

SEMINAR 7 SPORT AND THE MEDIA, NEWSPAPER LANGUAGE

*"The news and truth are not the same thing."
Walter Lippmann, American journalist.*

SPORT AND THE MEDIA

Task 1 Discussion questions

1. How would you define the term mass media?
2. What are your preferred sources of information? Do you trust one source over another? Why?
3. How would you compare and rate different media in this country?
4. How do they compare with foreign media?
5. Do you know who owns or controls the mass media in this country?
6. How serious is the issue of media ownership concentration? What problems could arise?
7. What do you think is the “societal purpose” of the media?



What are the mass media?

They're huge corporations, massive corporations, linked up with even bigger corporations. They sell audiences to other businesses, namely advertisers. So when you turn on the television set, CBS doesn't make any money from you; they make money from the advertisers. You're the product that they're selling, and the same is true of the daily newspapers. They're huge corporations, selling audiences, potential consumers, to other businesses, all linked up closely to the government, especially the big media. What picture of the world do you expect them to present?

– Noam Chomsky, American writer, linguist, and dissident (1928 -), in Sparrow Talks with Noam Chomsky.

From <http://www.newspeakdictionary.com/ot-quotes.html#QMedia>, viewed on April 15, 2003; and <http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com>.

Task 2 Match these words and phrases to their synonyms below:

article circulation editorial issue magazines newsreader
the papers reporter reviewer

critic the dailies journalist leading article monthlies&weeklies
newscaster number number of copies sold report

Task 3 Television News

Is there anything that shouldn't be shown on the TV news? What are the limits? Who sets them?
Look at the two opinions on television news. What is your reaction to their ideas?

1 “The public has a right to know what’s happening. I think they should not cut out anything. People are mature enough to take in the reality of what happens in the world every day.”

2 “TV news sometimes seems more like a show. They want a bigger audience so they show shocking or provocative images. TV news should report the news, not try to shock people.”

1. Can you think of an example of something sensational appearing on the news? How did you feel?
2. How is this type of censorship harmful or beneficial?

Task 4 Discussion questions

1. Is censorship a “necessary evil”?
2. Are there any forms of censorship that most societies consider to be necessary, and even beneficial?
3. What do you know about censorship in your own country?
4. Is systematic under-reporting¹ of news a form of censorship?

NEWSPAPER LANGUAGE – HEADLINE² ENGLISH

Origins. English newspaper writing dates from the 17th century. The first newspapers carried only news, without comments, as commenting was considered to be against the principles of journalism. By the 19th century, newspaper language was recognized as a particular variety of style, characterized by a specific communicative purpose and its own system of language means.

National papers in UK can be characterized as belonging to one of two distinct categories: the quality papers, or broadsheets³ and the popular papers, or tabloids⁴. They use larger headlines and write in a simpler style of English. Broadsheets devote much space to politics and other serious news, the tabloids concentrate on human interest stories, often on sex and scandal. Both types devote equal amounts of attention to sport. The broadsheets are twice as large as the tabloids.

Style. As the reporter is obliged to be brief, he naturally tries to cram⁵ all his facts into the space allotted⁶. This tendency predetermines the composition of brief items and the syntactical structure of the sentences. The size of brief items varies from one sentence to several short paragraphs. And generally, the shorter the news item, the more complex its syntactical structure.

The language of headlines is therefore unusual in a number of ways. The main function of the headline is to inform the reader briefly of what the news that follows is about. Sometimes headlines contain elements of appraisal⁷, i.e., they show the reporter's or the paper's attitude to the facts reported. English headlines are short and catching.

1 Under reporting – nedostatečné informování médiama

2 Headline - titulek

3 Broadsheets - noviny velkého formátu

4 Tabloid - plátek

5 Cram - nacpat

6 Alloted - přidělený

7 Appraisal - posouzení

Grammar words like *articles* or *auxiliary verbs* are often left out /Royal Family quits/
 A *simple* form of a *verb* is used /Queen Opens Hospital Today/
 The *infinitive* is used to express the *future* /President to visit Iran/

Newspaper articles and headlines use a lot of distinctive vocabulary:

NEWSPAPER WORD	MEANING	NEWSPAPER WORD	MEANING
aid	help	key	essential
axe	cut, remove	link	connection
back	support	bar	exclude, forbid
bid	attempt	oust	push out
blast	explosion	blaze	fire
plea	request	boost	encourage
clash	dispute	ploy	clever activity
curb	limit	probe	investigation
drive	campaign, effort	quit	leave, resign
go-ahead	approval	hit	affect badly
riddle	mystery	strife	conflict
threat	danger	vow	promise
wed	marry	gems	jewels

NOTE: Newspaper headlines often use abbreviations, e.g. PM = Prime Minister, MP = Member of Parliament etc.

Task 5 Match the headlines with their topics:

Headlines

1. PM BACKS PEACE PLAN
2. MP SPY DRAMA
3. SPACE PROBE FAILS
4. QUEEN'S GEMS RIDDLE
5. STAR WEDS
6. KEY WITNESS DEATH THREAT

Topics

- a. marriage of famous actress
- b. royal jewels are stolen
- c. person who saw crime in danger
- d. proposal to end war
- e. satellite is not launched
- f. politician sells secrets to enemy

Task 6 Explain the meaning of the following headlines:

- SHOP BLAZE 5 DEAD
- MOVE TO CREATE MORE JOBS
- GO-AHEAD FOR WATER CURBS
- BID TO OUST PM
- PRINCE VOWS TO BACK FAMILY
- NEW TENNIS CLASH
- BOMB BLAST CENTRAL LONDON

Task 7 Grammar – Passive Voice

Journalistic style, shared by both print and broadcast, uses active voice (the verb in the sentence describes some action that the subject is doing) as much as possible; however, passive voice (to be + past participle) is often used as well.

Complete the sentences using the active or passive voice of the suggested verbs.

1. The Guardian _____ all over Britain. (read)
2. When we join the EU, a lot of Czech people _____ in Brussels. (employ)
3. The thief would have continued to steal if he _____. (catch)
4. Fifteen years after kicking a two-packets-a-day habit to improve his presidential hopes, Jacques Chirac _____ a "war on tobacco" yesterday. (launch)
5. The Court of Appeal _____ Giulietta Atkinson, 56, £90,000 for trauma she suffered when her daughter _____ by a car. (award, kill)
6. This newspaper _____ well in major Czech cities. (sell)
7. The incident _____ early in the morning. (happen)

Word bank⁸

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|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. print media | tištěná média |
| 2. mass media | masmédiá |
| 3. electronic media | elektronická média |
| 4. media attention | pozornost médií |
| 5. broadcast on the radio/on TV | vysílat v rádiu/televizi |
| 6. TV channel | televizní stanice |
| 7. radio station | rozhlasová stanice |
| 8. TV programme | televizní pořad |
| 9. distorted news | zkreslené zprávy |
| 10. news bulletin | přehled zpráv |
| 11. the latest news | nejnovější zprávy |
| 12. live broadcast | živé vysílání |
| 13. TV presenter | televizní konferenciér |
| 14. newsreader | televizní hlasatel (ve zprávách) |
| 15. editor-in-chief | šéfredaktor |
| 16. column | sloupek |
| 17. columnist | sloupkař |
| 18. editorial | úvodník |
| 19. tabloid press | bulvární tisk |
| 20. broadsheet/quality paper | seriózní noviny |
| 21. to retouch photographs | retušovat fotografie |
| 22. reliable source of information | spolehlivý zdroj informací |
| 23. TV documentary | dokumentární pořad v televizi |
| 24. ratings figures | sledovanost |
| 25. prime/peak time | hlavní vysílací doba |
| 26. TV viewers | televizní diváci |
| 27. invasion of privacy | vpád do soukromí |
| 28. breach of privacy | narušení soukromí |
| 29. to sue for libel | žalovat pro urážku na cti |
| 30. freedom of the press | svoboda tisku |

⁸ Adapted from course CJVA2B, FSS MUNI