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nterculturality in the media. Combining critical multimodal discourse analysis and reception theory

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Interculturality in the Media: Combining Critical Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Reception Theory

University of York

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Outline of the presentation

➢ Overview of my research

➢ A *Mediation Analytical Framework*

➢ Research methodology

➢ Data sample

➢ Conclusions

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My Research - Overview

- Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (van Leeuwen, 2005; Machin and Mayr, 2012; Djonov and Zhao, 2014; Jancsary, Höllerer and Meyer, 2016)

- Socio-economical and intercultural issues

- TV Travel and Cultural programmes

- Focus on the reception/ perceptions of audiences

A *Mediation Analytical Framework*

The *Mediation Analytical Framework* (after Hall, 1980/2005: 119 and Charaudeau, 1997: 72)

(Castaldi, 2019)
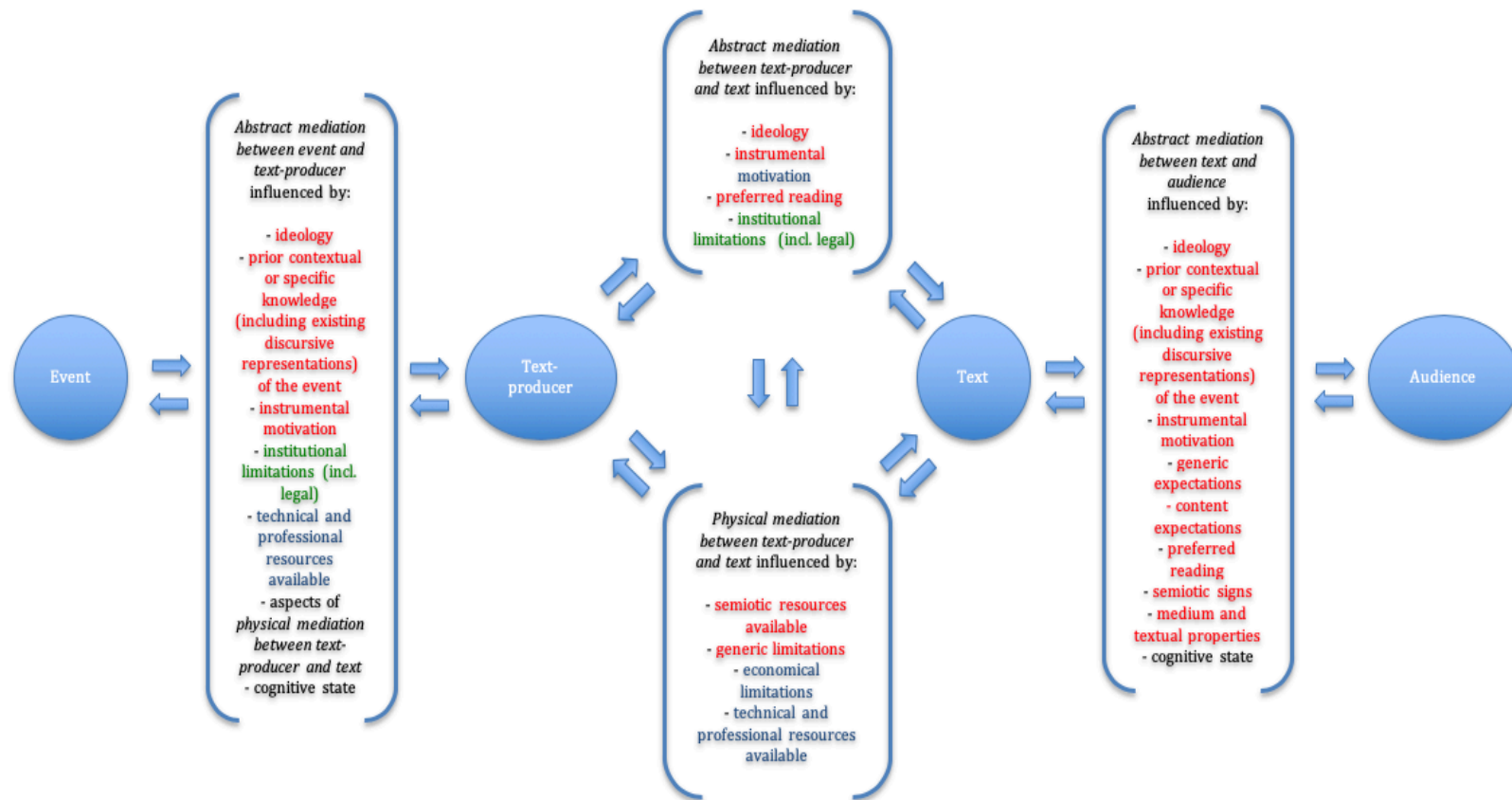
Methodology and Research Instruments

- Qualitative study

- Participants choose the television programme (with some restrictions ☺) and watch it how/when they want – *Questionnaire* and *Follow-up Interview*

- Critical Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the text chosen with focus on the following aspects:

  - *Linguistic:* lexis, representation of actors (van Leeuwen, 1996) and processes (or *transitivity*, e.g. Langacker, 2008:147-151; Hart, 2014: 22-30)

  - *Audio:* music and sound (e.g. van Leeuwen, 1999; Machin, 2014)

  - *Visual:* e.g. settings, salience, distance, gaze and poses, camera angle, frame position (Iedema 2001; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; Machin and Mayr, 2012)

- Reception Study: critical thematic and linguistic analysis of the questionnaire and interview data – *Investigator triangulation?* (Flick, 2004: 178)

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Data Sample: extract from
Burma with Simon Reeve (BBC, 2018, ep. 1)

The text

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b3g1nm

The British Empire vs. the Burmese Military

The British Empire vs. the Burmese Military

Critical Multimodal Analysis: the British Empire

Linguistic Analysis			Audio Analysis		Visual Analysis		Overall meaning-making
Lexis	Representation of actors and places	Representation of processes	Music	Sounds	Representation of actors and places	Representation of processes	
"Burma […] was once part of the British Empire" "the first colonial capital" "This is so atmospheric, it really is" "a really stunning landscape" "In the late 1800s the British began building railway lines running almost the entire length of the country" "The British ruled Burma for more than a century. After a long struggle, Burma finally gained independence in 1948"	Burma, collectivised British Empire, collectivised Burma British, collectivised British, collectivised Burma, collectivised	State State State Active Active Active	Slow and kind of epic to begin with (over the aerial shots); followed by faster, joyful music (when catching the train and while talking about the British Empire and railway); Followed by slower acoustic, melancholic music while talking about Burma gaining independence and the subsequent military rule	Sound of train chugging.	Aerial shots of religious places, including a church (sun is shining, probably not shot just before SR starts his journey as he seems wet outside); close up and medium shots of SR catching the train (carrying all his luggage like a traveller) and looking outside of the window; aerial shots of the train on its journey; close-up (low angle) of SR, looking into the camera, talking about choice of seats; mainly clear skies and sunset while talking about the Burmese ending the British Empire rule (cf. "the sun never sets on the British Empire")	Aerial shots give feelings of space and freedom while talking about the railway system; close up of SR create a sense of proximity and complicity with the viewer	The *states* ("facts") are: Burma was part of the Empire; Burma is beautiful. The railway system built by the British is seen as something positive, that enables the host and the audience to appreciate the beauty of the landscape and the country. The host is a genuine traveller, and this instils a sense of authenticity and trust in the viewer. Also, by associating the train journey with the beauty of the country the following association may be created: British built the railway > railway allows you to appreciate the beauty of the country > British rule = beauty of the country

The British Empire vs. the Burmese Military

Critical Multimodal Analysis: the Burmese Military

Linguistic Analysis			Audio Analysis		Visual Analysis		Overall meaning-making
Lexis	Representation of actors and places	Representation of processes	Music	Sounds	Representation of actors and places	Representation of processes	
SR: Just over a decade later, the military _seized power_ ushering in decades of _brutal dictatorship_	Military, collectivised	Active	Slow, melancholic acoustic music continues on when talking about military rule.	Sound of rain; Noises of busy train carriage.	Long distance shots from the train of Burmese people along the railway (one person waves); medium distance (lowish angle) of SR, looking into the camera, talking about the military rule; cut to shot of rain (although it was not raining when SR was still talking).	The quick shot on the people along the railway puts them briefly at the forefront of the narration; the waving could be interpreted as a "goodbye" to the British rule. The space of the frame goes from the wide aerial shots to the confinement of the train carriage. The medium shot distance creates proximity with SR who engages the viewer to respond to what he's saying about the military years. The sunshine at the beginning of the journey is replaced by rain.	There are no _states_ here; however, the following scene starts with the _state_ of "poverty is still endemic". This scene sharply contrasts with the previous one. After the sunshine and the happy association of British to beauty, comes the dark and melancholic description of the military years, to which the audience is asked to respond. The contrast is created both linguistically (e.g. 'ruled' vs 'seized power' and 'brutal dictatorship'), visually (e.g. aerial shots vs indoor shots'; 'sun and light' vs 'rain and dark') and aurally (e.g. happy fast-paced music vs slow, melancholic music).
SR: "The military _completely ruined_ Burma: they _wrecked_ the economy, they jailed thousands of dissidents, they imposed _severe censorship_ and they cut Burma off from the outside world. Under the military this became one of the ten poorest countries in the world"	Military, collectivised	Active					
	Burma, collectivised,	Active					

The British Empire vs. the Burmese Military

Summary of Critical Multimodal Analysis

	The British Empire	*The Burmese Military*
Linguistic analysis	<u>Burma</u>: positive connotations, e.g. *atmospheric, stunning landscape, gained independence.* <u>The British</u>: positive or neutral connotations, e.g. *building railway lines, ruled.*	<u>Burma</u>: negative connotations, e.g. *became one of the ten poorest countries* <u>The Military</u>: negative connotations, e.g. *seized power ushering in [...] brutal dictatorship, completely ruined, wrecked, jailed, severe censorship.*
Audio analysis	<u>Music</u>: fast-paced, joyful. <u>Sounds</u>: train chugging.	<u>Music</u>: slow, melancholic. <u>Sounds</u>: noises from the carriage; rain.
Visual analysis	Arial shots, views of the lush landscape from the window, fairly clear skies, sunset while talking about the Burmese ending the British Empire rule.	Shots confined within the carriage, with a fairly dark light; a cloudier sky eventually turns into a rainy one.
Overall meaning-making	The British rule is depicted, if not positively (building infrastructures and brining innovations), at least in a neutral way.	The Burmese Military rule is depicted as a brutal dictatorship that ruined the country and oppressed its people.

The British Empire vs. the Burmese Military

Participant's representation – Questionnaire data

- Pre-viewing section: both the colonial era and the Burmese military are identified as expected topics in the programme.

- Post-viewing section: no information regarding either is mentioned as something the participant found particularly interesting or memorable.

- Possible explanations for this:
  - the programme only reinforced existing preconceptions about the British empire and the Burmese military;
  - the participant found other elements and themes more interesting possibly due to novelty or prominence in the programme.

The British Empire vs. the Burmese Military

Participant's representation – Interview data

JC: "OK, so that's what you were kind of expecting then, "talking about an oppressive government and previous rulers"
P: yeah, so like the colonial
JC: were you expecting that as well, then?
P: yeah, **I thought that would be touched upon** because, obviously, my understanding of the current situation is all related to the history of the country and yes, so I did
JC: so, you were aware about that before, like, that it was part of the British empire?
P: yeah, yeah **because at school I was quite interested in the colonial empire**, Rudyard Kipling and all those references relate back to Burma
JC: Ah OK, so it would be, like, back to school days, I mean your knowledge about all of this
P: So, yeah, about the empire. That always interested me, not in a… **not like I'm mad on the British empire** but as a kid I was like "oh, that's quite cool about the British empire, it stretches across the world", before **you learn about the travesty** of the empire. So, yeah, it's always been… **those countries have always been something very interesting** and their current political situation or economical/ financial, **just what those countries are like now**" (lines 96-111)

P: "I can very much relate to the train in Kenya, where **the British were very concerned in having these great rail networks across the country and they slowly just deteriorated**." (lines 461-463)

P: "**I've been on trains like that in Africa**. The railway Nairobi to Mombasa is still the old train I travelled, like, when I was a child in the 1980s**, still diesel, engines have not been updated at all. It's crazy**" (lines 201-203)

P: "yeah, my general experience, as, obviously… for example **the British empire had a huge impact on three quarters of the world**, or what have you, **but, since that time they've messed with other countries, other regimes have gone in, ultimately worse**, or more recent, **but it distracts from that**. So, like **when I lived in Kenya, no one was bitter about British people**. They were more bitter about their current political climate or like the Kikuyu, like the genocide… that's not Kikuyu, but the various tribal fighting there. You think like, India suffered a lot after just for poor managing. **Burma, they had the militants coming and messed with the country.** There's lots of like examples of like… when I was in Poland, for example, they were… I was speaking to them about the Germans, because they'd gone to [unclear] and taken over, they conquered Poland. But they didn't give a shit about Poland [meaning Germany], they were pissed off with Russians. I think… **I think, because perhaps the British empire brought in some Western ideas, or innovations to other parts of the world, they see that** and there's… I don't know, but who am I talking to? Like people on… like I'm on holiday or I'm going to places where tourists go, they're not gonna say like 'ah, you dickhead, you English'" (lines 713-727)

Views on the British Empire (2014)

Fieldwork: 24th - 25th July 2014

	Total	Gender		Age				Social Grade		Region				
		Male	Female	18-24	25-39	40-59	60+	ABC1	C2DE	London	Rest of South	Midlands / Wales	North	Scotland
Weighted Sample	1741	844	897	207	440	595	498	992	749	223	566	373	428	151
Unweighted Sample	1741	812	929	173	373	687	508	1136	605	211	522	398	398	212
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Thinking about the British Empire, would you say it is more something to be proud or more something to be ashamed of?

More something to be proud of	**59**	62	55	48	54	60	65	58	59	55	65	58	58	46
More something to be ashamed of	**19**	18	19	27	18	19	16	19	18	23	13	23	17	27
Don't know	**23**	20	26	25	29	21	19	22	24	22	22	20	26	27

Overall do you think the countries that were colonised by Britain are better off or worse off for being colonised?

Better off	**49**	56	42	40	42	46	61	51	46	45	53	45	51	38
Worse off	**15**	15	15	23	15	16	11	14	16	19	12	17	14	22
Don't know	**36**	29	43	37	42	38	28	35	38	37	35	38	35	40

Would you like Britain to still have an

Yes	**34**	35	33	30	35	37	32	32	37	26	38	36	38	20
No	**45**	49	41	46	38	45	51	50	39	53	41	46	41	60
Don't know	**20**	15	25	24	27	18	16	18	24	22	21	18	21	20

Views on the British Empire (2016)

YouGov Survey Results

YouGov — What the world thinks

Sample Size: 1733 GB Adults
Fieldwork: 17th - 18th January 2016

	Total	Vote in 2015				Gender		Age				Social Grade		Region				
		Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Male	Female	18-24	25-39	40-59	60+	ABC1	C2DE	London	Rest of South	Midlands / Wales	North	Scotland
Weighted Sample	1733	589	485	121	208	841	892	206	438	593	496	988	745	222	563	371	426	151
Unweighted Sample	1733	564	468	135	222	804	929	163	310	706	554	1133	600	202	545	379	445	162
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Generally speaking, do you think the British Empire was

	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Male	Female	18-24	25-39	40-59	60+	ABC1	C2DE	London	Rest of South	Midlands / Wales	North	Scotland
A good thing	43	55	28	42	63	51	35	32	40	44	48	44	41	41	45	45	42	30
A bad thing	19	10	30	16	5	18	20	32	16	19	17	19	19	23	18	14	18	34
Neither a good or bad thing	25	23	29	28	23	25	26	19	24	26	29	26	25	22	26	26	26	26
Don't know	13	11	12	14	8	7	19	17	20	11	7	11	15	14	11	15	14	11

Do you think Britain's history of colonialism is...

	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Male	Female	18-24	25-39	40-59	60+	ABC1	C2DE	London	Rest of South	Midlands / Wales	North	Scotland
Part of our history that we should proud happened	44	57	31	35	66	53	34	30	39	47	49	46	40	42	45	46	44	34
Part of our history that we should regret happening	21	12	34	12	6	19	22	28	18	20	21	20	21	24	19	16	19	36
Neither	23	20	24	41	20	21	25	26	24	22	22	23	23	28	24	23	21	18
Don't know	13	11	11	12	7	6	19	16	19	11	8	10	17	5	12	15	16	11

Thinking about how Britain talks and thinks about our past, do you think...

	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Male	Female	18-24	25-39	40-59	60+	ABC1	C2DE	London	Rest of South	Midlands / Wales	North	Scotland
Britain tends to view our history of colonisation too postively - there was much cruelty, killing, injustice and racism that we try not to talk about	29	15	43	36	13	27	31	40	27	29	26	29	28	32	26	23	29	49
Britain tends to view our history of colonisation too negatively - we talk too much about the cruelty and racism of Empire, and ignore the good that it did	28	37	15	25	50	38	19	18	25	30	33	30	26	28	30	32	26	19
Britain tends to get the balance between the good and bad sides of our colonial history about right	27	37	25	25	25	27	28	23	24	27	33	29	26	27	30	27	27	19
Don't know	16	11	17	14	12	9	22	19	24	13	9	12	20	13	14	18	18	14

Conclusions on the role of Audience Research in my study

- A qualitative analysis of the audience, together with the possibility for the participant to choose their own programme seems to provide useful insights on which themes are considered as relevant and processed and which ones aren't. In other words, it can be use for *investigator triangulation* (Flick, 2004: 178).

- In the case of the data presented, there seems to be a remarkable alignment between the meaning-making that can be interpreted from the text and the representation that the participant provided of those themes. This can be an indicator of how these types of texts can influence or reinforce people's representations of reality.

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Thank you

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