Медийна комуникация
Media Communication

Media Communication:
Positive and Negative Manifestations

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Abstract: The article aims to present some features of communication in the media and in particular in social media. An overview of previous research on the subject has been made, and the aim is not to achieve completeness. The critical reading aims to present positive and negative manifestations of media communication, as well as its relations with politics, election campaigns and influence in society. The assumption is that the media change their functions in the modern media ecosystem, convergent media environment, striving to meet many requirements, including professional, ethical, technological, digital, creative, business among others. Attention is paid to the verbal, visual and non-verbal means used in media communication and to the requirements for them posed by the users, creators, senders and disseminators of the information.

Keywords: media communication, social media, trust, manipulation, demagogy, fake news, disinformation.

Introduction

Communication permeates life in all segments, changing it daily, as the only way to establish and maintain all relationships - from interpersonal to mass, from informal to institutionalised. The article is an attempt to establish the features of verbal and nonverbal communication in media and public appearances based on a review of previous studies.

Terms and notions

Lalka Borissova evaluates communication and she presents it as a process: „Communication is a complex socio-psychological process in which contact persons exchange information.“ [1] We agree with her position but we would like to add that communication has more manifestations in online media, on the Internet and in particular online media and social networks. Communication is a process but it is complicated. Digitalisation, virtual space, virtual reality, mixed reality, augmented reality, etc. establish new opportunities for participants in different

communicative situations as well as there are more demands to senders of messages online.

Traditionally, communication requires the existence of at least two participants in the communicative act. One of them sends the message and the other one receives the message. Generally, every sender of a message tries to reach an understanding and eventually persuades a member of the audience. It is important to note that the communication consists of more elements. For example, online communication takes place in different conditions and in fact sometimes there are two participants, in many cases this is not the case, as it has the peculiarity of sending messages from many to many. This does not change the requirement to avoid communication barriers, on the contrary, the speed of spread and the dynamics of online communication implies that clear messages should be decoded quickly by the recipient. It is important to clarify that online communication is not only verbal, it contains many visual elements, as well as multimodality, hashtags, software applications or appses. This requires synchronization between the elements, on the one hand.

On the other hand, communication seems chaotic, but it is also navigated through digital tools. It is also important for the sender of messages in online communication to realize the need for high quality information at a visual level, as the recipient has ever higher criteria for visual messages, whether they are photos, infographics, videos and more.

This raises the question of whether the sender prepares the visual and multimodal images himself or uses teams. Both options are possible. In the first case, the sender of the messages must have not only communication skills but also digital literacy in order to prepare the messages and publish them online in the appropriate format, site, post, genre, etc. In the second option, it is possible to have a team to prepare the visual elements or components and to send the final version online. There is a third option, which requires the already published message to be edited and to have a second or subsequent online version. Edits, additions and improvements are made to meet the requirements of the virtual audience for higher quality.

The transmission of information is successful when the sent message effectively exchanges thoughts, ideas and non-verbal signals and unsuccessful, when the process is disrupted and obstacles are created that stand in the way of the set goals. The purpose of communication is to get the message to others clearly and unambiguously.

The requirements for the observance of the ethical principles in communication remain basic, they are also valid for online communication. Successful

communication is based primarily on honesty and trust between interlocutors and there is no doubt that only honest dialogue leads to this success. However, when it comes to communication in virtual forums, chat rooms or online on social networks, these principles are not always followed. This is especially true when it comes to online communication during election campaigns, protests, situations of social discontent or events of civic activities offline.

The position of the elements of the complex linguistic system of symbols is especially important for communication and for the transfer of information. For some research areas it is very important whether it is about: direct or indirect communication, while for others it is essential whether the communication process is intrapersonal or interpersonal.

Media communication: new manifestations and features

The media are in a process of constant transformation and the factors are different: changes in the media market, digitalization, legislative decisions, new phenomena in the media themselves at the levels of government, genres, formats, funding and others. Interesting aspects between the media and the public agenda are explored by Iliya Valkov looking for and analysing the factors, phenomena and trends. [2]

Iliya Valkov analyses the civil movements, the agenda of the society; he pays attention to modern public communication tools from a scientific point of view topics in his monograph. It analyses factors, phenomena, processes, namely: social networks as a platform for collective topics; studies communication and change, media addiction policies, studies the public agenda, the role of activists and various movements and reaches a study of social networks and not only the Internet in general in the context of civil society and finds fresh ground with regard to the communication environment. [3]

Dobrinka Peycheva also makes an in-depth analysis of the influence of the media. She presents the hypothesis in a monograph, namely that the media influence is also a matter of concern for media companies and tycoons, as the financial interest is dominant, as is the issue of profit. They also present the results of a study of the role of the media and how they affect society, what attitudes they form in individual groups. [4]

This topic continues to be relevant, especially when there are changes in the functioning of the media.

Ivan Valchanov takes a comprehensive look at the changes in journalism, reaching conclusions in the professional transformation in the digital media envi-

ronment and even talking about digital journalism. [5]

The relationship between the media and public relations is also being studied by a specialist. One of them is Alexander Hristov, who based on analyses reaches the following conclusion „…both journalism and PR activities can contribute to the creation of media content. Of course, at some point they compete with each other to achieve this goal, but good media content is achieved not only as a result of this competition, but also from the interaction between them." [6]

It is clear that the research is presented not only in individual scientific articles, but also in monographs, which shows an increased interest in the topic.

Stella Angova traditionally studies the media, including manifestations, genres and transformations and presents the peculiarities of the podcast in professional journalism. One of the conclusions she reached was "the entry of the podcast into professional journalism and its establishment as a media practice. The review and analysis of the scientific literature allows specifying the main trends in the study and definition of the podcast. Good media practices and specific podcasts are marked, which enriches the media landscape with innovative and quality audio content. Stella Angova concludes that podcasts have opened up radio practices to journalists with other media specializations and to non-professionals tempted by technology and the ability to create content. [7]

Media communication: fake news, demagogy and protests

In recent years, Bulgarian scientists have focused on the study of fake news, others are looking for intersections with the post-truth. Among them is Maya Vasileva, who focuses on the analysis of the manifestations of fake news in the media; it studies the factors that give rise to them, including digitalisation, changes on the Internet and presents negative phenomena. She summarises that there is even a business model of fake news, and there are grounds to talk about false reality and the realm of misinformation [8] We provide a supplement to these conclusions with interpretations that the increase in the number of fake news is the result of many factors, it has been established that they are deliberately generated not only by political parties, national organizations and institutions, but also by business. In addition, neutralizing fake news is a difficult process and it requires a lot of resources, time, trained media professionals to call effective software.

We agree with the conclusion presented by Maya Vassileva who analyses fake news and their manifestations not only in media but in virtual environment: "Nor fake news, nor disinformation affects digital media environment harmfully, but as a consequent result- the growing disconnect between sections and reconciled authorities of society. Consciously, sowing seeds of doubt has happened ba-

sically between those who benefit from a globalized, technologized, fast-moving and constantly changing world and those who struggle to hold on." [9]

Desislava Antova conducts research in this area, analysing the Internet. She reaches the following conclusions: „Media convergence on the Internet has helped to spread fake news rapidly. The distribution of fake news on the Internet relies heavily on existing psychological mechanisms related to our perception of information. Journalism sometimes turns out to be neglected in the face of artisanal counterfeits. Media literacy should include not only knowledge and skills to require factual verification, but also knowledge and skills to discern opinions and facts. Rhetoric as a theoretical heritage and practical methods provides knowledge which are useful to improve those knowledge and skills and to be an essential part of media literacy." [10] This is an interesting approach to the topics, researchers are looking for intersections between several sciences in order to detect and neutralize fake news. Knowledge of the media, rhetorical heritage is combined with digital tools, and this requires teamwork to prevent negative phenomena in the media, as well as to present reliable information of high quality that meets professional standards in modern journalism.

Manipulation, misinformation and demagoguery are studied by scientists, they analyse the role of media communication in the broadest sense of the word and what role it plays in achieving goals related to these phenomena in society.

Tolya Stoitsova presents the results of a study from an interesting point of view of demagoguery and political life, we point out the conclusions she made regarding demagoguery: „The other social and psychological aspect concerns the relation between the explicit demagogy and stereotypes in political speeches. The essence in the content describes the usage of words in verbal channels as indicators of politicians' images. The main construction of these images uses general terms; words, connected to politicians and to other people; and development of negative attitudes to the political class. A conclusion is made that the only way to cope with political demagogy is by developing an intolerant social opinion against it." [11] We agree with the positions and in terms of how to overcome them, especially those related to political language, speech, public attitudes and ways of overcoming negative consequences.

Other authors study the manipulation of other processes and events in different countries, again focusing on modern media and ways of disseminating information and the use of the Internet and social networks by citizens. The experience of citizens in situations of social dissatisfaction and their skills to use modern media to present their ideas and proposals for changing the agenda of society or for active digital and real civic participation are analysed. Iglika Kassabova

analyses protests and she concludes that "The use of language and images as a symbolic means of inducing persuasion among the society is analysed by both informative and emotional aspects of the messages, as the second more inflammatory kind of messages are preferred by citizens and e-citizens passionately supporting causes." [12]

In this context of analysing the role of the media in society, scientists come to interesting conclusions. For example, Stella Angova studies the Internet and social technologies and she believes that they do not open new perspectives for media companies. She concludes that the media are becoming convergent and this allows journalists to integrate familiar media formats into the new environment. Angova concludes that the key characteristics of convergent media become hypertextuality, interactivity and multimedia. At the same time, the author accepts that the fundamental principles of journalism are not subject to change. [13]

These are conclusions that we accept and add that the profession of journalists requires responsibility to society, it remains basic, regardless of changes in technology, as well as the use of the Internet, social networks and software applications.

Media communication and tools

Oral communication, rhetoric, and public speaking are some of the most developed practices of transmitting messages. There are the most significant achievement of the development process and the initiator of all changes and further development. The advantages of verbal/ direct and oral communication are speed and feedback. Face-to-face communication is still the most reliable way to convey information to citizens and get feedback. Public communication is based on: the meaning of words and sentences, the intelligibility of speech, the clarity of the logical flow of thought, the intensity of the voice and the processing of information. Speech and thought are the greatest treasure, proof and condition for development.

According to the above-mentioned we will include another type of communication - non-verbal.

Non-verbal communication consists of body movements, intonation and accentuation of individual words, facial expression and physical distance between the sender and the recipient of the message. Through non-verbal communication, we can express our mental states. Messages conveyed by body language are: how much the receiver of the information likes someone and how much he or she is interested in his / her ideas and attitudes and what is the relationship between the sender and the recipient.

Researchers from different scientific fields analyse tools and elements of media and public communication.

Tolya Stoitsova, who is an established expert in the field of non-verbal communication, draws attention to the voice as a non-linguistic means of giving speeches and broadcasting them in the media. She not only identifies the peculiarities of the media, but also expands the analysis and establishes the importance of correct articulation in the presentation of speeches, especially when broadcast in the media. The author reaches the academic and public appearances of university professors that "Otherwise, the speech is pronounced as a learned poem, sometimes imposed on the public speaker. It is not uncommon for one to "recite badly" or simply "sing a lesson learned." The same, by the way, happens in lectures. As teachers, we still speak in public, and students are our audience. [14]

Ivanka Mavrodieva writes about diction and voice in giving speeches, she makes a comparative rhetorical analysis of the speeches of Queen Elizabeth II (4 April 2020) and King George VI (3 September 1939) [15] It is clear from the analysis that non-linguistic means, and in particular those of the voice, remain valid in direct speech, in radio speeches, in television broadcasts, and in virtual royal rhetoric.

Non-verbal tools are studied by Iglika Kasabova who analyses speeches from the so-called royal rhetoric. Based on the analysis of two speeches by Queen Elizabeth from 1997 and from 2020 which mark significant and difficult moments in the history of Great Britain, the author reaches the following conclusion about non-linguistic tools: „As an experienced speaker, Elizabeth II uses limited gestures as a technique that enhances the importance of the situation and emphasises the influence of her words. She handles her facial expressions skilfully, accentuating a higher tone of important elements of speech, constantly trying to control her emotions." [16]

Specialists in stage speech study voice and diction, they put the focus in another area. Experts present recommendations on how to prepare speakers in the media. They are entering the field of digital reality, virtual communication, webinars and video conferencing. Among these researchers and lecturers is Valeria Kardashevska, who presents the results of a review and methodological advice on the voice in rhetoric and its manifestations in the new digital reality. [17]

Petra Aczé expands rhetorical research and explores challenges of rhetoric in the era of "bytes and likes". She draws attention to the fact that the voice, diction, intonation, speech in the media and the Internet are increasingly being studied. [18]

From a brief review of research on media communication and rhetoric, it is clear that non-linguistic elements, including the peculiarities of the voice, are being studied. Good practices and positive phenomena in the media sphere and in public speaking are presented, the examples are mainly from the political rhetoric.

Conclusion

The assumption made in the introduction confirmed that media change their functions in the modern media ecosystem, striving to meet many requirements, including professional, ethical, technological, digital, creative, business and others. Another assumption was also confirmed to a great extent after a critical reading of research in the field of media communication and rhetoric. It was found that despite the changes in the media market and the convergent media environment, the media continue to play their role in society. Research shows the need for continuous development of media, digital, communicative and rhetorical literacy.

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