

## BOOK REVIEW

# *O lado oculto do telejornalismo*

ALFREDO VIZEU

Florianópolis: Calandra, 2005, 200 pgs.

REVIEWED BY **Célia Ladeira Mota**

It is not common for television professionals to follow the research path in order to achieve better reflection regarding their practices. This could be explained by the dynamics peculiar to telejournalism, which implies making fast decisions, editing against the clock and working in groups, in a kind of exhausting activity most of the time. The same thing happens with the teaching of telejournalism in the universities, because it is based on technical rather than theoretical works, on the use of writing and editing manuals. This kind of teaching occurs partly because of the pressure brought by students, who are eager to acquire new skills involving multi-modal texts, in addition to the techniques of ordinary written texts. Therefore, it is very rewarding when a journalist goes further and offers a good theoretical contribution to the comprehension of what is news on TV.

The *Hidden Face of Telejournalism* was originally presented as a doctorate thesis in the Postgraduate Program in Communication at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The book is a more didactic and less academic version. Alfredo Vizeu is an old friend from TV Globo, a respected professional and a Brazilian researcher concerned with providing visibility to telejournalism as a theoretical field. We are in debt to him for all the efforts he made as coordinator of our telejournalism research group in SBPJOR, now consolidated as a consistent group in our annual meetings.

Vizeu breaks with the sociological tradition of American and French news studies, based on productive routines, and adopts the Enunciation Theory to analyze the construction of the news on TV. His work is based on the hypothesis of *presumable audience*. His aim is to identify the textual traces which represent the professional attitude of presuming, constructing and anticipating the audience. According to the *presumable*

*audience* hypothesis, journalists anticipate the audience by means of the professional culture, the work organization, the production process and, last but not least, by means of the language codes.

In the chapter, “The Production of Meaning”, Vizeu shows how the audience is constructed beforehand within the discursive processes. The author focuses on the real substance of language based on the premises of the Enunciation Theory, first proposed by Bakhtin, who drew attention to the monological/dialogical structure of language, followed by Benveniste. Instead of being an abstract system of linguistic forms or even a monological, isolated enunciation, language is marked by the social phenomenon of oral interaction. Therefore, all enunciation has a social nature. The interlocutor is constitutive of the act of language production itself and is co-enunciator of the text, not just a message-decoding person. Accordingly, it is important to analyze a text looking at the other orientation. This other is the presumable audience for the text of news on TV.

In his research, Vizeu gives a full account of how the other is constructed in two newscasts in the State of Espírito Santo, Brazil: the ESTV Second Edition, exhibited by TV Globo, and Tribuna Notícias, exhibited by SBT. Vizeu uses five categories, called operators, which are: up-to-date quality, objectivity, interpellation, reading and didactics. They are textual operators which aim to establish links with the spectator or co-enunciator. The up-to-date quality and objectivity operators are words in the text of the news whose function is to construct the present time as well as the presumption of truth. The interpellation operator attempts to establish a relationship of co-participation. A good example is the use of the pronoun “us”. The results found by Vizeu made it possible to show how both newscasts established reading contracts with the spectator, in different ways.

Obligatory reading for both undergraduate as well as postgraduate students and researchers, the book *The Hidden Face of Telejournalism* has many merits. One of them is providing the reader with an entire chapter on the historical perspective of news theories. Other very important merit is to highlight the status of media texts as a form of social action, within wider social and cultural processes of constructing meaning with regard to the present day.

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