

INFORMATION HYGIENE ON UKRAINIAN TELEVISION

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The author focuses on the need to conduct daily information hygiene on the air of Ukrainian television. After all, in addition to threats of cosmopolitan blurring of information space, devaluation of the national identity, lack of media literacy in the conditions of massive information traffic, Ukraine and its media are experiencing a major threat, the military aggression of the Russian Federation, the information warfare on part of the occupant, and Russification of Ukrainian television. The present article considers the discussions within editorial staff and media environments regarding preservation of the standards of journalism and information hygiene.

Key words: information space, propaganda, standards of journalism, audience, information, expert, manipulation, information hygiene.

Lack of media filters in the Ukrainian media space at the time of military events in eastern Ukraine becomes more tangible. Numerous sources and different interpretations of the same event or problem in the Internet space, including social networks, lead to polarization of society. Ukrainian television is not an exception. The reason is clear: Russian propaganda is spreading its expansion in information space using various tools of information warfare. These means of influencing the Ukrainian audience become more refined, as the traditional instruments of creating threat and fear do not act the same as during the first months of the Russian aggression. The Ukrainian society, media as a platform for social communication, has learnt to treat the reports of the Russian media from the East (Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic) at least consciously over the past three years of war, and in some cases, such as STB case, the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine and the National Council on Television and Radio have demonstrated ability to respond to manifestations of propaganda. These precautions, however, can not be considered to be qualitative and comprehensive, because as we have noted above, not enough filters to keep the national space from the dominance of threatening of propaganda and to deepen understanding of the national identity and value orientations have been worked out.

Every day the information space is filled with true and false information, responses to the events that took place, reflections of the leaders of opinions, interpretations of concerned parties. And this information noise makes an average viewer tired, the audience becomes unscrupulous and psychologically exhausted. A recipient needs criteria by which he or she could navigate in the essence of a message, select something useful and interesting from the content, and reject what they try to impose upon him or her. These filters are required by not

only viewer, but are looked for by authors of materials and editors of television programs. The most part of what is received by viewer is overloaded by information and emotionally significant markers that are difficult to navigate.

Long before the Ukrainian-Russian war experts who examined the media started talking about information hygiene. “Hygiene (Greek *hygieinos* – something that brings health) is a science that studies the laws of environmental impact on humans and public health in order to justify the hygienic standards, sanitary regulations and measures, the implementation of which provides optimal conditions for life, health promotion and disease prevention” [5, p. 6].

In 1995 scientist Yeriomin O.L. proposed to distinguish a special branch of science, information hygiene, as a system of knowledge that studies the laws of impact of information on the formation, functioning, state of mental, physical and social well-being of a man and society, developing measures to improve the information environment. [4]

As defined by Ukrainian scientist V. Khalamendyk, information hygiene “was meant to help distinguishing between primary and secondary information, vital one and the one we can dispense with. And the main task of such hygiene is the introduction of mechanisms of protection against aggressive media.”

I agree with Georgiy Pocheptsov, a well-known researcher of the theory of information warfare: we live in an era of plural truths [6]. This trend is obviously strengthened by social networks and virtual space. On the one hand, such information overload both in the press and in society indicate the democratic processes and the public’s right to choose, analyze, correlate, understand, and not to have in its disposition the only truth, the truth of power, as it is in totalitarian and authoritarian society. On the other hand, we have a situation where informational chaos, distrust of all sources of information, the priority of news advantageous for the government are provoked, where instead of problems with the reforms, the incredible wealth that can not be explained by Ukrainian politicians in their tax returns, all TV channels of the country are discussing who was the first in the Ukrainian parliament to rush with his fists during the last fight. When the military reality, Russian aggression and propaganda are imposed upon the plurality of truths as a phenomenon of the modern information space of the world, the issue of filters for journalists and the audience becomes extremely important.

“Hybrid war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine leads to a new practice of the standards of journalistic work, because there is a real crisis of words and meanings that describe reality, give it and its elements an adequate description, said Professor Vasyl Lyzanchuk. Ukrainian journalists must be able to predict the prospect of the use of their materials by Russian media, the effects of the perception by the consumer of information product through the prism of the war. After all, the goal of the Russian propagandists-manipulators is to spread misinformation, to lie blatantly (it is known that the bigger is the lie, the more likely they will believe in it), to annoy the citizens of Ukraine by the actions of the military leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, to cause stable distrust and hatred of any current Ukrainian authorities, to cause pacifist sentiments in people during the war” [5].

Obviously, the standards summarized by practicing journalists Igor Kulyas and Oleksandr Makarenko in their paper, and referred to by NGO “Telekrytyka” during their monitoring studies are not enough in their classical sense to fulfill the function of filters at the time of war.

As a reminder, these are six standards: operational efficiency, accuracy, reliability, completeness of information, facts should be separated from the comments, the balance of opinion.

The famous saying of the French philosopher Philippe de Lara “Five minutes for Hitler, and five minutes for Jew” in today’s hybrid war should be understood more deeply, not just as primitive search for a balance of thoughts and ensuring completeness of information. Sophisticated methods of manipulation of the Russian propaganda were meant to encourage editors to analyze, who will be, figuratively speaking, “the tongue of Hitler, in our case Putin, in the Ukrainian-Russian hybrid war, the repeater of his ideas, his spokesman. We have to treat these repeaters especially carefully and meticulously if they appear on air of Ukrainian TV and not in the occupied territories.

Therefore, in addition to principal, basic rules exercised by journalist and production editor while verifying the information from at least three sources, some other protections against manipulations should be used. Several rules should be observed to make information hygiene effective and such that proves impartiality of mass media or negligent attitude of editorial staff to their airs. Firstly, they should thoroughly study former activity of the expert, invited to the studio, secondly, analyze messages and theses, with which the expert invited had already appeared, thirdly, verify the information he or she disseminates, in terms of legitimacy and the prospects for the facts to come true, fourthly, it is necessary to carefully examine the list of persons whom he criticizes or prefers. We believe that in the conditions of military aggression and the active phase of the information warfare, the facts imposed by experts or other sources of information, should be correlated by the Ukrainian journalists with what is written about these facts in foreign media.

It is crucially important to understand, and many scientists agree with it, that in the conditions of war, Ukrainian television often creates platforms to promote theses that contradict the integrity of the state. The fact of inviting experts with such views is considered equivalent to legitimization of his views. And then editor or journalist will not resort to asymmetric responses, as it is advised to apply as a response to the Russian propagandistic materials. After all, in the perception of the audience, expert is an impartial, neutral person, the so-called “arbitrator”, who, comparing different points of view, describing the retrospective of the issue, can direct toward the prospect of its solution or development.

Influence of dependent experts could be reduced if the Ukrainian television analyzed their financial ties, businesses or business groups funding them, and those who could be interested in the messages expressed by this expert.

There are no messages that would enhance value orientation, national identity, statehood position, or these messages are not systemic. In Ukraine and on Ukrainian television in particular there is a problem with clarity and comprehensibility of the messages from authorities, the representatives of authorities of various levels are not always able to explain even their qualitative steps, people are disoriented by various channels of information, so it is very important that the messages from authorities are clear to the public in different regions of Ukraine. The prospect of development of society and quality of life is determinant in this case.

We can not agree with the statement that Ukrainian mass media are not able to interpose Russian propaganda since they do not possess such financial and resource potential. A few

years ago Russian streams of information were under the protection of acting government, and today the information space was meant to be protected with the presence of all necessary institutions. It is time now for thorough and professional conducting of information hygiene and developing the content of Ukrainian television, based on the principles of humanistic values, Ukrainian identity and a Ukrainian-centric paradigm.

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ІНФОРМАЦІЙНА ГІГІЄНА НА УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ ТЕЛЕБАЧЕННІ

Парасковія Дворянин

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Проаналізовано праці, в яких йдеться про інформаційні війни та російську пропаганду, зроблено аналіз інформаційних загроз для інформаційного простору України, вивчено тенденції сучасного українського телебачення. Обґрунтовано, що в умовах космополітичних тенденцій до розмиття національної ідентичності, в час воєнної російської агресії на сьогодні інформаційна гігієна є необхідним запобіжником та важливим інструментом у роботі представників українського телевізійного мовлення. Щодня інформаційний простір наповнюється правдивою і неправдивою інформацією, реакціями на

події, що відбулися, рефлексіями лідерів думок, трактуваннями зацікавлених осіб. Український глядач втомлюється від щоденного інформаційного шуму, що робить аудиторію нерозбірливою, виснажує її психологічно. Реципієнт потребує критеріїв і фільтрів, за якими він міг би орієнтуватися в суті повідомлення, відбирати з контенту корисне та цікаве, а відкидати те, що йому може принести шкоду.

Українське телебачення, окрім визначених новинних стандартів, мало б ґрунтуватися на ціннісних гуманістичних орієнтирах, засадах пропагування національної ідентичності та українськоцентричної парадигми у формуванні телевізійного контенту. Для досягнення цієї мети редакції мали б ретельніше поставитись, зокрема, до відбору експертів, які коментують важливі політичні та економічні події країни. Напрацьовано критерії для відбору таких осіб: прискіпливо вивчати колишню діяльність експерта, проаналізувати повідомлення, з якими він уже виступав, перевіряти інформацію, яку він розповсюджує, осіб, яких він критикує і тих, кому віддає перевагу, аналізувати їхні фінансові зв'язки, які бізнес-структури чи бізнес-групи їх фінансують, і хто б міг бути зацікавлений у цих тезах, які буде виголошувати експерт.

Принципово важливо розуміти: в умовах війни – і з цим погоджується чимало науковців – українське телебачення часто несвідомо створює майданчики для популяризації тез, що суперечать моральним цінностям держави. Протистояти цьому українські медіа можуть, використовуючи усі засоби для інформаційної гігієни.

Ключові слова: інформаційний простір, пропаганда, стандарти журналістики, аудиторія, інформація, експерт, маніпуляція, інформаційна гігієна.