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Mass media Communicative Space: the Theoretical Research Aspect

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Abstract. The article analyses cross-disciplinary approaches in understanding communicative space in general, and mass media one in particular. Attention is focused on the ideas of classical liberal arts and current researches. The attempts to reconsider the past experience on the following subject and to provide a more decisive definition to the studied issue are made.

Keywords: media, mass media, communication, information, communicative space, mass media communicative space, means of mass media communication.

Introduction. The processes of global informatization of the postmodern world, that had started with the beginning of the scientific and technical revolution and still preserve their position in the modern society, touched different spheres of social life. The crucial role in the process of spreading information belongs to the segment of mass media. It is the mass media institution that predetermines the communicative space of the present-day society. Whereas the notion of mass media communication space is a complicated one, regarded to different fields of humanities knowledge, it still demands to be specified, with a consistent understanding of its conceptual core. It determines **the relevance** of the following research.

A brief review of publications on the subject. Different points of view on the notion of "mass media" are represented in culturological studies (Zinovieva [36]; Kastels [13]; Kirilova [15]; Vozchikov [34]; Dulatova [8]; Kryukova [19]; Kulichkina [20]), sociological researches (Lippmann [22]; Lazarsfeld [21]; McLuhan [23]; Naumenko [25]; Fedotova [10]), journalistic studies (Smirnova [31]; Zemlianova [35]; Chornykh [4]; Fomichieva [11]).

Objective. The aim of the following research is to investigate different views on defining the notion of mass media communicative space and its derivatives (information, media, communication) in classical and contemporary scientific fields, and, thus, to clarify it.

Research results. The origin of mass media and mass communication one can find 560 years ago from the beginning of the printing revolution that took place in Europe in the XVth century. As a result of technological changes, mass communication shifted from the mechanical process to the electronic transmission that led to the present-day digital world [5, p. 675]. Whereas interpersonal relationships are accomplished explicitly, interactions with mass media messages are intermediated by "the third side" facilitating communication, as it demands the usage of technological resources. So, mass communication predetermines sending information to a large audience by means of print and electronic media [5, p. 676].

Diverse opinions on the notion "mass media" in terms of its identification with or differentiation from means of mass communication need to be specified and as for the operational definition in this research work the following one was chosen: mass media covers technologies and institutions, by means of which information and other forms of symbolic communication are spread to large, heterogeneous and geographically dissipated audiences [18]. In the encyclopedic resource this notion is synonymic to the means of mass information (then MMI): "…As modern means of mass information one can regard the press (newspapers, magazines, books), cinematograph, radio, television, sound- and videorecording, video- and teletext, advertisement boards, videocenters, combination of television, telephone, computer and other types of contact. All these means are connected by the following qualities: addressing to the mass audience, availability, the corporate character of producing and spreading information. According to this, J. Gerbner denotes MMI as a form of mass interaction by means of information messages." [17].

The difficulty in perceiving the meaning of the discussed notion is influenced by the following term "means of mass communication" (then MMC). Some scientists, who identify MMI and MMC, denote mass communication as a derivative from a homonymous English phrase "mass communication" that can be translated literally as mass interactions intermediated by technical means… Thus, the terms "mass information" and "mass communication" are cognate in meaning as MMI and MMC" [3, c. 6]; "in the present-day understanding MMC, or mass media, is a general denomination of all forms of communication, which are focused on mass audiences. Traditionally it includes cinema, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, popular literature and music, and lately also the Internet." [28, p. 9]

These interpretations of both notions are so vague that they even more intensify their extreme ambiguity. However, we share the ideas, suggested by R. Ankhimova, to analyse the derivative categories underneath such notions as MMI and MMC, specifically "information" and "communication" [2, p. 464-468]. The most applicable definition was given by R. Tammeste: "information is a certain abstract form of the world reflection in thinking that is a category due to its generality and can't be denoted meaningfully" [33, p. 10]. As for the term "communication", it was put into scientific practice in 1909 by Charlse Horton Cooley and was explained as a means of actualization of "the organically whole world of a human being's thought" [6, p. 36].

According to the above-mentioned, we would like to agree to the idea of differentiating MMI (that is a synonym to mass media) and MMC as a part and a whole. These terms should be regarded as the independent categories, for the denotation of MMC is wider than that of MMI [2, p. 464-468]. As communication cannot be accomplished without information, it is reasonable to distinguish MMI as a part of MMC, but not as its identity [16, p. 288-290.].

The leading role of mass media in modifying communicative space is not exaggerated. Visual and oral mass media forms displace the forms of the so-called book culture, with media images and celebrities that substitute the institution of family, school and church and produce new identification models, fashion tastes and behavior manners [14, p. 17].

The phrase "communicative space" itself is an interdisciplinary notion used in different humanities studies, such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, linguoculturology, linguistics, pragmalinguistics, communication studies, sociolinguistics. The differences in defining the notion are predetermined by the way the essence of communicative space as a special environment is revealed and manifested.

In sociology "communicative space" is interpreted according to the researches accomplished by Habermas and Luman as an authentic form of social reality [27], in which communication is essential for social development. In the theory of communicative action J. Habermas contemplates communicatively structured life worlds, and communicative actions themselves are regarded in the form of "the environment that completely reconstructs the whole life world" [12, p. 309]. The life world is viewed from the perspective of three components of utterances: propositional, illocutionary and intentional (culture, society and individuals accordingly). Culture is a repository of knowledge, and due to communicative actions cultural values, social integration and socialization are reproduced [12, p. 353-354]. This approach in interpreting communicative space as a form of social reality implicates its identity with sociocultural space.

The scientist in the field of social communication A. V. Sokolov shares Habermas' views and emphasizes the organic connection between the evolution of social communications and cultural evolution: from oral communication to documentary one, and finally to the electronic communication that correspond to literature, book-learning and multimedia correspondingly [32].

The notion "communicative space" is also in the conceptual construct of such humanities, as communicative linguistics and pragmalinguistics. In the theory of communication it has gained a wider interpretation in terms of the environment, within which interaction takes place [30]. This idea was supported by B. M. Gasparov, V. V. Makarov and H. H. Pochepcov, who conveyed communicative space as a coherent communicative environment [24].

Despite of the diversity of views on the discussed subject, we've tried to formulate our own vision on communicative space in accordance to sociolinguistics comprehension. Communicative space can be regarded as a sociocultural category to denote a cognitive-discursive area, within which one can transact information exchange by means of coding, transmitting and decoding information that predetermines life worlds of communicators and is characterized by considerable mutability in the age of globalization and rapid technological development.

Certainly, the suggested interpretation cannot be regarded as completely explicit, inasmuch communicative space appears in heterogeneous images according to a sphere of human activity. At this rate, in the context of mass media products functioning several approaches to realizing mediaspace are considered:

1) text-centered approach – mediaspace is seen as a combination of all media texts, the so-called "discursive" space;

2) structural approach – mediaspace as an institutional sphere, a social field, a system of mass communication means;

3) territorial approach – mediaspace as a media market or informational space of a region (country, city);

4) technological approach, according to which mediaspace gets a special status of "virtual" reality supported by technological achievements;

5) ecological approach – mediaspace as a global environment of existence that penetrates all spheres of human activity [26, p. 31-41].

The authors of the multi-authored monograph "Mediaspace: Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age" N. Couldry and A. McCarthy emphasize a profound correlation between media and space and underline expediency in analyzing the macrosocial and the microsocial, the global and the local, structures and human emotions in their interrelation, but not in the opposition to each other [7, p. 1-15]. Taking into consideration the cross-disciplinary character of the notion, they suggest 5 directions for evaluating mediaspace:

1) a study of social space media presentations (covers researches of media images in local, national or global spaces – that is the first step in surveying mediaspace, as it is focused mainly on media narratives, but not on a space aspect of media process itself);

2) an analysis of a media role in changing configurations of social space (i.e. linking of one place to the others and, as a result, changing a space order of these places when exposed to media images, media texts, with further breaking of their local culture);

3) a review of specific spaces on either hand of a media process – a space of producing and a space of consuming (considers transcendence from media discourse to the world of media institutions and different organisations, accomplishing a marketing research of audiences);

4) analyzing multilevel effects of media functioning in space (when some places become centers that connect people in global nets, others conduce to their disunity – affected by media configuration of social space tends to be complicated);

5) a study of how multilevel media effects are experienced and perceived in definite places [7, p. 5-8].

J. Falkheimer and A. Jansson suggested to single out geography of media communication as a separate discipline. Their theory includes three categories to depict hyperspace communication in the modern society: mobility, convergence and interactivity. Mobility is seen in two interrelated forms: mobility of people and mobility of technological devices. Everyday life is loaded with media texts, and substantial proportion of it is used not only in a definite context (at home, at work), but on the move. Intercrossing of people and portable media creates a problem in defining a text and a context, which can easily swap over creating new space-communicative relations that have to be investigated. Technological convergence is a combination of diverse formats for presenting information in one device that, in its turn, destroys differences between audiovisual and print media, mass and high culture, information and entertainment. Interactivity of new media provides interaction at a distance [9, p. 9-10].

J. Falkheimer and A. Jansson' views on the geography of communication one can describe in terms of the

following three ideas: firstly, it includes political and ideological dimensions where convergence processes of public and private spheres, the global and the local can be observed; secondly, it's a technological dimension, where media are viewed not as a cultural form or an instrument of political influence, but as technical communication tools for intermediating experience and social interactions; and thirdly, a texture dimension depicts processes of space materialization by means of culture [9].

In the theoretical model created by P. Adams media is comprehended in a wider meaning not only as means of mass communication, but also as users of "new media" (sites, blogs, social nets) and other technical devices of producing, processing, transmitting and percepting information [1].

Conclusion. Summarizing the experience of foreign scientists in analyzing the essence of the notion mediaspace with its complex structure, we can define the boundaries of mass media communicative space. It can be applied to a special reality, a part of social space that is intermediated by media means in the oral or written form, visual, verbal or audio channels, and in the process of reality scanning it provides its audience with media texts and images loaded with certain meanings and senses. Further researches are considered to be maintained in compliance of semiotic and pragmatic analyses of media texts with due consideration of gender distinction between communicators.

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