



# **MEDIA LITERACY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL: NECESSITY OR LUXURY?**

**Robert Helán  
Language Centre  
Masaryk University  
Brno, Czech Republic**

# OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Defining Media Literacy
- Types of Media Messages
- Media Literacy and English as a Foreign Language
- Approaches to Analyzing Media Texts
- General ELT: Advertisements
- ESP: Health Fraud
- Conclusion



# LITERACY

- In the past – ability to **read** and **write**
- Today – the **skill** of understanding, interpreting, and critically evaluating texts
- Literacy changes as new **technologies** emerge
- Central problems:
  - **uncritical** acceptance of facts/ideas/opinions
  - interpreting texts as **right** or **wrong** instead of being **open** to interpretation



# MEDIA IN THE ELT

- provide **authentic language** - use of media sources of written, audio, and visual texts
- however, it should also be a **tool** for learning to interpret multiple layers of messages
- **awareness** of mediated images of people, places, things, ideas, values versus reality



# WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

Silverblatt (2008):

1. Promoting **critical** thinking skills
2. Understanding the **process** of mass communication
3. Media impact on the **individual** and **society**
4. **Strategies** for analyzing and discussing media texts
5. Insight into our **culture** and **ourselves**
6. Understanding and enjoyment of media **content**
7. **Producing** effective, responsible media messages



# WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

Quinlisk (2003):

- media messages are **constructed representations** of reality
- individual experiences **filter** media messages
- media messages carry social, political, economic, and aesthetic **power**
- each form of media has its **own** communicative **characteristics**



# WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

Hobbs (2011):

1. Media messages are **constructed**
2. They are produced within economic, social, political, historical, and aesthetic **contexts**
3. Interpretation – an interaction between the **reader**, the **text**, and the **culture**.
4. There are **codes** and **conventions** associated with different genres
5. Media representations **impact** people's understanding of and participation in social reality.
6. Media messages **reflect** and **shape** individual and social behavior, attitudes, and values.



# WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

- reality is mediated via **symbolic representations**
- media messages arise within specific **contexts**
- they provide **insights** into our world
- they are conveyed through **genres**
- they impact on **individual** and **society**.






# TYPES OF MEDIA MESSAGES

1. **manifest messages:** overtly expressed, recognizable by the target audience.
2. **latent messages:** hidden in the media text, being therefore difficult to notice
3. **cumulative messages:** frequently occurring, add new shades of meaning over a certain period of time, reproducing gender, age, race, and cultural stereotypes



# MEDIA LITERACY AND EFL

Bringing specific issues into focus:

- portrayal of people, society, and culture
  - promoting attitudes and values by specific images
  - meaning via technical and symbolic features
  - media influence on opinions of others, world views, social relations, and behaviors
  - meaning is interpreted through different cultural positions
- 

# FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING MEDIA TEXTS

(HOBBS 2011)

## Five Critical Questions

*Core Concepts*

*Critical Questions*

Authors and Audiences

1. Who is the author and what is the purpose?

Messages and Meanings

2. What creative techniques are used to attract and hold attention?

3. How might different people understand this message?

Representation and Reality

4. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented?

5. What is omitted?

# APPROACHES TO MEDIA LITERACY

- PROCESS: the **purposes** of a media text
- FORMULAIC: **structure, characters, and plot**
- HISTORICAL: depiction of **events** in specific genres
- IDEOLOGICAL: reflection of **ideologies** in media
- AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL: individual **perceptions**
- NON-VERBAL: analysis of **gestures, visuals, fonts...**
- OTHER: **mythic** analysis, **industry** perspective, analysis of **production elements, ...**



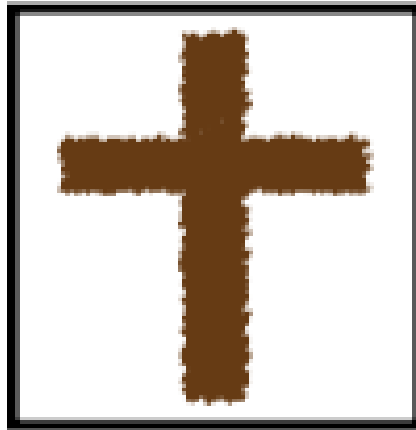
# DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

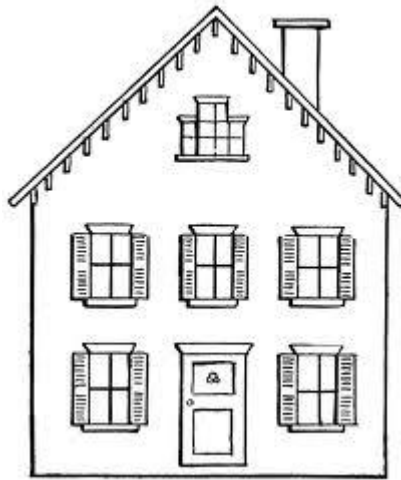
- DENOTATION – refers to the **literal meaning** of a sign. It is the **dictionary definition** of a word – e.g., *snake* – “*any of numerous scaly, legless, sometimes venomous reptiles*”.
- CONNOTATION – refers to the **associations** that are connected to a certain sign such as **emotional suggestions** related to a word. The connotative meanings of a word exist together with the denotative meanings. E.g., the connotations for *snake* might include danger or evil.



DENOTATION: A BROWN CROSS

CONNOTATION: A SYMBOL OF RELIGION, A  
SYMBOL OF CHRISTIANITY





**Denotation:** where a person lives

**Connotation:**

HOME – cozy, loving, comfortable

HOUSE – the actual building or structure

RESIDENCE – large, cold, no feeling





DENOTATION:  
Blonde Hair  
CONNOTES:  
*Ideal Woman,  
Innocence,  
Looks 'gold'*

DENOTATION :  
Jewellery  
CONNOTES :  
*Extravagance,  
Excess, Glamour,  
Decadence*

DENOTATION :  
Font  
CONNOTES :  
*Dior Logo,  
Brand Name,  
Designer*

DENOTATION :  
Perfume Bottle  
CONNOTES :  
*Looks Jewel-like,  
Buried Treasure*

DENOTATION :  
Word 'Love'  
CONNOTES :  
*Passion,  
Excitement,  
Lust*

DENOTATION :  
Colour Gold  
CONNOTES :  
*Luxury, Riches,  
Expense, Success,  
Shimmering*



# **THE RED FLAGS OF HEALTH FRAUD**



# REDUCE

## THROUGH

# LISTENING

by EDWIN L. BARON

## EASY NEW METHOD

HELPS YOU DEVELOP A DISLIKE  
FOR FATTENING FOODS... HELPS  
YOU REDUCE YOUR CALORIC INTAKE  
WITHOUT THE NEED FOR WILL POWER!

**PLAY THIS RECORD DAILY AND  
WATCH YOUR POUNDS MELT AWAY!**

A SELF-IMPROVEMENT SERIES RECORD

©1964 Improvement Services, Inc.



# NEW WEIGHT LOSS SOLUTION



"This miracle pill can  
Burn Fat FAST!"

DR. OZ

[LEARN MORE](#)



# THE RED FLAGS OF HEALTH FRAUD

- **fast results** and no restrictions on diet, exercise, or lifestyle
- **easy fixes** to obesity or impotence
- **promises** to cure untreatable diseases
- expressions connoting **mystery**, such as *hidden ingredients*
- the use of *all natural* therefore *safe*
- **testimonies** from unknown physicians alias actors
- product **endorsement** by sportsmen
- the *before/after comparison* (adjusted with Photoshop)
- sense of **urgency**: *limited availability, act now*
- **no-risk** guarantee with money back



# EVIDENCE-BASED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

**ProCon.org** website: <http://www.procon.org>

- addresses selected controversial topics by listing pro- and con-arguments
- is based on unbiased and objective sources of scientific information
- thus debunks some of the common myths related to the topic







ProCon.org:  
Promoting critical thinking, education, and informed citizenship.

PLAY 1:47 Intro Video

Listen

- Obesity Home
- Featured Resources
  - 1. Did You Know?
  - 2. Pro & Con Arguments
  - 3. Background
  - 4. Video Gallery
- Projects
  - 5. Top Pro & Con Quotes
  - 6. Comments

- 7. US and Global Obesity Levels: The Fat Chart
- 8. Portion Sizes: How Big or Small Should They Be?
- 9. Find Your Body Mass Index (BMI)
- 10. Adult Obesity Rates in the

## Is Obesity a Disease?

Micro Site



The debate over whether or not obesity is a disease grows as obesity rates and the cost of treating obesity-related conditions increase in the United States.

Proponents stress that obesity is a disease because it is caused by genetics, biological factors, or illnesses that cause weight gain, including hypothyroidism, Cushing's syndrome, and polycystic ovary syndrome.

Opponents argue that obesity is not a disease because it results from a person's chosen lifestyle, eating habits, and environment (i.e. residential location, social circle, economic status, etc.). **Read more...**

- Did You Know?
- Pro & Con Arguments
- Top Pro & Con Quotes
- Background
- Video Gallery
- Comments

Obesity ProCon.org is a nonpartisan, nonprofit website that presents facts, studies, and pro and con statements on questions related to whether or not obesity is a disease.

### Did You Know?

1. Between 2005-2006, experts estimated 67% of the adult US population [18] to be either overweight or obese.
2. Mississippi had the nation's highest obesity rate at 34.4%, with Colorado having the lowest at 19.8%, according to a July 2011 report

### Is obesity a disease?

I'm Pro because...

I'm Con because...

# CONCLUSION

Media literacy approach to EFL teaching:

- valuable contribution to classroom practice
- reading, writing, and discussion skills
- successful language learners are media literate
- media representation of people, communities, nations, and races as opposed to reality



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