

# SOUND AND IMAGE-COMMUNICATION BY TEXT IN AUDIO-VISUAL MASS-MEDIA OF ROMANIA

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the language of communication, first, presenting some introductory notions, then, discussing the changes occurring in the domain of communication, the consequences determined by the structure of society, the stages in the communication research from "the society of information to the culture of information".

**Keywords:** text communication, audio visual mass-media, image -word, communicator, receptor

*It is impossible not to communicate.*

(Buda Bela)

*Communication implies transmission of information, ideas, feelings by means of symbols (words, images, graphics etc.).*

(Berelson-Steiner)

As each language has several variants and is in a continuous process of change, I should like to compare the correct and incorrect text, which is used mainly on radio and television, by presenting authentic texts from mass media in Romania. Once television came into being, the question was whether this would not "put the radio into shade". In time, it was proved that both media sources are needed. They function not in parallel, they complete each other, but each of them has its own well established role in the audio-visual mass-media. Nevertheless, it is also true that radio journalists should revise their journalistic genre - right under the influence of television. It has been necessary for them to renew their radio phonic text.

Television can transmit information without a text, only by means of the *language of images*. While on the radio, the *audio effect* creates satisfaction. The nuance, the power, intonation, articulation and sound on the radio are part of the given information, having also a special role in the transmission of information. These have been the reasons for the radio phonic text and

the text of the radio announcer to have developed as a distinct branch of the media science.

Any person in good health can speak, but to be able to communicate in different situations, to express the nuance, rhythm, intonation of a text, you should have a certain training, you should be a specialist. Speaking in public has precise rules: how much of the text should be assimilated by the speaker- which is the best variant, if he assimilates the text in its entirety or if he keeps a distance from it. Can he have control over his emotions or, because of these, he breathes faster and the rhythm of the speech is more rapid; does he raise the pitch of his voice and speaks louder? (e.g. during sports transmissions). What is the role of the logical intonation and of the emotive one? How does the melody of speech influence the intonation of the word, of the sentence, of the text? These and other are the questions I will try to answer. Mass-media has a decisive role in modern society, because people of our days get information about everything going on in the world by means of it. In this way, a person acquires knowledge about the world. It is very important for the language, for the speech, by means of which information is transmitted to the *receptor*, to observe the correct linguistic norms, to be *beautiful*. Speaking is the most complex *activity*, which is not inborn, it is learnt from parents and in school. Speaking is a system of communication by several channels. The general content of words is changing according to intonation, rhythm, volume, articulation etc. In the development of language and speaking, mass-media has a decisive role. On the radio and television, quite often we can hear texts where we can *sense* that the presenter concentrates a lot

on the articulation of consonants and vowels, on the tone of the voice, on intonation and punctuation. We can hear all these but we cannot hear the *idea* in itself. Although, radio cannot *transmit* by images – as it is the case with television- it has also its own informational language: the human voice, the speech of the presenter. By the harmony between the meaning of the text and the phonetic elements, a new quality can be achieved: the auditive influence leads to the visual effect. This “inner visuality” has a special effect. Today, it is evident that television does not “put the radio into the shade”.

The acoustic language (and the read text), especially the spontaneous live one is related to the personality of the speaker, to the situation and the receptor. As a rule it is emphatic, it is a complex communication.

Besides articulation, the live speech contributes to communication by the common and alternative use of phonetic instruments.

The cohesion and the elaboration of the spontaneous text are easier to be done than those of the written communication. That is why the verbal and grammatical elements are not always enough. In addition, there are the phonetic elements which lead to the intonational cohesion.

In principle, communication is a dialogue because it is addressed to partners and, even if it is a monologue, the main idea does not represent communication in itself but understanding oneself.

It can be said that, *in the first place information has a reason and communication an aim*. In the informational relationship the *receptor* is the one who decipher the text, while in the communication he is the *partner*. That is why, the real communication is an interaction in which the *communicator* and the *receptor* can exchange places all the time.

Therefore, the speaker and the listener are on equal terms in communication.

In speaking the main aim is for people to make themselves understood. But, as speaking is a difficult physiological process consisting of many elements, it is not to be neglected, that while speaking, we have to concentrate ourselves, or the correct expression is a reflex act.

In time, radio and television have changed the context of speaking: the place of direct

communication has been taken by indirect communication. Frequently, those targeted are the great audience, which is not homogeneous and they may have an average intellectual level or less than this. But, in the direct communication the structure of the audience can change.

The duration of the communication units (news) on the radio and television generally varies from 30 seconds to 3 minutes and for very important news the time may be up to 10 minutes. This is explained by the fact that in a longer span of time the *receptor* cannot concentrate on a single fact and cannot perceive too much information. It is important to know what is the role of the speaker, communicator and in which situation he is placed, is he a physical or an official person?

In using the language and the style it is important to know if speaking takes place between partners of the same level of culture or not, if the audience is made up of several persons or not, if it is homogeneous or heterogeneous.

The process of communication makes use of communicational verbal and non-verbal elements.

It is also important if in a dialogue the roles of communicator –receptor are changing or not, if both partners are active producers of the text or not.

Reports and programs of the round table type only seem to be total communication. The real receptors are the listeners and TV viewers, not the partners of the dialogue. The reporter asks questions in their name, and the interviewed person speaks to them even if apparently he answers the reporter.

The linguistic result is similar to that obtained in a dialogue. But, on the radio and television, texts are rarely spontaneous, because the majority of reports are transmitted in a “cosmetized” variant: the editor can shorten or “beautify” the text. In this way, the transmitted report is often perfect.

Television, like the film, is characterized by complexity. It includes three important ways of human communication: image, sound and word, which occur simultaneously.

The audio-visual media has texts whose interpretation may be a process as active as reading. Radio and television texts should be decoded in the same way as words and sentences

are, but the process of interpretation requires a different manner of creativity.

At present, audio visual mass-media has a decisive role. The existence, the *turning on* of the radio or TV set implies participation in the events of the world. Everything we hear or see refers to us, because radio and television, in spite of distances, have created a *huge community*. This implies immense possibilities, but it may also hide dangers.

**The most frequent texts on radio and television are:** news, talk-shows, advertisements, sports programs, interactive programs, documentaries etc.

In television, the text and the image are most often perceived at the same time by the viewer.

Nevertheless, the television text has specific characteristics different from those in the written press or on the radio.

In television, messages are transmitted in a continuous flow and what has not been understood from the beginning is lost. Speaking about the association **image-word**, we imply the existence, in a voluntary or non-voluntary way, of three qualities: competition, redundancy, complementarity. Messages transmitted by words and images must coincide.

Once the sound is heard on the radio, the non-verbal elements disappear, which helps the listener to perceive the text. We refer to the mimic, gestures and everything that is *added* by the TV speaker. The speaker's voice and the way the text is written are added to these.

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES IN ELABORATING RADIO AND TELEVISION MATERIALS**

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There are some principles and rules in writing texts. Television requires that audio visual materials should be as accessible as possible, allowing the viewers to understand the message immediately without difficulty.

The radio and television text should be written in a simple way (but not in a simplistic way), it should be clear, concise, straightforward, explicit; it should use every day language, the way one usually speaks, but avoiding familiarity or jargon. An exaggerating, exacting wording, the administrative or official style are to be avoided.

If the information from an official document has to be included in a piece of news or comment, it should be written in Colloquial language. A good method in writing the audio visual text is to utter the sentences aloud and then write them down. The audio quality of a text is checked by reading it aloud. Short clauses and sentences should be used, avoiding complicated, heavy constructions. The information is to be arranged in logical order, to be easily followed; unnecessary details or words should be avoided; there should be harmony between word and image.

The basic condition for the success of communication depends on common knowledge of the system of signs: the common language. Any speech is made according to this fact. But speaking a *single language* does not depend only on the language, but also when presented/read on knowledge and antecedents.

Information, in the broad sense of the word, implies the transmission of knowledge and information. In such a case, there are two manners of writing a text. It may be informative or communicative. In the first case information is the most important, in the second case, the most important is the listener for whom the information has taken shape. It is important that the communicative flow should not be interrupted not even for a second.

**Referring to speaking, to the presentation of the text by voice, we will mention two important aspects:**

- a. How is the text, which should get a sonorous form?
- b. Are there in a given text some components that coordinate in one way or other the correct presentation of the text, how could they be identified?

**The elements of articulation and intonation are to be found in sentences, but their meaning and function get shape in the text, in the communicative field.** Therefore, from the point of view of an adequate presentation, it is not necessary to make only the analysis of the minor elements of the communication. It is necessary to make an analysis of the whole text, its introduction, rhythm and the correlation of the textual elements. Only if we *feel* the connection between content and sound, we can be convinced that what we say is correct.

There are two types of style of speaking in audio visual mass-media: the literary and the informative speaking. In radio and television the latter style is more frequently used, because the majority of transmissions are informative. The relationship between the speaker and the listener is the following:

The SPEAKER – creates for – the LISTENER

The AUTHOR of the TEXT – creates for – the LISTENER

In the case in which the radio or TV presenter reads texts written by other persons and not by himself, he is no longer the “speaker” in the relationship between him and the partner.

This is a frequent situation in the case of the news programs, where there is not only one editor of the whole transmission. There is a special relationship between radio/television and the news. Radio and television provide the ideal elements for communication of news and the news is the most important category in the programs on radio and television. A piece of news is the rapid means of information of the population regarding the most recent events. Today, television can transmit news very quickly, adding images as well.

On the radio and television there are channels which transmit frequently (every other half an hour) news. The shortest transmission of this type should contain 5-6 pieces of news, and their sequence should be logical.

**The source of information consist of the 5 W's**

- Who (with whom did it happen?)
- What (what happened?)
- When (when did it happen?)
- Where (where did it happen?)
- Why (why did it happen?)

Any piece of correct news should answer to all the above questions or at least to four. In time, to the 5 W's, the question How (how did it happen?) was added.

Generally speaking, we can say, that in comparison with the previous years (especially tens of years ago), the language, the communicative quality of the radio and television news has improved. The majority of news is well made

and can be easily followed. But, if we have in view the sonorous aspect of the news, we can see that the situation is not equally good, it is not “live” enough. This may be due to the fact that some obstacles may be hidden (e.g. the complicated grammatical structure), which hinder the perception of the text.

The news reader has the task to decode the written text, transferring it to an acoustic code, he must not simply present it, he should present it in an intelligible way. This is not something easy to achieve, especially in the case in which the author is not the same person as the reader of the text, mainly, because, unfortunately, there occur spelling or composition mistakes in the given text. The newsreader's experience may contribute to solving up this problem.

**Situation, text and intention determine the resonance of the voice.** The phonetic research of the last years has analysed the sonorous aspect of the language (langue) and of the speech (parole). Their articulated “flow” is completed by intonation. But all these do not render the real way of speaking, because, even if sentences sound well and correct, from an acoustic point of view, they do not make up a textual chain. Although the textual cohesion exists, the intonational cohesion is missing. These elements, named the phonetic instruments of the text, are present in sentences, words and components of words, but they acquire meaning only in a context, in the *communication field*.

The question is: how can a radio or television presenter manage to visualize all these elements occurring in the complexity of a text? The problem arises when the speaker/ presenter does not hear his own mistakes, because he has developed an inner hearing by which he perceives his own mistakes as being correct. In this way, after the “diagnosis” has been made, there follows the most difficult part: “therapy”.

It is very important to exist a *minimum of speaking*, without which nobody should be in front of a microphone. This should apply to the interpreters, sometimes to those interviewed because the text reaching the listeners' ears should be correct and perceptible.



## CONCLUSIONS

We can say that the language/speech of a nation is in a continuous change, it develops and transforms permanently and the representatives of mass-media should observe the new norms. As far as the communication is concerned, it involves the communicator, the one who transmits the information, and the receptor, the one who perceives it.

For many years, sociologists, philosophers, aesthetes have analysed the process according to which media systems can influence the human way of thinking. Of a great importance is to observe what is specific to writing, speaking, and visibility.

Concluding, we may say that the **text communicativity** will remain an important aspect in the **Romanian visual mass-media**, which can become a topic of research for those interested in it.

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