

# Coarseness and Incivility in Broadcast talk

# Contrasting Voices

- The traditional idea of broadcasting as a form of public address or speaking to the nation dramatically contrasts with more conversational styles of contemporary media talk such as chat shows and phone in programs.

On radio and television until 1960s, coverage tended:

- To be framed as being automatic importance to the media audience
- To use presenters chosen for their class persona and accent, who spoke standard form of English
- To be narrated at a relatively slow tempo and in a formal style

- This patrician sense of addressing the nation has been a common means in radio and television broadcasting of symbolizing national identity and authority or of controlling public discourse.
- There are two major forces that change media environment:
- Commercial broadcasting
- Digital media

# Commercial Broadcasting

- Commercial Broadcasting has been more responsive to audience ratings. Commercial Broadcasters pursued forms of closer identification with audience tastes, styles and aspirations in order to maintain and expand audiences.
- The shift of approach was noticed in wider range of program formats- traditional news, documentaries, features, drama and entertainment, quiz show, phone in, make over program, reality TV format and chat show.

# Digital Media

- Digital media and multichannel supply of broadcast programs have contributed to further reshaping of approach and style. With more broadcast content available, new categories of people began to appear on radio and television.
- More extensive opportunities become available for participation.

- The contemporary broadcast media environment gives space to a far wider range of different voices. Media participants come from different walks of life.
- These two forces have enlarged the range of language varieties that include 'media discourse' or 'the language of media'.
- There are many media participants whose voices, dialects, accent, speech styles come under media discourse.

- Media language has become more inclusive in terms of language varieties and social classes
- The shift of style from standardized varieties and formal register towards accents and dialect representation and informal registers contributes to conversationalization



- Conversational style is adopted not only between speakers in the studio setting but also between a media speaker and the audience
- Contemporary styles of broadcast talk function partly to level out hierarchical difference between media speakers and their audiences

Complaints are often made about standards of broadcast talk:

- Some are about editorial judgment
- Others are about incivility and coarseness –bad language . The category of bad language is very broad, it runs from slang, swearing (taboo words) poor grammar, rough or outlandish (very unusual) accent

- Sometimes controversy about bad language involves a general view of social conduct –verbal offensiveness. It is concerned with admissible words, admissible voices and admissible ideas.
- Lakoff suggests differences between the terms ‘polite’ and ‘civil’. Polite involves positive consideration of others. Civil suggests mutual tolerance in a shared space or observance of accepted social custom.

Incivility involves claims for respectful naming of minorities and historically subordinated groups, by challenging negative or stereotypical names and replacing them with more respectful terms such as:

African American – Negro

Woman –girl, lady

Asian- oriental

Disabled-handicapped