of documentation is to record ethnographical facts and dialect texts at the same time while retaining maximum authenticity. At present the research project is concentrating on the audiovisual documentation of monologues and dialogues. In early 2005, the project was renamed “*Audiovisual dialectology – documentary records of past folk culture in dialect (www.kwfilm.com)*”.

Keywords: dialectology; multimedia, audiovisual research; terminology; communication; vernaculars.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Today's rapid technological developments have encouraged a much wider range of approaches to observing, portraying and interpreting objects of research in many different disciplines (Maurer-Lausegger 2007b: 1001). Conventional audiovisual media have been strongly influenced by developments in modern information and communications technology which allow new forms of presentation to be used. These innovations can also be used to great effect in dialect research (cf. Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 164 f.).

Language and culture and the way in which they are processed are attracting more and more attention in linguistic, media, communication and cultural research. Audiovisual and electronic media make it possible to record acoustic information (text, sound) and pictures (the context of the situation, simulation, etc.) synchronically and diachronically (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 167). In the age of multimedia, traditional research methods from individual disciplines are starting to synthesize into trans- and interdisciplinary

approaches, leading to cross-media thinking and facilitating the “mutual illumination of various theoretical and methodological approaches” (cf. Rajewski, 2002: 11). As Rajewski points out, “film illustrates the relativity of time, space and visual perspective, the fragmentary nature of perception and the simultaneity of experiences; the impulse to move is also most convincingly accommodated by this medium.”^[2]

1.2 Thanks to dramatic advances in digital and film technology, dialectology has also seen the number of interdisciplinary approaches increase since the second half of the 1980s. Reflecting current academic trends and depending on the availability of technical equipment, dialectology, too, can pursue a wide range of linguistic and cultural interests. One of the many innovative approaches to emerge recently is audiovisual dialectology, which has been developed by the author and professional film crews in an interdisciplinary research project entitled *Documentary records of past folk culture in dialect* (www.kwfilm.com) which was launched at the Institute of Slavic Studies at Klagenfurt University in 1994.” (Maurer-Lausegger 2007b: 1001).

2. THE RESEARCH PROJECT “AUDIOVISUAL DIALECTOLOGY”

The film project involves recording the dialect and culture of bilingual speakers (Slovene and German) in Southern Carinthia/Austria and then producing documentary video films with an accompanying pamphlet for commercial purposes. The main aim of the project is audiovisual dialectology. The documentaries are produced in cooperation with Artis Filmproduktions-GesmbH (since 1998), a Klagenfurt film company, and the Institute of Media and Communication Studies at the University of Klagenfurt (1994-1998). In close cooperation with various professional film crews, my approach to audiovisual dialectology has gradually developed and in early 2005, the project was renamed “*Audiovisual dialectology – documentary records of past folk culture in dialect*” (www.kwfilm.com).

2.1 Audiovisual technology in dialect research

Until the early 1990s, no attention was paid to audiovisual documentation in dialect research. The methodological foundations for this innovative discipline were developed between 1994 and 2004 in the multimedia dialectological-ethnographical research project entitled “*Documentary records of past folk culture in dialect*”. This process is founded on many years of experience with dialectological field research in the bilingual area of southern Carinthia, where German and Slovene are spoken, as well as filming experience with three different camera teams and theoretical knowledge from related disciplines. The many and varied methods of audiovisual dialectology were developed step by step in our film project (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 167).

“*Audiovisual dialectology*” can be defined as the use of multimedia technology in dialect research, involving both auditive and visual processes (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 164). Its realization in many different forms and audiovisual processing combined with the ensuing methodological and theoretical insights firmly place dialectology in an intermedial and interdisciplinary context of cultural studies” (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 169). Audiovisual data does not only provide text, but also information on the location, time and plot, always including extralinguistic factors. General atmospheric and

background noises (Vielmuth 1998: 205) can be given an important role when changing locations, for example. Noises can also include linguistically relevant information which can only be conveyed and deciphered audiovisually (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 169).

2.2 Audiovisual dialectology: a first theoretical definition

A first theoretical definition of audiovisual dialectology was formulated in 2000 by the autor:

"The use of video technology in dialectological field work is a method of documenting linguistic and cultural matters synchronically which allows the viewer to hear the spoken dialect as well as other sounds and noises and to observe the production of spontaneous speech from a realistic perspective which also includes nonverbal communication and the social context. The chronological sequences of pictures on the video can be reproduced so that this process of hearing and observing can be experienced and analysed at any time and in every location where the appropriate technical equipment is available. The more often and the more intensively this process takes place, the more profoundly this realistic context can be tapped into."

(Maurer-Lausegger 2000: 191 f.; Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 169).

The multimedia approach to audiovisual dialectology makes it possible to observe the dialect from a new and more profound perspective which was not previously accessible to dialect research (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 167).

2.3 Objectives of the project

The main objective of the project is to document the local Slovene vernaculars spoken in different parts of southern Carinthia by recording the language used by bilingual speakers from different age groups (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 166). Therefore at present our audiovisual dialectology mainly concentrates on the language spoken by the older generation (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 165). This does not mean to say that our audiovisual dialectology exclusively covers the language spoken by the older generation and ignores younger speakers (...). One reason why we concentrate on filming the language of older dialect speakers is that their dialect is more firmly rooted, exhibiting an extraordinary variety in lexical, phonological, morphological and semantic terms, while younger speakers often show distinctive interference patterns with other varieties of German or Slovene. As old farming tools and traditions gradually disappear, valuable cultural assets are lost and along with them the down-to-earth language that describes them (Maurer-Lausegger 2007b: 1003).

The aim of the research project is to produce a scientific audiovisual record of dialect spoken in "simulated yet natural" situations. Bilingual dialect speakers of various ages are recorded talking about selected topics in different situations, both in terms of context and filming. Observations and experiences from everyday rural life, which is still characterized by the use of traditional farming skills and implements, are recorded on video in the form of dialogues and group discussions as well as monologues (cf. www.kwfilm.com).

2.4 Video films and accompanying pamphlets

The videos which have been produced from the materials recorded so far concentrate on the following specialist fields: water mills and sawmills, sheep breeding, agricultural implements for arable farming, sledges and transporting wood, baking bread in the black kitchen and reminiscences of rural life in the past, amongst others. Spontaneous spoken dialect is recorded in simulated yet natural situations. In all fourteen documentaries have been compiled on these topics, six in Slovene and six in German and two with English subtitles, published along with an accompanying pamphlet by Hermagoras Verlag in Klagenfurt as part of a special series entitled "*Dialektdokumentationen - Narečne dokumentacije*" (*Documentaries in dialect*). The German versions of the documentaries were either originally recorded in German as well or have been dubbed. The Slovene versions of the films on sledges and on baking bread in the black kitchen have also been brought out with English subtitles (cf. Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 166).

The accompanying pamphlets, which are illustrated with old photographs, have a phonological transcription of the text of the film and a German translation or a standard Slovene version or an English version (in two cases). They also include detailed information on how the individual films were made (cf. Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 166).

2.5 Subjects and methodology

Successful use of film technology in dialectological research requires a wide range of practical and theoretical experience with dialectological and sociolinguistic field research, solid sociolinguistic knowledge of the terrain in which the recordings should be made, good knowledge of the language/dialect and awareness of and experience with the technicalities of film production (Maurer-Lausegger 2007b: 1003). Depending on research interests, coupled with technical and financial capabilities, one can present dialect on film in a wide variety of ways. So far, our films have concentrated on ethnographical topics from "bygone days". Such topics are particularly suitable for recording dialect spoken in its most traditional form. When using a professional camera team (consisting of a cameraman, sound assistant and interviewer/researcher in our case) in dialectological field research, the interviewer/dialectologist must have a wide range of practical experience and theoretical knowledge. Likewise, the cameraman must be very sensitive to the situation being filmed and be prepared to consider the needs of the interviewer/dialectologist (Maurer-Lausegger 2007b: 1003).

2.5.1 We document spontaneously spoken dialect, paying particular attention to a 'simulated yet natural' situation in its sociocultural context (cf. Wodak 1982) in front of the camera. Every situation requires its own specific methodological approach, which means the team must build up a fundamental feeling of trust from the start and also be very flexible. In contrast to other documentaries, it is not possible to create a screenplay in the classic sense of the word as the 'plot' or order of events is determined by the dialect speaker(s). In other words, the cameraman is an 'observer' who follows the dynamic contextual events with the camera (Maurer-Lausegger 2007b: 1004).

2.5.2 The recordings can focus on a single person, on dialogues and conversations between two or three people or on synchronic documentation of dialect and terminology

from the perspective of contextual research. Since November 1998, the research project has concentrated on documenting both agricultural/rural terminology and objects in audiovisual form, the main aim being to record spontaneous spoken dialect in simulated yet natural situations (cf. www.kwfilm.com). At present the research project is concentrating on the audiovisual documentation of monologues and dialogues.^[3]

2.5.3 Audiovisual presentation of monologues and dialogues: Three different constellations from our video documentary “*Čej so tiste stezice ... Spomini na nekdanje kmečko življenje*” (*Following the tracks of yesteryear ... reminiscences of rural life in the past*; produced in 2004) illustrate just some of the many ways in which audiovisual documentation of dialect can be realized. In all three cases, the speakers were sitting down and recorded with one camera in a fixed position while the sound was recorded by an assistant. Zooming and tracking with the camera focus the viewers' attention on the dynamics of the conversation and the expressive gestures and facial expressions with which the speaker tries to emphasize certain points (Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 173).

2.5.4 Audiovisual documentation of terminology and objects from the perspective of contextual research: a new methodological approach to research: Several ethnographical exhibitions arranged by myself in the place where I come from, Bodental/Poden (municipality of Ferlach/Borovlje), on the topic of “*old farm implements*” prompted me to expand the audiovisual dialectological documentary project to include research into terminology and the objects being described. Thanks to the achievements of modern communication technology, audiovisual research into dialect and terminology can be carried out using a wide variety of documentation and working processes in many different ways. Specialist fields of life are recorded on video with a running commentary on the objects which are being used/explained. Our aim is to record ethnographical circumstances and spoken dialect simultaneously while being as authentic as possible. In order to achieve this ambitious research work, which requires a very good interview partner/dialect speaker and skilled camera work, the Klagenfurt film company ARTIS was brought into the project. So far three ethnographical video films on old farm implements have been made in cooperation with this team of professionals: “*Farm implements from Carinthian lofts*” (1999; length: 30 min.), “*About sledges ...*” (1999, 2000, 2001; length: 47 min.) and “*Bread from the black kitchen*” (1999, 2000; length: 25 min.).^[4]

2.6 Objectives of audiovisual dialect documentation

The main aim of the research project is to record and study the wide range of dialects and vernaculars spoken in southern Carinthia. At the same time, valuable cultural heritage will be saved from completely dying out and preserved for posterity. On a long-term basis, the aim is to expand the project to include other specialist fields and also other text types, which could serve as a basis for research in linguistics and cultural studies. The documentaries are also screened in public, for example as part of university courses (dialectology, ethnology), seminars, excursions and school events and cultural evenings. Dialectologists, ethnologists and other cultural studies experts are interested in these documentaries, as are experts from other disciplines as well as everybody who is interested in folklore and cultural matters. The project leader also arranges presentations

at ethnographical exhibitions (especially for tourists staying in the region) and as part of various other social programmes.^[5]

3. CONCLUSION

At the heart of our audiovisual approach dialectology is the documentary. It is what enables us to use such a wide range of methods, opening up a broad spectrum of academic applications as well as sociocultural approaches (seminars, excursions and educational events as well as cultural programmes). The films are appealing to experts in various disciplines – dialectology, ethnology, cultural anthropology and other areas of cultural studies – but are also attractive for anybody interested in folklore and local culture, as demonstrated by their positive reception during ethnographic exhibitions and cultural events. Such activities help contribute to the breaking down of language barriers in the general public (...) (Maurer-Lausegger 2007b: 1005).

NOTES

[1] The bibliography of the project leader and a short description of the film project “*Audiovisual dialectology – documentary records of past folk culture in dialect*” is available on the homepage of the project leader and author: www.kwfilm.com. The present article is a selection of excerpts from papers already published in English on the subject of Audiovisual Dialectology. Some citations may have been slightly altered and, therefore, the inverted commas have been dropped in the listing of sources. More detailed information on the subject matter can be found in the referenced articles.

[2] Rajewski 2002: 29; [translation from German, HML]; Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 163 f.).

[3] Maurer-Lausegger IADA 2007: 165. See more about the working methods: Maurer-Lausegger 2000; Maurer-Lausegger 2006; Maurer-Lausegger 2007a; Maurer-Lausegger 2007b; Maurer-Lausegger 2008: 165 f.

[4] Cf. Maurer-Lausegger 2004b; Maurer-Lausegger 2008. The same film crew was used to make documentaries on other topics which are being prepared for publication.

[5] Cf. Maurer-Lausegger 2007a: 166; www.kwfilm.com.

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