

The communication environment of the press in the social-educational context: a two-way relationship

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Abstract

This article briefly approaches the multidimensional character of press, and especially of newspapers, as a means of communication used not only for transmission but also for mediation of the events. Press, considered as a cultural product, facilitates both the historical understanding of social relations and the mass' way of thinking. A two-way communicative relationship is gradually being built, which is fed back by the needs of the press. The issues of press are related to society, which interacts in a way with it. In this sense, considering the contribution of the Press can facilitate the terms of understanding the social and educational context. In this way, the testimonies in this context intersect based on the assessment of constant or changing conditions. Methodologically, our effort utilizes theoretical approaches in order to define the function of this means of communication.

Keywords: Press, society, education, interaction.

1. Introduction

The decisive and timeless contribution of print media to the transmission of events or news of the social sphere has been the subject of multiple discussions from time to time. The long period of the newspapers dates back to 1873 in Greece and reaches until 1997, when they are immersed in crisis. This period highlighted the complexity of filtering the information of the public sphere's events. Press may not be successful in telling people what to think but it is surprisingly successful in telling its readers what to think (Cohen, 1963: 13). Although news' objective truth is disputed (Eco, 1992: 34-37), every journalistic record constitutes an effort of depicting reality. In this context, press was characterized as society's mirror, as daily passions' reflection and social structure's image. (Kovacs & Rosenstil, 2004: 52). In other words, press and society, in all their forms, constitute an interconnected and interdependent system with a common purpose of the public interest and the discovery of the truth. «The function of the news is to signal an event, the function of the truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them in relation to each other and to create an image of reality on the basis of which people can act. Only in those places where social conditions take on a recognizable and measurable form do the body of truth and the body of news coincide» (Lippmann, 1922: 159).

The interaction of Press and society is decisive and regulatory of their course. In the beginning of the 20th century as the greek lawyer Πετρακάκος wrote, people participate in governments through press and when the step of the parliament is silenced, there is always the step of the public opinion, which has never met with a break. The warmer the citizen's interest in the states' affairs, the greater the progress of people and their culture (Πετρακάκος, 1920: 181). McLuhan, one of the leading scholars of communication internationally, and one of the leading exponents of the University of Toronto, follows the



same line of thought, pointing out that "the page of every newspaper presents the hidden history of society in action and reaction" (McLuhan, 1964: 168).

In the same context, it has been argued that press functions as a reflection of the feelings and rumors of the time being, which may or may not be true (Martin et al., 2003: 9). In another direction, Skiadas claims that press constitutes the most sensitive instrument in any political change, in a normal or violent change of government, or in any other situation and it reflects the given moment when news is reported, imposed and acted. According to Skiadas, it, also, reflects the state's intentions and aspirations associated with certain situations, conquests or perspectives of the coordinated or uncoordinated struggles of a class, the majority or all of the citizens of the country (Σκιαδάς, 1981: 33). As a pocket of modernity (Μπακουνάκης, 2016: 16), press is the reflection of society's changing character of, as it follows the course of reality in almost all its manifestations and from a different socio-political perspective. It supports but also supports the news which is the blood of the newspaper organization. Therefore, it still constitutes a key forum for the discussion of issues of educational policy and an important source of information for the most complete reconstruction of the educational history of each era. There is, therefore, the need to rely on timeless studies based on a variety of methods and contexts, which follow the trends of the press, its interventions and its research over longer periods through an extensive typology of educational topics.

Based on the above theoretical framework, this study aims to demonstrate the interactive relationship that is developed between press and the social-educational context, from which it is affected, as the connections between them reveal a mutual interdependence. The main problem, however, remains the question of whether or not the "interventionist policy" of press can contribute to the formation of codes, practices and perceptions capable of bringing about radical changes in the status quo.

2. The communicative environment

When we refer to the communicative environment of press, as a framework of information and ideological dialogue, especially in the mainstream definition of newspaper, we mean the coexistence of different types of written speech, such as opinion articles, main articles, interviews, vignettes, leaflets, reports, which function as images and recordings of everyday life. Apart from information, the main goal of all the above is to give voice to the voiceless and invisible aspects of society. In addition to the textual arrangement, the cohesive titles, also, play a key role, which essentially functions as the forefront of the texts they represent. They are characterized as a high degree of allusion, with shortcomings, proverbs, metaphors, slogans, aimed at triggering the reader (Χατζησαββίδης, 2000: 51). In general, in its full mission, press is a field of "intellectual diversity" (Kovacs & Rosenstil, 2001: 238-239). In this field man can discover and at the same time reveal the pace of everyday life of each society in each time period, creating correlations and comparisons with the appearance and evolution of events.

3. Press in the social pace

Press highlights several aspects of society. It claims for the possibility of political and social criticism, while at the same time it conquers its emergence as a "fourth power". Press also spreads knowledge and at the same time it reorganizes the practices and standards associated with it. Not only that, but it, also, shapes and preserves the common memory. Due to this fact,



historical and social research is focused on the study of press history and the analysis of its role and its function.

Its timeless contribution "as the daily spiritual 'bread' of humanity" in the social context, its catalytic role, the necessity of discretion and journalist's honesty, are topics dynamically addressed with a guiding tone in the main article "Journalists and Journalism", signed in 1894 by the columnist Spyridon Paganelis in the Athenian newspaper *Εστία*: "Two forces are able to save any corrupt society, if they did not corrupt. These forces are Justice and Journalism. Both are based on publicity and the power of Truth "[...] Any journalist is the teacher and priest of society".

It is a fact that the press is dynamically present, since it performs specific and necessary functions within the social domain. Its executive role is not limited to conveying news, but also to transmitting ideas, values, perceptions and stereotypes, which the readers will either accept or reject, depending on their ideological orientation. In this context, through the long-term presentation of man-made culture, press seeks to render various variations functioning as a driving social lever but also as a keen observer and as a critic of state's interventions and arbitrariness (Shaker, 2014: 135). These current affairs are sometimes presented with a simple and unbiased commentary of the current reality as a report. Otherwise, they are depicted with an obvious attempt to impress and influence the readers through main articles and headlines, as a violation, deviation or deviation from the norm (Βρύζας, 2015: 97). A two-way communication relationship is gradually built that is fed back by the needs of both press focusing on topical issues and society that affects it (MacQuail, 2000: 31). Thus, through Press, a multifaceted communicative canvas is formed with perceptions, opinions and various issues, which are attributed to and transferred to the social sphere, while their recruitment is done by various social groups (Τριανταφύλλου, 2007: 134). That is why press is recognized as an important institution of political and social life, especially as a "self-appointed" opinion and voice of the "national interest", while it tends to show a very developed sense of social and moral responsibility (in practice essentially compliant), while strengthening the rise of a journalistic profession dedicated to the objective reporting of events (MacQuail, 2010: 32). In the political process the press functions like the blood flowing in the human body, allowing the process we know today to continue, connecting all the scattered pieces, bringing them in contact with each other and providing them with political and spiritual food (Everett, 2005: 138).

In general, press is always specialized in stories of "human interest" (Hughes, 1940) presented and reported in a dramatic and shocking way including crimes, disasters, crises, scandals, wars, etc. Each of the above references is presented through the emotional narration of a specific story, by which the reader is not led to a level of individual or social self-knowledge, but the goal is to interpret by himself the meaning of the confrontation of wider social subgroups and state power.

Generally, the depiction and reflection of social aspects in press, as a refraction of socio-political reality through specific linguistic codes, can provide us with useful information about the ideology, perceptions and beliefs of an era in every domain, including education, which will be analyzed below. Definitely this does not mean that press operates impartially and independently of the social, economic or political "truth regime" and the wishes of this regime, because it has always been a multifaceted interactive space of communication that captured and cultivated controlling, authoritarian trends. It is a status-oriented control of the order of things, through which either negative aspects of the exercise of power are stigmatized



through counterclaims (Τσουκαλάς, 1999: 149) or the current order of things is served (Σμυρναίος, 2020: 137). Undoubtedly, the connection of press with specific political interests, on the one hand, gives it "a purely accountable and propagandistic character". On the other hand, it can be characterized by as an insulting and largely blackmailing means of communication (Τσουκαλάς, 1999: 150).

However, the recording of this social inquiry makes the public opinion a regulatory factor and contributes to the formation of the necessity of the "necessary" presence of Press in the reading public. This reading public also constitutes public opinion, which is impersonal and unbound, but it determines and influences the flow of social inquiry. Therefore, the evolution of society in all its forms, from the noisiest to the most "quiet" issue, gradually takes a printed form, enabling every citizen to participate in socio-political processes (Μπασάντης, 2002: 16). And despite the accusations for impressionable tendencies against the newspapers, at the beginning of the 20th century, press' social responsibility towards their audience was finally recognized (Martin et al., 2003: 134).

In this regard, citizens may benefit from such thorough reports from a variety of journal issues that inform, comment, criticize and challenge the reader to make informed decisions. After all, the journalist's job is to create a portrait of reality for which the citizen can act (Kaplan, 1992: 6). In this portrait there may or may not be events of our own experience. In any case, this will determine the acceptance or rejection of this reality by the citizen. It is important for the press to evoke emotions in the reader, to motivate him to feel a sense of personal identification with the stories he reads. «News that does not offer this opportunity to enter the struggle of the reality they portray. The audience must participate in the news, much as it participates in the drama, by personal identification. It is in a combination of these elements that the power to create opinion resides» (Lippman, 1922: 157-158).

However, considering the complexity of the statics or dynamics of the phenomenon of public opinion as a whole, we should examine it in the light of space and time, as the occurrence of random events - crises, conflicts, natural events - can decisively affect its variability. On the other hand, we should explore stereotypical crises and timeless prejudice of social context, which have been consolidated in the data of the unconscious, distorting reality at the level of the imaginary (Bauer, 1914: 57). Of course, it is doubtful whether the average reader, in the final analysis, is more interested than the author of an article in exploring a different truth that goes beyond the limits of the newspaper he has chosen to read (Λούλος, 2006: 17). In this sense, press holds the mitigating factor of the so-called "social innocence" towards its audience, as its harmless character is interpreted by the fact that it does not exert coercion on anyone, since the reader himself is individually fully aware of the cognitive limits of his own framework for the defense of liberty.

Undoubtedly, the readers become a miniature of current reality, but a reality acquiring indirect participation or experience (Πυργιωτάκης & Παπαδάκης, 2002: 81). And we must not overlook the fact that this reality consists of potentially "new" events, which acquire substance from the feeder that will describe them, reshape them and reproduce them symbolically in images, ideas and speech (Σεραφετινίδου, 2002: 246). It is essentially a reciprocal relationship, as the reader, ultimately attributes to his own interpretation to the narrated event. He will appropriate it, thus erasing the steps of a collective culture through the crystallization of his personal memory.

4. The press in the field of education



Both press and education are two powerful social pillars in the course of history, which consistently play a central role in shaping perceptions, values, ideological positions, and even the actions of citizens. The two-way communication relationship between them does not seem to have occupied the Greek research data in depth yet, in contrast with foreign countries, as will be analyzed below. Kamarianos was oriented in this direction, approaching the symbolic materiality of their relationship, which is analyzed through the relationship of specific organizational structures associated with society and individual action, in the sense of the control of social space and acceptance of the society from which their message derives (Καμαριανός, 2002: 78). The coverage of educational news has recently evolved significantly, occupying a prominent place in the communication context and influencing governance policy, as educational issues constitute an important part of society and, therefore, unfold political manifestations. Important educational issues occasionally feed press and journalistic struggles with educational controversies and saber-rattling were hosted in the pages of newspapers.

A typical example is the disagreement focusing on the approval or not of modern Greek readings of the Greek school that Dimitrios Kaklamanos that had been submitted to the Committee. The history of the journalistic struggle lasted throughout May 1908 and was linked to the language issue. The material for the struggle was given to the Athenian newspaper of Professor G. Mistriotis, who was protesting against their vulgar language and in *‘Εστία’* newspaper in which Kaklamanos was defending his point of view (Τόγιας, 1988: 249). The dimensions taken by the specific journalistic struggle but also the noise caused in the press by the educational sabotage showed the impact and the repercussion of this mediation in the society.

In the same context, at the beginning of the 20th century, we read in *‘Ακρόπολις’* (date 12.2.1902, n. 7169) for "Learned Telegraphers", a special daring of students for the educational data of the time, their recourse to newspapers, journalists, but also politicians, in order to publish their problem in society keeping in mind that a quick and effective solution to the problems they faced at school would be found. It is clear that journalism is not limited to covering current events but also assumes the role of mediator, considering it as its duty between the student and the leadership, either it is the school director, or any minister or government. This is at least the result that derived from the live transmissions of the students' complaints and the request not only for their publication but also for immediate intervention: "Students visited the offices of the newspapers and forwarded their complaints. The committee of these students asked us to report their grievances and to ask the Minister of Education to take pity as many of them are protecting families and those who are rejected are destroyed" (Σκριπ, date 2.7.1906, n. 10218).

In another case, a columnist in a front-page text criticizes the initiative of students of a high school in Karditsa city, in which students decided to protest via a letter of protest in the press against an Athenian publication regarding the misery, as reported by the situation of their school: Student dissertations: "and these students have a high school director and a professor, who we do not believe are ignorant of their slip, since in fact, below the student dissertation, they also tried to persuade the other dissertationist against him. And the conclusion is that the situation of the high school of Karditsa, and only because it feeds students of writers of «Tabukomyrianthus» dissertations, is not enviable" (Εφημερίς, date 27.1.1894, n. 27).



Although several reports on education tend to be ignored as a research topic in media and journalism studies, there is a recent trend towards re-approaching the issue by analyzing new data in this area of communication. However, some studies have reached conclusions about the impact of news coverage on education, but researchers rarely consider how to address concerns about the nature of this coverage (Shine, 2018: 224). In this context, we ask, and from a research point of view, not only whether the press has from time to time or at specific intervals covered journalistic educational issues and issues, but what is their typology, weight and frequency of publication. What images and understandings of education are created by this coverage? What potential impact can the press reports have on educational policy-making? The answers to these questions, of course, need careful research. One realizes that this two-way relationship of press with the educational becoming constitutes a complex communication practice with complex meanings of the mediated events. Once they are the subject of a process, they can be grounded on time and history through the social production and recognition they have undergone (Ψύλλα, 2010: 23). Education policy has always been a field of intense controversy and education, as a social good of the utmost importance, has had a dominant position in the consciousness of the citizens but also a high priority in the political programs of the respective governments. Not all the educational events of a fluid society can, however, fall under the perception and direct supervision of people. Thus, between the two partners, reality and the human being, the press mediates, assuming a catalytic role, that is, to channel the educational reality to the citizen (Καμαριανός, 2003).

In this context, G. Papisotiriou, director of the Cretan school, very aptly writes in his study on primary education: in the columns of "Acropolis", so that society may take knowledge of them "(Παπασωτηρίου, 1907: 52). Over time, press has been an important source of information for the most complete reconstruction of the educational history of each era, but mainly a source of data on the educational discourse that is articulated, but also the pedagogical perceptions that crystallize, and then published and circulated in newspapers and magazines of interest (Καραστεργίου et al., 2005: 401). Press and education can sometimes be allies in the same war over knowledge and information and sometimes vigilant competitors in a mutual struggle over who will have the upper hand in shaping public thought, image and social behavior (Everette, 1993: 12). After all, coverage of educational news can even influence the way public educational institutions or the political leadership think themselves about essential current educational issues and highlight which of them are "urgent" (Moses, 2007: 161). It is common ground that the influence and contribution of press in shaping the "image" of education, teaching staff, students, building infrastructure, teaching methods, educational reforms, the role of the teacher, etc. seems to depend on many factors, mainly political ones, while its study is considered complex from the very beginning. Undoubtedly, press shapes and possibly sometimes distorts the perceptions about education, which is, also, related to the respective style of journalism it serves. After all, newspapers need to "serve" public in order to achieve their viability. The decades-old English journalist L. Heren states that "the public has no obligation to support the newspapers. Publishers are obliged to provide the type of newspaper that the public wants to read" (Heren, 1985: 143-145). In the same direction in the United States of America, according to the philosophy of the "Press effect", they know, understand, believe and face the world of socio-politics as a result of a negotiation between journalists and politicians. News in press is not shaped by a liberal or conservative bias, but mainly by the need to present it dramatically and digestibly, defined and formatted in the context of the "Culture of the Newspaper" (Μπακουνάκης, 2016: 13). Consequently, the facts



that are deemed appropriate - more than any objective idea of the truth - determine what information passes through the news filter (Jamieson et al., 2003: 186). Therefore, the presence of press in political history and not only in that, is often treated through factional or party identities, a fact that does not allow us to bypass its current political orientation even in the field of education (Μπακουνάκης, 2016: 14).

The Journalist Doyle, on the other hand, although placed in a different, more modern time frame, states that two issues tend to dominate the journalistic coverage of education. The first has to do with education in the form of "ceremony" and "honor". These are news articles that allow those who have a good educational performance to be honored and to see their name written in the press. These articles, however, are almost never accompanied by further analysis, but they are a simple description. The second issue is education as "politics and interest", as a process of competition between opponents, in which rhetoric, critical thinking and argumentation are involved (Doyle, 1998: 46). But Adolph Ochs, publisher of the New York Times since 1896, realizing the impact that journalism coverage would have on the world, of course targeting teachers and educators, launched an ad contest with the slogan: "You earn respect if you they see you reading the New York Times" (Μπακουνάκης, 2016: 179). Methodologically tracing the steps and philosophy in the emerging journalistic field of educational journalism, if we claim that this term has existed for a long time and for the Greek data, it seems that its task is not just to capture a sensitive landscape-student, teachers, bills, exams, and the dispersion of educational events, but also the effort to influence in ways that were considered to yield fruitful fruits contributing to the improvement. Therefore, the journalist who seeks to capture as realistically as possible the current issues of education in the reading public, needs to have already understood the strong and sensitive links that connect it with society as a whole (Kaplan, 1992: 11). His priority is to capture as realistically as possible the current issues of education in the reading public, in order to properly serve his duty, to have understood the strong and sensitive links that connect it with society as a whole (Kaplan, 1992: 11). In addition, journalists who specialize in educational news must monitor their coverage in the various media, stay in touch with teachers, principals and other professionals in the educational world, as well as the movements of teaching associations, government representatives and educational authorities. In their mission and work, moreover, Fr. Nietzsche in his first lecture on education, refers specifically to the journalists, who clearly reflect the educational expectations of German education, he said that: adhesive layer that plasters the joints between every social class, in every art, in every science" (Nietzsche, 2006: 55).

The coverage of educational issues in press, also, highlights the typology of events that attract the attention of the press, demonstrating how educational stories are treated differently in terms of their collection, promotion and dissemination to the reading public. Thus, at the same time, ways of commenting not only on the events themselves but also on issues related to the school, such as on broader issues of ethics, discipline and social order, emerge. The responsibility is spread across the spectrum of the press, while the analysis of the news shows how the descriptions compile the facts as important, or even as a general reflection of a social upheaval or even a moral decline (MacMillan, 2002: 28). The multiple unconscious and conscious choices of topics are made in the production of news coverage of what should be included and what should be ignored, shaping the way consumers interpret events. For example, if there is a tendency to portray schools in press in a state of constant failure and crisis. This does not only bring a bleak picture of the future of education, but also



leads most people to start seeing the education system as failing and blaming schools for broader structural and social inequalities. Such reasons shape an approach to educational reform that emphasizes on the selection, privatization, competition, and responsibility of individual teachers rather than systems.

5. Conclusion

In summary, we would say that the contribution of press, as a broad communication environment, to the social-educational context makes it an important tool for the multifaceted interpretation of the past of any society to the extent that one goes beyond its evaluation as just an authentic or objective field of information and use this material in a different way. Face reflections as well as social and educational news coverage can even affect the way readers think. They also form the backbone that supports the press. Through this brief approach it became clear that the interdependence between these functions as a factor of co-formation of their needs, since Press is constantly present in social context and promotes several solutions for issues that may occur.

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