

Sociolinguistics Symposium 19 (2012), Freie Universität Berlin, FB Philosophie und Geisteswissenschaften, Prof. Dr. Matthias Hüning & Prof. Dr. Uli Reich, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, D - 14195 Berlin

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Freie Universität Berlin
Prof. Dr. M. Hüning & Prof. Dr. U. Reich
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To Whom It May Concern

This is to confirm that **Dr. Anastasia G. Stamou** is welcome to participate in the **Sociolinguistics Symposium 19**, to be held in Berlin (Germany) from August 21 to August 24, 2012.

Please note that registration fees, travel, living and accommodation expenses will not be supported by the conference organization.

Dr. Anastasia G. Stamou is author/co-author of the following accepted contribution(s):

Title: Mediating urban vs. rural female identities in Greek television

Conference Track / Type of Submission: General Paper Session

Author(s): Stamou, Anastasia G.; Maroniti, Katerina S.; Dinas, Konstantinos D.

Presenting Author: Stamou, Anastasia G.

We look forward to seeing Dr. Anastasia G. Stamou.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Matthias Hüning & Prof. Dr. Uli Reich
(Local organizers of the Sociolinguistics Symposium)

Mediating urban vs. rural female identities in Greek television*

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In the present paper, we analyze how a popular Greek TV series mediates the urban vs. rural dipole through the construction of contrasting female identities. Despite the wealth of sociolinguistic studies on gender identity construction in interpersonal settings, limited research has been directed to mediated contexts (e.g. Behm 2009). Drawing upon the “identities in interaction” sociocultural linguistic model of Bucholz & Hall (2005) plus the ethnomethodological tool of “Membership Categorization Analysis” (Sacks 1992), the analysis indicates that the TV series constructs a rather schematic construction of the world by conflating the Membership Categorization Devices of “gender” and “geography”. Specifically, the category of “traditional woman”, as incarnated by the villager Stavroula, is contrasted to that of “progressive woman”, as represented by the “Athenian” Hara. Rurality is negatively associated with conservatism and oppression of women, while urbanity is attached to the positive values of progress and female emancipation. Consequently, the TV series seems to echo the naturalized binary opposition between “rural”/ “provincial” vs. “urban”/ “cosmopolitan” knitted to the construction of modernity (Bauman & Briggs 2003). However, it rather negotiates this dipole, being placed into a late modern socio-cultural context. The male protagonist and mayor of the village where the plot revolves is represented as being hostile towards urban modernity. Moreover, Hara is depicted through the category of “city person”, who holds a distorted and idealistic view of rurality, characterizing post-industrial urban people with no experience of rural life (the “rural idyll”: Cloke & Milbourne 1992). At stylistic level, the TV series does not depict, as probably expected, a straightforward relationship between rural (traditional) female identities and feminine speech style on the one hand, and urban (progressive) female identities and masculine style of talk on the other, but treats the two symbolic resources as forming a stylistic continuum along which TV characters are positioned during the display of their gender identities in specific fictional contexts. The contrasting gender identities are further constructed through other sociolinguistic resources, including specialized lexis of foods and drinks in English, Italian and French (category of “modern woman of the city”) vs. terminology of pests (category of “traditional woman of the country”).

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