

高等院校新闻传播学专业教学丛书

# 新闻传播专业英语

严怡宁 编著

X<sub>inwen</sub>  
C<sub>huanbo</sub> Z<sub>huanye</sub>  
Y<sub>ingyu</sub>



华中科技大学出版社

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新闻传播媒介是社会的中介,发挥着沟通社会各阶级、阶层、团体、个人的桥梁作用,政党的主张要靠它来宣传,企业的产品要靠它来推广,这种作用随着时间的推移愈发不可替代。新闻传播推动了社会的发展和进步。随着经济全球化与媒介市场竞争的加剧,新闻传播工作和新闻传播教育面临着一系列的挑战和机遇。新闻传播教育工作者和新闻传播工作者只有对此有一个清醒的认识,抓住机遇,主动迎接挑战,才能使新闻传播教育工作和新闻传播工作在继承优秀传统文化的基础上,不断创新,与时俱进。

近几年,我国媒体发展迅速,特别是新媒体发展更快。同时,高校新闻传播教育的规模迅速扩大,新闻学、传播学、广播电视新闻学、广告学、编辑出版学等专业成为文科热门专业。根据教育部新闻学科教学指导委员会掌握的数据,目前国内有 861 所高校开设了新闻学、传播学、广播电视新闻学、广告学、编辑出版学等专业,成立新闻传播院、系的高校有 657 所,每年招收本科生、专科生近 11 万人。由于新闻学、传播学、广播电视新闻学、广告学、编辑出版学等专业发展快,教材更新不快,且好教材不多,因此,亟须与时俱进,为高校新闻传播专业的学生提供符合新媒体时代、贴近新闻传播实际的最新教材。这套教材正是在这样的背景下应运而生的。

这套教材有以下长处和特点:吸收了当前新闻学、传播学的最新研究成果,以新媒体为新闻传播主要平台作为视角,以实务为基点阐述新闻传播的主要理论,采用大量案例聚焦新闻传播的知识要点,注重实际训练以培养学生的基本技能,尽量做到理论通俗易懂但不肤浅,教学案例众多但



有特色,紧扣新传播技术但尊重传统。

编写这套教材时成立了编辑委员会,编辑委员会的成员有教育部新闻学科教学指导委员会委员及各高校新闻传播院、系分管教学的副院长、系主任和中青年骨干教师。为了提高教材质量,还聘请了所在领域的前辈专家审稿。

这套教材适合高校新闻学、传播学、广播电视新闻学、广告学、编辑出版学等专业学生和教师使用,也可供新闻传播工作者、自学考试考生、新闻传播爱好者等参考学习。

丁淦林

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2009年12月6日

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# **Chapter One    Mass Media and Mass Communication**

Mass media and mass communication play a very important role in our life. People have been concerned about mass media's functions and the process of mass communication. More importantly, how mass media affect people has been studied for decades.

## **Section 1    The Role of Media and Mass Communication in an Information Society**

With the development of media technologies and the information society, mass media and mass communication play a more and more important role in our life. People have been trying to study their functions both positive and negative and imagine what a real information society will be like.

### **I . Basic functions of media and mass communication**

You can't imagine what your life would be like without television, newspapers, radios, magazines, movies, books and the Internet. You listen to the radio as an accompaniment for your breakfast, or for latest road information during your car drive to your office; you go online and check e-mail as soon as you sit down with a cup of coffee; you read the evening newspaper on the underground train home; you enjoy the TV soap operas as relaxation after a whole day's toil and moil. Media seem to be part of our life. It is especially so when our society develops on the wheel of information technology, when digitalization puts media into every fabric of our life and the line between different media blurs.

To better understand the role of media and mass communication in today's information society, we have to first know the basic functions of mass communication in human society summarized by theorists<sup>[1]</sup> :

(1) Surveillance, Or we can call it information role of mass media. It always comes first to our mind when we think of various kinds of functions of mass media. The mass media have replaced the lookout in ancient time and there are professionals gathering information for us to be aware of what occurs around us. Some information gives us warnings about the approaching threats as earthquakes, floods, terrorist attack and the financial tsunami. However some information is more instrumental, which is useful in daily life contained in the guides for newly released movies, stock market prices, new IT products, fashion ideas, health advice and so on.

(2) Correlation: The mass media do not only supply facts and data. They can link elements of society together through selecting, interpreting information and commenting on it. The selective publication of certain stories by newspapers draws our attention to certain issues and creates the focus of the whole society. Interpretations and opinions give people a chance to share different perspectives and views on social phenomenon. Why is the world faced with so many bankruptcies nowadays? How should we guarantee our food safety after our milk, meat and eggs have been contaminated? With the persuasion of advertisement, the demand of consumers and supply of manufacturers are linked together. In the aftermath of Wenchuan earthquake, the stories about volunteers and the advocacy of donations in newspapers and on TV mobilized the whole Chinese nation to do something for the people in the disaster-stricken areas.

(3) Transmission of culture: Media and communication bind time across generations by educating people about information, values, and social norms. It is a subtle but very important function of mass communication. It is also a socialization process. We watch, read and listen to the portrayals of our society, share important information with all the other social members, and adopt the behaviors and values of a social group. When we are enjoying the annual TV gala for the Spring Festival, we learn the important meaning of the Spring Festival to the Chinese people and adopt the value about family and reunion conveyed by all the performances at the gala.

(4) Entertainment: It is a very obvious function of mass media. They just amuse us without necessarily offering any other functional values. Even in newspapers, which are mostly devoted to information function, there are still comics, puzzles, games, stories and so on to entertain people, needless to say television, which is primarily devoted to entertainment, with about three quarters of the showing time falling into this category. Some special channels like all-music ones or all-sport ones are totally serving for this purpose. Previously the entertainment function of media was played down in China, but in recent years we have attached greater importance to it and now there is rich entertaining content in China's media.

Wright has outlined the negative effects of the above four functions of mass media. For example, the portrayal of antisocial behaviors can cause delinquency; too much exposure to advertisement may lure people to spend more than necessary; and the omnipresent entertaining diversions can be a distraction from serious business.

Meanwhile, some people consider the four basic functions are far from enough to describe the full range of media functions. For instance, McQuail maintained that media serve audiences in the following ways<sup>[2]</sup>:

(1) Diversion, including escape from constraints of routine by people whose jobs or family circumstances make them feel as though they are in a rut.

(2) Escape from burdens of problems, sought by those who are faced with tensions, pressures and difficulties in their jobs and life.

(3) Emotional release, sought by those who have no normal emotional outlets.

(4) Substitute companionship, sought by people with limited social contacts or lost touch with former friends.

(5) Social utility, for those who use media to “lubricate” social contacts, to aid conversation, or to gain information and opinions in case they find themselves serving as opinion leaders.

## II . Information Society

With media and information technology developing at fast pace, we are now stepping into an information society. An information society is a society in which the creation, distribution, and manipulation of information has become the most significant economic and cultural activity. The information society is seen as the successor to the industrial society. The machine tools of the information society are computers and telecommunications, rather than lathes or ploughs. In an information society, information is as a powerful resource as the manufacturing and agricultural industries were in previous eras.

Our present life is markedly different from the industrial society. Joseph Dionne says, “The industrial revolution changed the way we worked in two centuries. The information revolution has done as much in two decades.”<sup>[3]</sup> Progress in information technologies and communication is changing the way we live; how we work and do business; how we educate our children; how we study, do research, and train ourselves; and how we are entertained. The information society is not only affecting the way people interact with each other, but also requiring the traditional organizational structures to be more flexible, more participatory and more decentralized.<sup>[4]</sup>

Jorge Reina Schement suggests six distinguishing characteristics of an information society<sup>[5]</sup>:

- ① information materialism or information exchanged as an economic commodity;
- ② a large information workforce;
- ③ interconnectedness among individuals and institutions;
- ④ the special status of scientific knowledge;
- ⑤ a social environment with many messages and channels;
- ⑥ and widely diffused information technology.

## Summary

Mass media and mass communication are very important in our life. Mass communication has several basic functions in our society: surveillance, correlation, transmission of culture and entertainment. Of course mass media can also bring some negative effects. Some scholars add some more functions of mass media, including diversion, escaping from real life pressure, emotional release, substitute companionship, and social utility. Now we are entering an information society, in which the creation, distribution, and manipulation of information has become the most significant economic and cultural activity. There are six distinguishing characteristics of an information society.

## Homework

1. Give examples of mass media functions in your life.
2. Has China entered the information society? Has China got the six distinguishing characteristics of an information society?

## Supplementary Reading

### The DNA of Information Bits and Atoms <sup>[6]</sup>

The best way to appreciate the merits and consequences of being digital is to reflect on the difference between bits and atoms. While we are undoubtedly in an information age, most information is delivered to us in the form of atoms: newspapers, magazines, and books (like this one). Our economy may be moving toward an information economy, but we measure trade and we write our balance sheets with atoms in mind. GATT is about atoms.

I recently visited the headquarters of one America's top five integrated circuit manufacturers. I was asked to sign in and, in the process, was asked whether I had a laptop computer with me. Of course I did. The receptionist asked for the model, serial number and its value. "Roughly, between one and two million dollars," I said. "Oh, that cannot be, sir," she replied. "What do you mean? Let me see it." I showed her my old PowerBook and she estimated its value at \$2 000. She wrote down that amount and I was allowed to enter the premises. The point is that while the atoms were not worth that much, the bits were almost priceless.

Not long ago I attended a management retreat for senior executives of PolyGram in Vancouver, British Columbia. The purpose was to enhance communications among senior management and to give everybody an overview of the year to come, including many samples of soon-to-be-released music, movies, games, and rock videos. These samples were to be shipped by FedEx to the meeting in the form of CDs, videocassettes, and CD-ROMs, physical material in real packages that have weight and size. Unfortunately, some of the material was held up in customs. That same day, I had been in my hotel room shipping bits back and forth over the Internet, to and from MIT and elsewhere in the world. My bits, unlike PolyGram's atoms, were not caught in customs.

The information superhighway is about the global movement of weightless bits at the speed of light. As one industry after another looks at itself in the mirror and asks about its future in a digital world, that future is driven almost 100 percent by the ability of that company's product or services to be rendered in digital form. If you make cashmere sweaters or Chinese food, it will be a long time before we can convert them to bits. "Beam me up, Scotty" is a wonderful dream, but not likely to come true for several centuries. Until then you will have to rely on FedEx, bicycles, and sneakers to get your atoms from one place to another. This is not to say that digital technologies will be of no help in

design, manufacturing, marketing, and management of atom-based businesses. I am only saying that the core business won't change and your product won't have bits standing in.

In the information and entertainment industries, bits and atoms often are confused. Is the publisher of a book in the information delivery business (bits) or in the manufacturing business (atoms)? The historical answer is both, but that will change rapidly as information appliances become more ubiquitous and user-friendly. Right now it is hard, but not impossible, to compete with the qualities of a printed book.

A book has a high-contrast display, is lightweight, easy to "thumb" through, and not very expensive. But getting it to you needs shipping and inventory. In the case of textbooks, 45 percent of the cost is inventory, shipping, and returns. Worse, a book can go out of print. Digital books never go out of print. They are always there.

Other media has even more immediate risk and opportunity. The first entertainment atoms to be displaced and become bits will be those of videocassettes in the rental business, where consumers have the added inconvenience of having to return the atoms and being fined if they are forgotten under a couch (\$ 3 billion of the \$ 12 billion U. S. video rental business is said to be late fines). Other media will become digital, driven by the combined forces of convenience, economic imperative, and deregulation. And it will happen fast.

### Word List

1. Bits and Atoms 比特(二进制单位,也是数字信号的最小单位)和原子(物质的最小单位)。文中用比特表示信息化社会的数字化信息,原子表示工业化社会产出的物质产品。
2. reflect on 思考,反省
3. balance sheet 资产负债表
4. GATT; General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 关税和贸易总协定,现在已被世界贸易组织 WTO 取代。
5. integrated circuit 集成电路。电子传媒设备多运用集成电路。
6. PowerBook (苹果公司出产的)强力笔记本电脑
7. management retreat 管理人员培训
8. PolyGram 宝丽金唱片公司,是 1999 年以前世界上最著名、规模最大的唱片公司。1999 年被美国环球唱片收购。
9. ship v. 运送
10. FedEx 联邦快递,是全球知名的快递公司。
11. hold up 阻挡,拦截
12. MIT; Massachusetts Institute of Technology (美国)麻省理工学院
13. information superhighway 信息高速公路,是指从 20 世纪 90 年代开始,由美国率先开始打造的数字信息系统。
14. render v. 呈递
15. "Beam me up, Scotty" "史考提,把我传送上去!"这是美国科幻电影《星舰迷航》里舰长叫工程师送他回飞船的一句台词。文中是指未来把人像数字信息一样传送的情景。

16. sneaker *n.* 运动鞋
17. ubiquitous *adj.* 无处不在的
18. user-friendly *adj.* 用户界面友好的, 用户容易掌握使用的
19. high-contrast display 对比鲜明的显示
20. "thumb" through 用拇指翻过
21. inventory *n.* 存货, 库存量
22. return *n.* 常作 returns, 利润
23. out of print (书等) 绝版, 不再印行
24. rental business 租赁业
25. imperative *n.* 驱使
26. deregulation *n.* 放松管制

### Comprehension Questions

1. What does the writer think is the fundamental difference between being digital and non-digital?
2. What are the advantages of bits?
3. What drives the future of an industry in a digital world?
4. Will atoms be replaced by bits instantly?
5. What business will probably be the first to have bits in stead of atoms?
6. What are the driving forces for the digital change of media?

### Discussion

1. Have you felt in your life the process of atoms turning into bits in the digitalized society? What are the benefits?
2. Are there any disadvantages of a digitalized society?

---

## Notes

[1] Joseph R. Dominick. *The Dynamic of Mass Communication*. McGraw-Hill, 1993:33-47; Jay Black & Jennings Bryant. *Introduction to Media Communication*. Dubuque, IA: WCB Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1995:33.

[2] Jay Black & Frederick C. Whitney. *Introduction to Mass Communication*. Dubuque, IA: WCB Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1988:54-55.

[3] Joseph L. Dionne. *The Information Revolution*. Pamphlet. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1987.

[4] Chair's conclusions from the G-7 Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, February 1995.

[5] Jorge Reina Schement. The origin of the information society in the United States: competing visions. In Jerry L. Salvaggio, Ed. *The Information Society: Economic, Social, and Structural Issues*. Hillsdale, N. J. : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989:30-31.

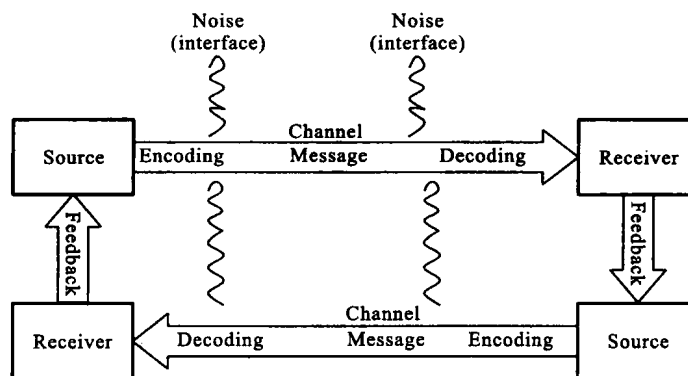
[6] Excerpt from Negroponte, N. *Being Digital*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

## Section 2 Mass Communication Process

Mass communication has always been viewed as a process, which Harold Lasswell described with a framework in 1940s. Lasswell said, in order to understand the complete process, answers must be found for each of the following questions: who, says what, in what channel, to whom, with what effect?

“What”, here refers to the message or information itself. “Who”, is the source of information. “Channels”, are the ways in which the message travels to the receiver. For example, electromagnetic radiation is a common channel that carries radio and TV signals. “Whom” refers to the receiver of the message (audience), and “effect”, means the influence the message exerts on the audience.

Some other researchers add more elements to the process, just as what the following chart shows<sup>[1]</sup>.



Encoding refers to the activities that a source goes through to translate thoughts and ideas into a form that may be perceived by the sense. It can be the writing process of the newspaper, or the shooting and editing process for TV production.

Decoding refers to the opposite of the encoding process. It is the activities to translate or interpret physical messages into a form that has eventual meaning for the audience. It is the process of enjoying the music on radio or being amused by the soap opera on TV.

The communication process is not simply a linear and one-way process. They can be connected by feedback. Feedback refers to the responses of the receiver (audience), who can alter the subsequent message of the sources. In this case communication comes in a reversal way—the audience becomes the source, the original source, the receiver. The source can get the feedback in many ways, letters to the editor, the call-in show for TV or radio, posts of response by netizens, audience surveys, and so on. The source can adjust the message and cater to audience’s needs according to their immediate or delayed feedback.

The last factor involved in the chart is the noise. Noise is defined as anything that

interferes with the delivery of the message. There are three types of noise: semantic noise, which occurs when different people have different understanding for different words and phrases; mechanical noise, which occurs when there is a problem with the machine that assists communication, a broken optic fiber for telecommunication is an example; environmental noise, which is external to the communication process, but interferes with it, for example the noisy crowd on the bus that bothers you a lot when you are watching the mobile TV.

Of course, the description can also fit interpersonal communication. Then what is special about the mass communication during this process? The differences are clearly shown in the following chart<sup>[2]</sup>:

| Element | Setting  |  |  |  |
|---------|----------|--|--|--|
|         |          | Interpersonal  | Machine-assisted interpersonal   | Mass   |
|         | Source   | Single person; has knowledge of receiver   | Single person or group; great deal of knowledge or no knowledge of receiver  | Organizations; little knowledge of receivers                       |
|         | Encoding | Single stage   | Single or multiple stage   | Multiple stages  |
|         | Message  | Private or public; cheap; hard to terminate; altered to fit receiver               | Private or public; low to moderate expense; relatively easy to terminate; can be altered to fit receivers in some situations | Public; expensive; easily terminated; same message to everybody    |
|         | Channel  | Potential for many; no machines interposed   | Restricted to one or two; at least one machine interposed  | Restricted to one or two; usually more than one machine interposed |
|         | Decoding | Single stage   | Single or multiple stage   | Multiple stages  |
|         | Receiver | One or relatively small number; in physical presence of source; selected by source | One person or a small or large group; within or outside of physical presence of source; selected by source or self-defined   | Large numbers; out of physical presence of source; self-selected   |
|         | Feedback | Plentiful; immediate   | Somewhat limited; immediate or delayed   | Highly limited; delayed  |
|         | Noise    | Semantic; environmental  | Semantic; environmental; mechanical  | Semantic; environmental; mechanical                                |



Comparatively speaking, the source in the mass communication process is a group of professional communicators who act with predetermined roles in an organizational setting.

They send messages through mass media, film, print or broadcasting, usually with more than one machine. Take TV broadcasting for an example, there are very complicated devices to complete the transmission of message.

The messages of mass media reach relatively large and diverse audience whom the source has little knowledge of.

The encoding for mass communication is always a multi-stage process. For a newspaper, a story production always goes through the work of a reporter, an editor and a chief editor. The production of the message is much more expensive, even more nowadays. TV production can be a million-dollar business.

The mass media messages themselves are public. Everyone can get access to them easily. They can also choose not to get the message by turning off the radio or turning to other channels.

Mass communication also involves multiple decoding before the message is received. The TV receiver decodes both sight and sound transmission.

The feedback is typically highly limited and delayed, since the communicating organization and masses of audience cannot get in touch with each other so conveniently. It's often much later to get the ratings of TV than it of broadcasting. Of course with the live call-in show and online interaction, the feedback can be given much faster now but it is still much limited.

Finally the noises in mass communication can be semantic, environment or mechanical. There will be compounded mechanical noises as a result of more than one machine involved.

### Summary

Lasswell concluded a linear process of communication with Five Ws which was renovated by other scholars by adding the encoding, decoding, feedback process and noise interference. For mass communication, the process is more complicated compared with interpersonal communication.

### Homework

1. Can you use the communication process theory to describe the differences between the Internet and the traditional media?
2. What do you think is the noise in Internet communication?