

ON MEDIA INFLUENCE AND MEDIA LITERACY

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Marshall McLuhan coined a phrase which explains the current state and effect of media on society. He denotes the world “global village”. In the past, knowledge of individuals was limited spatially. People were interested in happenings in their surroundings. Actually, they had almost no means of acquiring information from further distances, e.g. other countries, not speaking of continents or space. However, with the spread of media, information has become an available commodity. Thus, the globe has contracted and people have access to information from all over the world in an instant.

Regarding communication, or mass communication, Fairclough stresses two disjunctions – temporal and spatial. “The time and place of production of a mass communication text is different from the time and place of consumption” [1995: 36]. For that reason, producers, i.e. senders, of the text must take into consideration audience, receivers, of the information. They create the text which is addressed to a certain group of people in a certain environment in a certain period of time. “Producers postulate and construct ideal audiences partly on the basis of guesses about audience response drawn from experience and various types of indirect evidence (such as programme ratings or market research)” [Ibid.: 40].

Viewers or readers watch or read the text after some time which is necessary for its creation and transport. They usually consume the text in a place which is not identical to the one where the text is created. Nowadays, due to the globalization, a mass communication text can be consumed anywhere in the world. Therefore, cultural disjunction occurs. People are exposed to foreign productions which eventually generate feelings of familiarity with the foreign country’s culture.

Fairclough states Thompson’s term “mediated quasi-interaction” [Ibid.]. It warns against understanding communication in general terms. There is actually no direct communication because audiences cannot reply to what they watch or read at that very moment.

Media audiences and their reception of mass communication texts are researched by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Stuart Hall deals with the topic in his paper *Encoding and Decoding the TV Message* (1973). He claims that “texts are polysemic, being open to more than one reading, and that there is no necessary correspondence between the message encoded by the film or programme maker and that decoded by audiences” [Eldridge et al. 1997: 130]. His approach highlights the role of text receivers. Receiver is a person with pre-existing identity which encompasses ideas, views, attitudes, beliefs, experiences, etc. Therefore, the reception of the text may differ. It is highly influenced by the social context of the viewer. The meaning, which is crucial for every communication, is thus interpreted in various ways and we can speak about the interiorisation of the text.

Hall states three hypothetical positions from which the viewer constructs decodings of the text – the dominant, the negotiated, and the oppositional. The viewer in the dominant position decodes the meaning according to the code in which the

producers decoded the text. The negotiated position is characterised by the viewer's application of the message to local conditions. The viewer accepts the message in the universal abstract conditions, but negotiates the application in their local conditions. The oppositional position reflects the viewer's opposition to the message transmitted in the text. [Ibid.]

Viewers should deliberately choose from the available broadcasting and develop their media literacy. "Media literacy can be seen as a part of a wider definition of 'literacy' in the 21st Century. It does not simply refer to technical skills, but rather has to do with understanding, critical reading, the ability to analyse and reason and social participation" [http://www.unesco.org.uk/media_literacy].

According to Meyrowitz, there are three metaphors of media which imply three important types of media literacy. The first metaphor i.e. media are conduits that carry messages explains that each medium has content which can be analysed and decoded. Moreover, the audiences should understand what forces participate in passing or omitting the messages and should be aware of the possibility of multiple decodings. [Meyrowitz 1998: 97]

The second metaphor presents media as distinct languages with grammars which are specific for each medium. These grammars include unique production variables. The key competence here is to recognize how the variables (e.g. camera movement) are applied in order to express the message in a particular way. "The more effective media content elements are, the more that the audiences are likely to be aware of, and think about, the content. The more effective the media grammar elements are, the less the average audience member will even notice them." [Ibid.: 102]

The third metaphor depicts media as environments. Each medium, i.e. each environment has specific nature and thus its effect varies. It operates on two levels – microlevel and macrolevel. "Microlevel medium literacy could entail understanding why a particular type of interaction might work differently in one form of communication than another" (Ibid., p. 104). It means that the form of communication or communication channel influences the message which is desired to be transmitted. The same message transmitted through telephone and letter may eventually differ. "On the macrolevel, medium literacy entails understanding how the widespread use of a new medium may lead to broad social changes" [Ibid.: 105].

McLuhan's "the medium is the message" explains that by coming to existence every medium alters the conditions in the world. For instance the invention of electricity has changed the daily routines of people and gave impetus to other inventions, for example to radio and television. The medium is the message because it is the "medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action" [McLuhan 1994: 9]. Therefore, the medium itself in its characteristics carries a meaning which should be studied. In McLuhan's view, the content is not even as important as the medium itself.

These concepts inform us about the power and influence of media. Media differ in the way they transmit information to us. The same message can be interpreted in various ways. Media affect and define ideology, politics, society and social change. Media shape our perception of reality and it depends on us and our media literacy to what extent we allow them to do so.

Literature

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Summary

The paper presents the topic of mass communication and audience reception. The world has contracted due to the effect of mass media and texts which they spread can be received all over the world. It is clarified that the audiences overcome various disjunctions in order to decode the text. It is highlighted that the degree of decoding may differ and depends on the level of media literacy.

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ФОНЕТИКО-ГРАФІЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПЕРЕДАЧІ АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ ЗАДНЬОЯЗИКОВИХ ФОНЕМ В УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ МОВІ

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Питання передачі іншомовних слів графічними засобами мови-реципієнта – одне з найбільш дискусійних та актуальних у сучасній лінгвістичній науці. Слова англійського походження, які потрапляють у нове мовне середовище, неодмінно змінюються, оскільки на них починає впливати фонетична система мови-реципієнта (у даному випадку йдеться про українську мову).

Передача англійських фонем, які є у складі англійських прототипів відповідних запозичених слів, не може бути абсолютно фонетичною. Основною причиною цього є те, українська мова не має у своєму розпорядженні досить значної кількості фонем, які відповідали б фонемам англійської мови. Крім того,