

Interactivity as an Integral Professional Competence of a Broadcast Host

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Abstract

Journalism is referred to one of the most dynamic, actively changing, transformable professions that are highly demanded in the modern world. The development of information technologies, the processes of globalization, the situations of inter-confessional, intercontinental information lead to the fact that a journalist has the highest social responsibility. A modern journalist should demonstrate new professional abilities, which are not yet sufficiently developed in the framework of professional training at a university. Basically, a new range of professional competencies can include social-communicative, cognitive and emotional-volitional characteristics. It is the ability to analyze, critically comprehend, evaluate, sort information in conditions of its overabundance and data inconsistency. As the performed study shows, one of the "new" professional competencies along with others is interactivity: the ability of a presenter to interact with mass audience in a direct, open dialogue. Interactivity can be viewed in various aspects from the standpoint of an interdisciplinary approach: communication, media psychology, media sociology, cultural studies, philosophy and psychology. Interactivity can be presented as a technical specification, a virtual communication schedule; as a characteristic of dialogic communication, as a kind of an active feedback, as a strategy of socialization, as the media characteristic, etc. From the perspective of a competence approach, in the context of a modern journalist training, a specialist in media communications, the concept of interactivity was studied poorly. Meanwhile, interactivity can be represented as an integrative quality of a person, as a strategy of a journalist self-development since this competence reflects the specifics of the author's style, the communicative features of a presenter, the style of communication with the audience. In particular, in the field of professional broadcasting, the term "interactive" implies the presence of active listeners in a specific program. Technically, activity can be manifested in the form of SMS-message sending, the sending of messages to social networks and the calls to a studio. This can be replicas, participation in shows, and the expression of opinions from the content point of view. The degree of interactivity can vary from low to high one, depending on the level of a listener's impact on air. The article presents the results of the study conducted on the basis of the Kazan Federal University and professional radio stations broadcasting at the regional and federal levels and gives the author's interpretation of interactivity as a professional competence.

Key words: The communicative skills of a journalist, The competence of a radio host, Media interactivity

INTRODUCTION

The general trend of higher education development in modern Russia, in particular, the strategy of the Kazan Federal University development, is focused on the training of modern experts demanded by the labor market. This implies the carrying out special studies on the problems of pedagogical prognosis, which will expand the understanding of new trends in the development of

professional competencies, skills, professional strategies that will be demanded in the future [1].

The concept of interactivity was introduced into scientific circulation at the end of the last century to denote special technical capabilities and the characteristics of new media [2]. The term was used to denote the differences between new digital and traditional media, such as the ability of a digital system to respond to user actions resulting in the transformation of project components [3].

However, nowadays interactivity can be considered from the point of view of different scientific approaches. From the standpoint of the culturological approach, interactivity is viewed as a kind of co-creation, as a fundamentally new, non-classical type of interaction between a recipient and an artifact. At the end of the last century a lot of research

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Month of Submission : 05-2017
Month of Peer Review : 06-2017
Month of Acceptance : 07-2017
Month of Publishing : 08-2017

Corresponding Author: ???

was carried out to identify the peculiarities of a work of art perception in network formats. There are changes concerning sense, the interpretation of the classics during the transition of the act of “meeting” a real platform to a virtual one. A reader (a viewer) moves from the position of the interpreter to the role of an integrator, a co-creator, who really influences the a work development. The roles of an artist and a viewer, an actor and a public, an author and a reader are mixed, a new synthesis, the symbiosis of roles takes place [4].

From the position of the moral culture of an individual, a person-oriented pedagogical approach, interactivity can be represented as a level of a personality spiritual development, expressed as the inner integrity of an individual, the readiness to perceive a different opinion, the openness to mutual spiritual enrichment, an active interaction, the cooperation with others [5]. So, a person confident in the correctness of his conception of the world (for example, a Christian one) can openly and without aggression study other beliefs, comprehending the wisdom of other peoples.

From the position of conflictology, interactivity is seen as an individual ability to establish favorable, friendly, positive relationships with the members of society, and the ability to find common interests and the opportunities for cooperation with different people.

From the experimental positions in media sociology interactivity can be considered as: 1) the sequence of messages, data exchange; 2) continuous modification (variability) of the media environment in real time; 3) the specifics, the capabilities of interaction subjects; 4) the peculiarity of monitoring, control over the process of communication (discourse); 5) the specificity of audience parameters; 6) the usefulness, the efficiency of group work, stimulation of information search and so forth [6].

From the position of acmeology, the development and the socialization of a personality, initiation is a modern kind of socialization, an individual inclusion in social relations, in active social interaction with the help of a media resource. The variants of interactive behavior can be different: active and accepting, constructive and destructive one. However, any social phenomenon has a constructive and a destructive field. A feedback, an active participation of the audience in media communication is positive, but it can bring an element of instability, uncontrollability and aggression. This was written by the representatives of the critical approach to interactivity, describing the phenomenon of “communication ecstasy” [7].

In the communicative approach, from the standpoint of communication psychology, interactivity can be considered

as a personal quality, the ability to interact effectively in various spheres (professional, domestic, social-political, etc.) with an opponent, a communication partner, the ability to understand and comprehend the position of another taking it as a given fact and to correct and to change the strategies of activity [8].

In media psychology interactivity is the phenomenon of media communication, when a communication participant initiates, expresses himself in the virtual space, realizes his needs, desires, enters into a virtual contact and actively expresses his opinion, influencing a media situation in the process of virtual activity.

Studying the presented positions, one can come to the following understanding: interactivity is an integral characteristic of a personality, determined by the readiness for communication (reaction to a feedback), social interaction, co-creation, to a changing real and virtual environment of media communication with a high degree of adaptability.

The most important task of this study was to identify the features of the interactivity competence implementation during radio air. Radio is selected for an experiment because of a high proportion of interactivity with respect to the general content of other forms of information delivery. The level of radio communication in some cases reaches half of a daily broadcast with the help of “greeting programs”, morning and evening shows, almost reaching the level of information on the same radio channel.

METHODS

We used empirical and theoretical methods in order to perform the study. The students of full-time undergraduate study (25 students, 3rd and 4th courses) took part in the experiment conducted for 5 years on the basis of the Kazan Federal University: it involved the use of interactive methods (interviews, surveys, discussions), project-gaming techniques (the engaging in interactive, playing and professional situations).

During the analysis of professional competence implementation specifics, the method of passive and also active observation was used on the air (one of the authors worked on radio as the host of interactive programs for several years). Using the methods of content analysis, comparative analysis, analogy and generalization, the specificity of interactive inclusion phenomenon in the field of modern Russian federal and regional broadcasting was assessed.

To evaluate the results, the systemic and interdisciplinary approach was used, the specifics of which contributed to the identification of interactive types on the radio, the explanation of interactive mechanism for their integration in its broadcast schedule. In general, the use of all presented methods and approaches made it possible to combine the obtained scientific data into a single theoretical picture.

RESULTS

In order to conduct the study, the radio stations were chosen that became the leaders by the proportion of listeners in almost all age groups, regional radio stations with the broadcasting in Russian and Tatar. The control list includes federal radio stations “Europa plus”, “Avtoradio”, “Road radio”, “Russian radio”, “Retro FM” [9] and regional “BIM-radio” and “Bulgarian radio”. The importance of interactive programs on the above radio stations is determined by their place in the broadcasting schedule. The entire morning prime time of these radio stations is represented by interactive. “Brigade U” on “Europe plus”, “Murzilki LIVE” on Autoradio, “Morning show” on “Russian radio”, “First shift” on “Retro FM”, “Morning men” on “BIM-radio” and so on.

The interactive content of the morning programs is limited to the participation of listeners in gaming shows, rubrics and quizzes. The programs of greetings during morning and evening prime time, and also during daytime are also popular at almost all radio stations.

During the experiment, we divided the interactive involvement in radio programs into three groups: low, medium and high interactivity. For example, we found out that the games and the programs of greetings have one thing in common: the limitation of a listener’s participation, the performance of obvious functions for program filling, the answers to the questions prepared in advance by presenters; The statement of their own opinion in such programs by the listeners is not practiced. Therefore, it can be argued that the degree of such program interactivity is low and limited by the presence of feedback.

The group with a low degree of interactivity is the listeners’ appeal to radio via social networks. According to the Russian Federation Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications, in 2015 “BIM-radio” was recognized as the most successful regional public actively using the capabilities of social network users for their content expansion and leaving their messages and comments in the community tapes. The number of subscribers has grown by more than 20 thousand and exceeded 80 thousand users. The radio station actively uses “VKontakte” together with

its own website and its airtime for commercial offers [9]. Based on the data from the social network, one of the radio programs - “BIM Star Vkontakte” - was developed completely.

It was noted that the role of a presenter is reduced to the conforming to the form of a chosen radio program and to observation of moral and ethical principles of communication with listeners on air in all programs with a low degree of interactivity. Possible problems that may occur in this case: 1) a listener is very worried and responds abruptly or is silent; 2) a listener starts asking for a song that is not on the radio station’s rotation list; 3) the telephone connection breaks.

The group of radio programs with medium and high degree of interactivity was represented by the programs of information or music and information radio stations, where a listener has the opportunity to set the trend of the radio broadcast. The main thing for the conduct of a presenting journalist in such a situation is to be a moderator: to clarify a question, to support both sides, or to support one of the parties if the format of a program requires it. For example, the radio station for intellectuals “Echo of Moscow” operates at the level of medium and sometimes high interactivity. High interactivity is an opportunity to speak for listeners [10]. According to the famous journalist Dmitry Gubin, interactive is not a question-and-answer program. This is not an appeal to the celestial advisors. This is a free discussion, the work of a mind and a session of simultaneous game without rules [11].

The group of programs with a high degree of interactivity is represented by Vladimir Solovyov’s “Nightingale Trills” on “Silver Rain”, “Let’s Discuss It” by Vladimir Pozner on “Radio Seven on Seven Hills”, etc. According to the analysis results, a key role is played by the choice of an interactive presenter to achieve a high degree of interactivity, his professional and personal characteristics and the choice of the topic corresponding to the segment of the potential radio station audience. At that, the main competences of an interactive presenter are announcement, guest selection, expert choice, erudition and reaction. Professionals, on the whole, confirm that the availability of these competences can bring an interactive radio program to success [11].

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The experiment showed that an interactive program for any radio station is an opportunity to stand out against the general background, to compete successfully in the media space with other radio stations. And in the greatest degree the success of such a program will depend on the

professionalism of a presenter, his interactivity - a special competence that includes many parameters (erudition, responsibility, activity). By activating the feedback, the radio stations turn their listeners in “co-creators of the air”, forming with their help not only music programs, but also developing information and analytical broadcast units. A contact phone became an attribute of modern broadcasting [12]. Interactivity on radio air in Russia is becoming particularly topical: in 2014 an average Russian spent up to 3 hours a day listening to traditional radio [13].

The interactivity of a radio presenter is a synthesis of personality traits (skills, abilities, the abilities to solve professional problems), developed at the level of professional competencies. A journalist as a professional communicator must be an active participant in the interactive process, be the leader in a dialogue, he must have this professional competence at the acme level, i.e. in the highest degree as compared with a usual user of a media resource.

An interactive person is open to new social and communicative experience, is capable of cooperation, is able to manage extreme, conflict situations. This is an indicator of journalistic skill level, the manifestation of an independent intellectual, creative status. Many situations of journalistic non-professionalism are associated with the insufficient development of this competence. A host of interactive media programs should have a number of special professional competencies: communicative-prognostic, psychological (emotional-volitional), cognitive-culturological and information ones.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The world technological revolution leads to global interactive processes in the media space: there is a constant exchange of information, a new content is created, the picture of the world is adjusted, the idea of reality is updated.
2. The result of profession information explosion is associated with communicative practices and are in the process of transformation. New professional competencies are demanded in modern journalism, yet insufficiently presented in special scientific research.
3. Interactivity is an integral characteristic of a personality, determined by readiness for communication

(perception and constructive reaction to feedback), social interaction, co-creation with a high degree of adaptability to the changing real and virtual communication environment.

4. The development of interactivity as a professional competence of a journalist is especially active at the level of a journalist’s personality three areas: motivational, emotional-volitional and cognitive one. It is necessary to consider these features during the development and the creation of training courses for future journalists.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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How to cite this article: Arsenteva GL, Andreeva YV. Interactivity as an Integral Professional Competence of a Broadcast Host. *Int J Sci Stud* 2017;5(5):341-344.

Source of Support: Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.