

THE SURVEY ON NEW PERSPECTIVES IN MEDIA EDUCATION

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Abstract. The aim of this article is redefining the concept of “media”. The many definitions of media generally remain tied to the technical object (television, cinema, photography) and their characteristics: numerous classifications of educational media and/or new » technologies – one of the first was undoubtedly that of Bretz – are still built on this model. Other more sociological classifications have taken as a basis the type of messages likely to be conveyed by the technical devices, by transmission technologies. This trend has often been reinforced by semiologically inspired studies which, by stating the diversity of the codes constituting the messages, has built an analysis system strictly formal to the detriment of the contextual, pragmatic and psychosocial.

Keywords: media, didactics, educational technologies, pedagogical communication.

Introduction. Indeed, traditional media are not immune to development. IT and “all digital”. IT tools change certainly the design, processing and technical operations of production of media such as photography and television: this is the case, for example, of digital shooting and editing. But above all, the development of new » media such as multimedia, the Internet, the Web, realities virtual, etc. transform the role and status of traditional media, forcing both the teacher and the researcher to reconsider the theoretical tools, lastly, analysis methods, usage scenarios and pedagogical practice.

Methods. Geneviève Jacquinot (1995) recently called for the renewal of education for media while indicating the paradoxical nature of his invitation: how the effect of renovating a teaching practice when it is still very unequally shared and developed across countries, regions or even education sectors. She also recalled that the media can be a source and mode of knowledge under certain conditions and, in particular, in a school whose function must be completely redefined. Several reasons make us share this conviction and among them the emergence of the media electronics seems essential to us.

Main part. This questioning obviously concerns the media, but more generally the modes of research, disclosure and appropriation of knowledge, in a word the ways of learning. To remain blind to this evolution would quickly lead to the disappearance of two disciplines essential to teacher training: media education and simultaneously media psychology. At level of the new university education and the LMD system we have included this discipline as a module taught in the 2nd year, offers a teaching “Media and didactics” dealing with themes which, there are few time, were still the subject of separate courses.

The coordination of these two orientations within the same teaching unit show that neither the type of media nor the nature of the technological support cannot constitute a adequate taxonomic criterion, the areas of overlap being numerous. The

sharing would undoubtedly go through the practices and pedagogical scenarios of which each type of media can become the support much more than by the sole criterion technical, even semiological.

It therefore seems necessary to identify the specific characteristics of each of these media – traditional and electronic – while reassessing the cross-cutting issues, those that are perpetuated through this change technical. These include: the methods of presentation and treatment of content through textual, iconic and sound media; the relationship between the text, images and sound; image communication and more particularly the relationship between media and pedagogical communication; finally, education in the language of sounds and images as well as in the forms of scientific representations. It is in this direction that we are currently working, in a unit of educational technologies¹.

Theoretical foundations: Redefining the concept of “media”. The many definitions of media generally remain tied to the technical object (television, cinema, photography) and their characteristics: numerous classifications of educational media and/or new » technologies – one of the first was undoubtedly that of Bretz (1972) – are still built on this model (in particular, Basinac and Wentland, 1994; Saved, 1996). Other more sociological classifications have taken as a basis the type of messages likely to be conveyed by the technical devices, by transmission technologies. This trend has often been reinforced by semiologically inspired studies which, by stating the diversity of the codes constituting the messages, has built an analysis system strictly formal to the detriment of the contextual, pragmatic and psychosocial. Tisseron’s recent book, *Happiness in the Image* shows the limits of any semiological approach that does not take into account the individual relationship to the device of representation and to the material object that is the representation itself: “Thus it is not the distinction between fixed image and animated which founds the opposition between photography and cinema, but the invention of the device of the dark room” (1996:59).

Beyond the limits of each of these approaches, it is above all the relations and the reciprocal determinations between the different aspects which seem to be lacking. We believe, for example, that we must rethink the articulation between the study of material and mental representations; the appearance of new forms of representation is an opportunity for this, as well as openness to cognitive semiotics. The first step will be to find a definition of media that satisfy our theoretical approach. We will retain that of Anderson (1988:11): “A media is a distinct human activity that organizes reality into readable texts for action”. Compared to the classic definitions, this one highlights:

- “human activity”, therefore the primacy of the human over the technical (notion of “human activity”)
- “The activity”, therefore the process and not the product; in other words social activity, governed by statutory positions and particular practices (“social spheres” of production and reception)

¹ Le Boterf, 1994, p.16.

- a philosophy of “action”, therefore the intentionality and finality of media communication;
- “The organization of reality into texts”, therefore the semiotic status of any form of representation;
- “Readability”, therefore the learning of the constituent languages of these representations and literacy.

In this perspective, it seems essential to us to isolate the forms of representation of information and knowledge – in the sense of forms symbolic and semiotic – of all other aspects concerning the media, know the forms of dissemination, presentation and reception of these.

Forms of representation can be defined in usual terms like the various languages we use to communicate our experiences, knowledge or information: the language is spoken be written, graphic languages (diagrams, tables, graphs, etc.), the language image and photography, etc. These are the different forms semiotic, symbolic, available. To illustrate this concept, we can refer to this well-known example given by Glass and Holoak (cited by Denis, 1989): the drawing of a cup can be represented by its verbal definition or by a more or less complex system of equations since the cup can be described by the equation of the elliptical paraboloid and the flat saucer by that of the circle.

For our part, we would gladly add that the design of the cup already constitutes an analogical representation of the object, the cup... Also would we be in the presence of three different representations of the “cup object”: drawing, verbal definition, mathematical formulas.

By diffusion and presentation systems, on the other hand, we define the channel and the material support of restitution, i.e. all the devices physical and technical, which allow the appropriation of the message by its

Discussion. Finally, the context of production and reception of the message must be considered from these different angles: material, physical, organizational, institutional and socio-cultural.

The systems of signs which are the basis of our representations material have a function of expression, of objectification but also of data processing. They help to determine the mode of perception and intellection by which we know objects and are the instrument of mediation and interaction between our universe and ourselves: they allow us to think about the world and our relationship to the world. This design has a long history of which here are some milestones. The works of philosopher E. Cassirer (1972) on the symbolic forms which must be considered as forms of objectification of reality, structuring our knowledge and our actions. The work of anthropologists such as Le roi Gourhan (1964) or Goody (1978) has shown the importance of writing for the development of logical reason. This last author insisted that writing, as visualization of speech, allowed the constitution of tables and lexicons that have refined the terminological rigor, the processes classificatory and logical thinking which, in turn, reinforced thinking logic. In this sense, systems of representations are primarily tools cognitive or even intellectual technologies, which is consistent with the point point of view of Vigotsky for whom cognitive tools are not necessarily

material or technical objects: they can be of a symbolic nature such as the language, the cognitive tool par excellence².

These two concepts – cognitive tools and intellectual technologies – have experienced a major revival of interest under the impetus of cognitivist currents, in the wake of computer science and artificial intelligence and cognition distributed (Leontev, 1981; Levy, 1987, 1990; Resnick et al., 1991; Johnassen, 1992; Pea, 1993). The tool – in the sense of a technical object – is often privileged as Johnassen's definition shows: “Tools are extensions of human beings that partially differentiate humans from lower order species of animals. Other species of animals have discovered tools, but have been unable to conceive needs to construct or incorporate tools in to their culture [...] (learning tools) are different from normal task-specific tools. These are generalizable tools that can facilitate cognitive processing – hence cognitive tools” (quoted by Jerman, 1996, p. 23).

Communication theories still teach us to analyze relationship between representation, technical artefact and social relationship. In other words; communication theories develop and construct their objects on the analysis of the interactions between these three universes: semiotic, social and technological. What would be, for example, the graphic languages, photographic, cinematographic or multimedia without the existence of objects and technical operations that allow them to be produced, transmitted, finally to make them perceptible to the recipients?

But we also know the influence of the technical media device – videoconferencing par exemple – on the conversational and dialogical structure (notably Perin and Gensollen, 1992). One can therefore define a techno-semioprismatic device (Peraya, 1995 and 1996) as the set of interactions between these three universes – technical, relational and semiotic – interactions to which a information technology, a representation system or more generally a media. This undoubtedly off-putting neologism contains in the terms a reminder of each of the three universes and their interactions.

Results. The works carried out for students, it seems difficult to distinguish between manipulative technical skills (how to use tools), scientific concepts relating to technical fields (color theory, notions of optics, etc.) the concepts relating to the technosemiotic device used (for filmic discourse, for example montage, ellipsis, etc.) and finally psychopedagogical concepts. Moreover, it was to be feared that the realization technique does not take precedence over the pedagogical dimension of the use of media since many participants were unfamiliar with the various technological supports offered. In reality, this was rarely the case. We will take a few examples to illustrate this approach. THE first work, of an academic nature, thus the influence of visual variables (color, filtering, clipping, etc.) on the identification and recognition of visual representations. This research attempts to articulate the material representations and underlying mental models. His goal was to measure the impact of context, color and shape on the mechanisms identification. This exploratory study was carried out with students from second year LMD, French Department at El-Hadj

² NdT sur ce point, cf. Hymes, 1972, *Models of interaction of language and social life*, traduit dans *Etudes de Linguistique appliquée*, n° 37, janv—mars 1980 (Didier). Hymes distingue LANGUE et DIALECTE de CODE ou VARIÉTÉ sur la base en particulier d'un critère de —provenance historique qui s'appliquerait aux deux premiers.

University Lakhdar Batna (06 groups, each group composed of 50 students). Several images were presented to them: those of caricatures taken from the article in El Guellil "Slice of Life" in the "Quotidien d'Oran". Each of them has been presented under several different conditions (depending on the title of the articles and subjects treated) carried out. Finally, the students interviewed had to give us their interpretations.

The results show that the interpretations vary according to the level of understanding of the different subjects, and that the image "the caricature" whatever either the degree of representation is and always remains a sure means of attracting their attention. However, this type of image is undoubtedly the most frequent in the literature.

Didactic. It is often the color that appears as the index identification. These few modest conclusions confirm data observed by elsewhere: on the one hand the impact of affective and relational aspects in the constitution of mental images and conceptual categories (Darras, 1996) and on the other hand the insufficiency of the technical parameters of representation for explain the recognition and identification of representations (Denis and de Vega, 1993). They make it possible to formulate a better understanding of the relationships between the type and the referent, key elements in the definition of the visual sign.

Conclusion. While many of the issues familiar to us from research on television will continue to be relevant, new media forms offer challenges in relation to both the objects of study that we select and the research methods we employ. We need to focus on the results of research on children and the media currently available to establish our future priorities. The research challenges faced by Australian researchers, and ABA in particular can conveniently be classified into two categories: content and methodology. The categories classified as content issues refer to themes to which research on children and the media focuses, while methodological issues refer to the methods we adopt and the reasons we have for using them. The research issues that are presented below are not exhaustive, but they do concern the main problems that we will encounter now or that we will meet in the near future.