

Chapter 3

Context in International Political Communication: Take on Media and Takeover by Media

ABSTRACT

The third chapter encompasses a wide variety of subjects related to media awareness and audience's conscious and subconscious perception of media. Discussed are the context layers of usually neglected types of media such as advertisement, music videos, and video games and their place in universal codes of media is established through articulated cases and industry status changes with the arrival of world wide web and other globalization tendencies. Additional cases represent importance of such second-tier media in international political communication, serving as a reason to dwell on political context in specialized media in general. The chapter serves as a gateway to all following chapters, crossing over in some of the represented cases and showing the interconnection of different layers in universal codes of media in international political communication.

INTRODUCTION

There is a virtually untranslatable post-Soviet joke regarding DVD:

See it on DVD. Now see it on a vacuum cleaner.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-3808-1.ch003

There is no known way to translate that joke into English without making it looking surreal but joke, eventually, can be explained: in Ukrainian and Russian languages see, look, watch and stare are virtually almost always represented with one word. Such vocabulary problem makes for a funny joke in Russian and Ukrainian which is a spoof of a common tagline for movies on DVD, but loses discernible context as soon as it enters many other languages, including, as we've proven, English.

However whole notion that one might look at something that is not traditionally considered a media outlet and still see one is surprisingly popular in Ukrainian and Russian idioms, with a popular idiom *heard from an every iron*. Translation of that idiom is equally hard as the previous case as even when explained that iron in question is the one for pressing one's clothes, idiom does not make much sense. Meaning behind the idiom is basically that of *overwhelming media presence*, usually used in the context of popular music, however used surprisingly often nowadays for politics and other figures of power, despite their media presence was, until recently, expected to be *in each iron*.

In spite of being invented when media hardly was at the stage of radio, the *iron* idiom works greatly to describe the abundance of media surrounding us every day, twenty-four hours, seven days a week, to a point that many people try to develop media diets.

BACKGROUND

Comedy often provides the sense indirectly, using objects as embodiments of situations, symbols of certain problems. Such types of communication are often called *softened* by specialists in different fields and one of the primary examples is found in a Japanese tradition of ikebana – bouquets of flowers, combined with certain systematical approach, served not only as a decoration, but also as an object of conversation which later moved on, swiftly or slowly, to other topics. Ikebana was crucial because Japanese culture does not tolerate well direct eye contact and so such was moved to a certain object of interest. In our everyday life we use softened communication to form stable social contacts – people tend to show each other objects of shared interest, which strengthens the communication and makes it all the more diverse. Sociologists

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