

国际新闻专业教材

English

NEWS

Media Studies

# 新闻英语与媒介研究

徐琴媛 张 开 编著

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北京广播学院 出版社

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## 前 言

多年来,人们一直认为读书看报是沟通信息、增长知识、拓展思路的好途径。随着 IT 时代的到来,尤其是中国正式加入 WTO 后,在全球化进程的推动下,世界上多家超级大媒体纷纷瞄上中国这个大市场,同时,中国媒体也跃跃欲试走向国际市场。在这样一个到处都被媒介渗透的大环境下,许多人们所始料不及的问题也应运而生,如媒介与社会、媒介与文化、媒介与政治、媒介与产业、媒介与青少年等等。

为了适应新形势的发展要求,为了探讨教育改革的新思维,我们试图尝试用一种完全不同于传统的报刊阅读(报刊导读)的方式,通过走近媒体、接触媒体、认识媒体,透过新闻报道,来思考、探究被新闻所关注的各种事件和事件背后所反映的社会问题,以及因媒介事业急速发展给人类带来的潜移默化的深远影响和社会变化等等。这是当前比较前卫的、能够激发读者思考能力和判断能力的全新的阅读思路。

这种新思路的阅读方式比起 20 世纪 80 年代兴起的报刊阅读要跃上一个新的层次。本书的重点是“思考”和“研究”。每篇文章后都附有阅读指导计划,通过对一系列问题的引导,读者的思维自然就被锁定在具有一定深度的问题上。从严格意义上来讲,真正达到本书的阅读要求,读者必须拥有跨学科的知识能力,如新闻与

文学、新闻与社会学、新闻与传播学、新闻与艺术学、新闻与语言学等学科的交叉和融合。当然通过对本书的学习,也能帮助读者逐步拥有跨学科的能力。

本书共分以下 6 个章节:

Section One——Media Power

Section Two——Political Issue

Section Three——Science and Health

Section Four——Social Issue

Section Five——Internet Controversies

Section Six——Arts, Sports & Culture

在本书的编写期间我们曾有幸得到孟毓焕和马建丽老师的帮助,谨此致谢。编者深感水平有限,书中缺点和不足在所难免,恳请读者批评指正。

**编 者**

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*Section One*

**Media Power**

## Pro-war Propaganda Machine

### Media Becomes Branch of War Effort

By Anthony Arnove

IN THE former USSR, people knew that the country's state-owned newspaper Pravda would peddle Moscow's line, no matter how outrageous the lies. George W. Bush can't boast that the Republican Party owns the country's newspapers, television stations or radio networks. But he can still count on a press that's nearly as obedient as Pravda.

No matter how many lies George Bush tells about Iraq's "threat" to the U.S., the corporate media won't ask him the hard questions. Bush and his administration know that they can count on the "patriotism" of the press—which will report on the coming war like a local sports reporter rooting for the home team. And Bush—unlike the rulers of the former USSR—won't even have to issue any orders or appoint any news censors. That's because the press in the U.S. censors itself.

In May 2002, CBS news anchor Dan Rather acknowledged,

“What we are talking about here—whether one wants to recognize it or not, or call it by its proper name or not—is a form of self-censorship. It starts with a feeling of patriotism within oneself. It carries through with a certain knowledge that the country as a whole . . . felt and continues to feel this surge of patriotism within themselves. And one finds oneself saying: ‘I know the right question, but you know what? This is not exactly the right time to ask it.’”

Of course, Rather said this to Britain’s BBC—and didn’t have the courage to say it at home, where he had been leading the patriotic charge in the media after the attacks of September 11. Predictably, almost no outlet of the U. S. mainstream media reported on Rather’s comments.

No one in Washington had to tell newspapers to bury them—just like no one had to tell the press to ignore reports, published in Britain’s Observer newspaper, that the Bush administration spied on United Nations (UN) Security Council members during the debate on a new resolution to authorize war on Iraq.

And few media outlets have focused on Newsweek magazine’s revelation that Iraqi Gen. Hussein Kamel, a prominent defector, testified in 1995 that Iraq had already been significantly disarmed. Bush and other administration officials have regularly cited Kamel’s testimony as evidence that Iraq still had weapons of mass destruction.

The fact is that the media will support this war, despite the restrictions that the government will place on their ability to report freely—and despite the administration’s open manipulation of information.

The image presented of the new Gulf War will be totally sani-

tized. During the U. S. bombardment of Afghanistan, Walter Isaacson, the chief executive of CNN, told his staff that it was “perverse to focus too much on the casualties or hardship in Afghanistan.” And during the 1991 Gulf War, the media quickly buried images of the horrific slaughter carried out against retreating soldiers and civilians on the “Highway of Death” at the end of the war.

The media lines up with the government on fundamental matters not because of any conspiracy or backroom deals, but because the media themselves are huge corporations that share the same economic and political interests with the tiny elite that runs the U. S. government. In some cases, they’re the same people.

It’s now common practice for the Big Three networks to put former military officials, politicians and government bureaucrats on the payroll. “The media has simply become a branch of the war effort,” the Palestinian author Edward Said wrote recently. “What has entirely disappeared from television is anything remotely resembling a consistently dissenting voice.” As if to underline the point, in February, the cable news network MSNBC canceled Phil Donahue’s show—and announced that it was hiring Republican hack Dick Arney as a commentator.

Current and former government voices dominate the “debate” in the media about war and other questions of foreign policy. “Unnamed government sources,” press spokespeople, Pentagon officers, White House officials, and ideologues close to the administration make up most of the “experts” and “reliable sources” that we hear from.

The corporations that dominate the media are getting more and more concentrated. Ben Bagdikian, author of *Media Monopoly*, es-

timates that six inter-linked corporations dominate the U. S. media today. NBC is owned by major military contractor General Electric. But even news media that aren't directly tied to the military-industrial complex have a stake in the system.

That's because the media are in the business of making profits from selling advertising. Print, television and radio media all make their money by selling audiences to advertisers—and they know that their bottom line will suffer if they pursue stories that might damage advertisers.

The economics of reporting also shapes the news that we see. For example, rather than spend large sums to send an investigative reporters to uncover human rights abuses against detainees being tortured at Bagram air base in Afghanistan, for next to nothing, the media can cover the latest White House press conference denying the crimes.

That means independent media are a crucial source of information that the mainstream media won't report—or will bury in a sea of pro-war coverage. We need to support independent media efforts where we can and build our own newspapers, like *Socialist Worker*, that will tell the truth about this war. But we also need to directly challenge the corporate media outlets—to force their hand and shame them into covering the stories that we know they would rather not touch.

After months of downplaying the size of demonstrations against the war on Iraq, major newspapers like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* were forced to give front-page coverage to the massive February 15 international demonstrations against the war. The main reason was that the participation of more than 10 million peo-

ple around the world meant the demonstrations were simply too big for editors to bury. But activists also directly targeted National Public Radio, the Times and other elite media—and shamed them into acknowledging that they had ignored the story of earlier protests.

February 15 showed the power of protest to reach millions of people who share our anger about this war—and who will be more likely to join us on the streets at the next demonstration. We can also look to the example of the Vietnam War to see this power. The media backed the brutal war against the people of Vietnam from the moment that U.S. began to send in its “advisers.” But the antiwar movement forced the reality of the war into public consciousness—and pressured the U.S. establishment, including the media, to open up the issue to debate.

Reporters were able to file stories that exposed the brutality of the war and challenged the government’s lies—a process that led millions of people to turn against the Vietnam War, and eventually helped bring it to an end.

## Wag the Media Lapdog

NOTHING EXPOSED the Washington press corps as lapdogs as much as its gutless behavior at George Bush’s White House press conference two weeks ago. Bush got away with mentioning September 11 eight times during the press conference—even though, to date, no one has offered any evidence that there’s any connection between Iraq and the hijackings.

But the media have given Bush a free pass to use September 11

as a pretext for a war against Iraq. "As a *casus* rallying cry, 'Remember 9/11' ranks with 'Remember the Maine' of 1898 for war with Spain or the Gulf of Tonkin resolution of 1964," Nation journalist William Greider recently wrote.

Greider points out that, according to a New York Times/CBS News survey, 42 percent of Americans believe that Saddam Hussein was directly responsible for the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. And 55 percent believe that Saddam directly supports al-Qaeda, according to an ABC News poll.

There's no evidence for either belief. But here's one question that you won't hear the media asking: How have we contributed to spreading these myths, which we then report as evidence of people's support for war?

As veteran journalist Tom Wicker wrote recently, "Bush administration spokesmen have made several cases for waging war against Iraq, and the U.S. press has tended to present all those cases to the public as if they were gospel." We are seeing, Wicker concluded, "an American press that seems sometimes to be playing on the administration team rather than pursuing the necessary search for truth, wherever it may lead."

## "Just Tell me Where I Should Line Up"

DAN RATHER is sometimes pointed out as an example of liberal bias in the media. It's hard to understand why, though, when you look at what Rather has had to say about the "war on terrorism."



“George Bush is the president, he makes the decisions, and, you know, as just one American, he wants me to line up, just tell me where.”

“Whatever arguments one may or may not have had with George Bush the younger before September 11th, he is our commander in chief, he’s the man now. And we need unity, we need steadiness. I’m not preaching about it. We all know this.”

“I would willingly die for my country at a moment’s notice and on the command of my president.”

## The “Liberal Bias” Hoax

OF THE many myths about the U. S. media, the two most common are that we have a “free press” and that we have a “liberal” media. In its ads for the aggressively right-wing Fox News Channel, Roger Ailes, the network’s chairman, sums up these two myths in a single quote: “America guarantees a free press……Freedom relies on a fair press.”

The implication of Ailes’ idiotic statement is that Fox is providing a right-wing balance against the liberal bias of the mainstream press. But is there a liberal bias?

Nation columnist Eric Alterman recently did a study of newspaper articles and found that since 1992, the word “media” appeared close to the phrase “liberal bias” 469 times. The words “media” and “conservative bias” were linked only 17 times. As Alterman notes, “If people are disposed to believe that the media have a liberal bias, it’s because that’s what the media have been telling them all a-