Communicating geographical space, time, cultural difference and mediated accent: Finnish football fans’ nocturnal online following of Trinidadian online live radio

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This paper is an interactional-sociolinguistic analysis of an online discourse event with a complex mediational chain (cf. Scollon & Scollon 2004; Androutsopoulos 2010). The event is based on a men’s friendly football match (2012), Finland against Trinidad and Tobago, played on the Caribbeans’ home ground. With no television broadcast or online streaming, the Finnish supporters of their national team gather together on their online asylum Futisforum2 (Kytölä 2013) under an interactive, multi-authored live following topic. The match begins at 6 p.m. Trinidad’s time, midnight in Finland. The Finnish followers find out that a Trinidadian online radio broadcasts the entire match live; and this presentation explores the intricate relations between the match events on-the-spot, the Trinidadian radio commentary, and the nightly Finnish online forum discussion on the former two, a highly ‘synchronous’ digital communication event despite the alleged ‘asynchronicity’ of web forums in general (Kytölä 2013).

Besides ‘picturing’ the match events on the basis of the auditory input, three specific metapragmatic themes emerge in the Finns’ nocturnal live following: 1) the ‘accented’ speech differing considerably from the wider known varieties of English, triggering ‘laughing-out-loud’ response and humour among the Finns on the other side of the globe; 2) the cultural difference of the radio commentary genre, i.e. how Trinidadian commentators pick up things from the field and filter them through into their performance; 3) the cultural difference of ‘radio behaviour’, i.e. the ways in which the Trinidadian commentators sound more ‘laid-back’, ‘relaxed’, ‘far out’ or ‘Ganja’ than the Finns are acquainted with. All this is comparable to Coupland’s (2009) ‘mediated performance of vernaculars’, requiring a holistic, ethnographically and socio-culturally motivated analysis. It is this complicated interface of geographical space, time, cultural differences, old and new technologies, and football fandom, that this presentation attempts to illustrate.

Keywords: Trinidad, online radio, football.