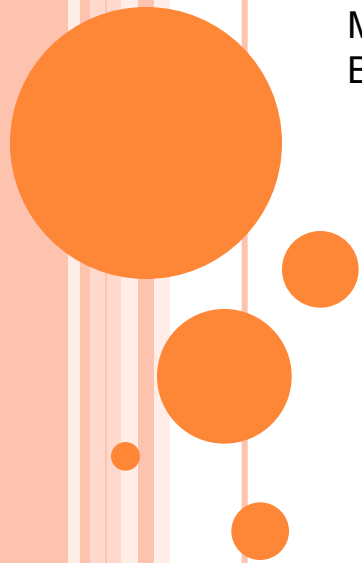# MEDIA LITERACY

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OUTLINE

THEORY:

- Defining Media Literacy
- Types of Media Messages
- Approaches to Analyzing Media Texts

PRACTICE:

- Denotation and connotation
- CLIL: Advertisements

    - advertisement

    - video
- ESP: Health Fraud

MEDIA

- provide **a source of information** - 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

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

WEB 1.0 – "GOING TO A LIBRARY"

- for **passive** reception of information

- majority of users = **consumers** of content

- **limited interaction** between sites and web users (no comments, reviews, etc.)

- read-only, **static** web pages

WEB 2.0 – "TALKING WITH A GROUP OF FRIENDS"

- **active interaction** among users, encouraging participation, collaboration, and information sharing

- characterized by the **creation** and **sharing** of intellectual and social resources by end-users

- the **use** of wikis, blogs, discussion groups, online electronic tools, etc.

WEB 3.0 – "HAVING A PERSONAL ASSISTANT"

- dynamic **applications**, interactive **services**, and machine-to-machine **interaction**

- characterized by its ability to interpret user input and tailor the web surfing experience to make it more **relevant** and **personal** (semantic web)

- e.g. last.fm: a music service providing the users with **personalized recommendations** based on the music they listen to

DEFINING 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

DEFINING MEDIA LITERACY

Quinlisk (2003):

1. media messages are **constructed representations** of reality

2. individual experiences **filter** media messages

3. media messages carry social, political, economic, and aesthetic **power**

4. each form of media has its **own** communicative **characteristics**

DEFINING 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.

SO, 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** differently in different cultures

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

- <u>PROCESS</u>: the **purposes** of a media text

- <u>FORMULAIC</u>: **structure**, **characters**, and **plot**

- <u>HISTORICAL</u>: depiction of **events** in specific genres

- <u>IDEOLOGICAL</u>: reflection of **ideologies** in media

- <u>AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL</u>: individual **perceptions**

- <u>NON-VERBAL</u>: analysis of **gestures**, **visuals**, **fonts**…

SCIENCE. IT'S A GIRL THING!

- European Commission's online **campaign spot**
- discrepancy between the intention and actual potential to change **gender stereotypes**
- connecting women primarily with fashion and make-up
- science = chemistry and physics (social sciences are **excluded**)
- the focus in on **appearance** (looking pretty)
- the result: higher education will make you even sexier

THE RED FLAGS OF HEALTH FRAUD

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- **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

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