Media production: television and radio

Media, Television

Let's discuss the concepts of personalisation and define what personalisation is. " Personalisation wherever possible, events are seen as the actions of people as individuals thus the NHS cuts may be put on an agenda by Baby X not getting the operation s/he needs", (Branston & Stafford, 1996: 138). Branston and Stafford, imply that personalisation within the news is reporting the news and relating it to the general public or a social issue. This example of the NHS making cuts, and effecting baby x can be reported in a certain way that it affects the general public.

For example, " you" the viewer can suggest an individual person or social group being affected by something in the news. In this case the subject of a baby provides a human interest in the news story. Williams claims that, " There is no subject, no abstract thing that cannot be translated in terms of people" (Williams, 1958: 220). An example of this concept in recent news is in The Sun newspaper, there is a story about the recent re-imprisonment of one of Jamie Buglers killer. " The Sun" have set up a petition demanding the government to reveal the official reason for his return to jail.

The newspaper then encourages the readers to add their names to a petition which they had set up on their website www. thesun. co. uk. This is an attempt to directly involve and engage with the reader, emotionally pulling them in by personalising the language. Private personalisation within the news has resulted in the news becoming dumbed down and info-tainment. There is an increasing amount of news broadcasters using personalisation in the news, wether it is citing the public, polls, public opinion, texts, online forums emails, vox pops, or the use of celebrity personalities, by using Twitter, Facebook or the broadcast forums. The infotainment debate is an

argument about the relationship between television and public life...... according to the prevailing wisdom, TV news ought to conform as much as possible to the existing generic format of a serious newspaper' (Creeber, 2001: 118-119). An example of infotainment can be seen when the news of John Terry's affair was published. This story received more press converge than the upcoming general election. This asks the question, is the general public more interested in the sex life's of footballers than an election that will affect their lifes?

I will now move onto define the word impartiality; impartiality is defined as a, " sound practice that makes clear distinction between news reports and expressions of opinion. News reports should be free of opinion or bias of any kind" (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1923 in Allan 2004: 22) In other words news broadcasters are legally required to broadcast unbiased and balance news reports. Ofcom state that news broadcasters have " to ensure that news, in whatever form, is reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality". Impartiality associated with objectivity ' the word objectivity is rarely used by regulators, but is substituted by words such as " impartially", " accuracy", " balance' and " fairness" " they use a set of devices that they can argue that their reporting is unbiased" (Creeber, 2001: 117) Habermas (cited in Bromley) argues that, " in social democracies such as Britain, TV news, because of its institutional position of (quasi) independence from the state and its statutory obligations towards impartiality and public service ideals, can serve to facilitate that " realm of social life" which is available to all citizens and in which and through which " something approaching public can be formed. (2001: 61)

I will now move on to analyse the BBC, Channel 4, and ITV news programmes, discussing the broadcaster views and policies and how they use personalization and impartiality in their news broadcasts All the news broadcasters mentioned Andy Murrays win at the Australian open, the presenters all used words like " we" can win and it's " our" time the news broadcasts were all very patriotic and involved the viewer in the story. I noticed how the BBC used personalisation in their story about the two children found dead in the boot of their mother's car in east Sussex, the news reader introduced the story with a soft sympathetic voice to set the tone of the story, they showed two still images one image of the children and one of the mother which gives an insight into what people has been effected by this atrocity.

The BBC also asked the neighbours opinion on the story all of these tequnices are used by the BBC to involve the viewer in the story and to make the viewer think that this could have been there next door neighbour with such quotes as " it's the same old story you would never it would happen in a place like this. ITVs take on the murder of the two children is a great deal more dramatised than the BBCs the reporter narrates " she is a happy little girl there is no clue no sign in this picture of the fate she faces why would there be" the reporter asks questions in the narration to make the viewer answer and become more involved in the story, there is shot of a mum and a young girl walking into a nursery school which basically sends the message to the viewer that this should have been the young girl and her mother.

This was a good insight into what happened to the young children as the reporter points to the house to set the scene then recreates the journey the mum took by filming inside the car as the drivers point of view. ITV also asked the neighbours about their views on the situation, and the last image was very personal as it showed a message from the public or afamilymember saying sleep tight little babies. I noticed the similarities between ITV and Channel 4 news as their reports were very similar and so was there running order. After careful research I found out that both their news is provided by ITN who say they are ' the world's leading independent content provider, producing news, entertainment and factual content across a range of platforms.

I found that ITN's news was dramatized compared to the BBCs this is due to the fact that the BBC prides its self in being impartial and the most respected News broadcaster in the world. After watching the BBC news I spotted some impartiality between the different news stories, in the first story about the war in Afghanistan, the picture behind the news reader shows the British and Afghanistan leaders standing side by side which implies that both leaders are together in their fight to have peace in Afghanistan. The first couple of minutes showed pictures of solders and the military winning the fight against the Taliban. The reporter mentions in the story the number of British solders killed at war and is Impartial because it doesn't mention anything about any innocent civilians killed.

The public views on the war in Afghanistan are mixed but I felt that the BBC were in favour of the war as the reporter said " in a country where most

can't read or write" the solders have brought roads hospitals and schools to the area. And footage of a solder saying " we're winning". Even though the BBC supported " the troops" they were negative against both leaders saying " the leaders can't guarantee to deliver on what they agreed today, the past few years in Afghanistan have been littered with failures. This was very impartial compared to the story of president Obama and his great American recession and job opportunities speech. The BBC report used positive words such as " not broken but bruised" and great programs failing to mention that he hasn't delivered on many policies that he promised in his election speech.

This story also got more airtime than the segment on the recent job losses in Sunderland and Burnley which asks the question is the BBC more concerned about the American recession or the U. K recession. The Obama story got more airtime because it is infotainment as Obama is a celebrity president and is associated with celebrities such as jay Z. Galtung and Ruge conducted an analysis of newspapers in which they identified certain factors as being worthy of the news. These factors included things such as frequency, the time medium in which the event could be reported, threshold, the proximity of the story in relation to the reader; elite persons and nations, stories concerning powerful people or places and personalisation as well as others.

The more of these criteria a story fills the more news worthy it is. Cited in Harcup and O'Neill, 2001, p 279) This format of selecting the news is repeated regularly as an example the ITV news again selects stories about elite people The ITV had a different view on the policy against the Taliban the news report used words such as bribe and buy off the Taliban negative

words to suggest that the policy is not a good idea. The first shot was footage of a dead solders coffin being laid to rest. It used words such as " the man he died for" suggesting the solder gave his life for the Afghanistan president it then showed clips of the Taliban firing rockets at the solders. This was a completely different view compared to the BBCs images of the solders winning battles and the solders being surrounded by children. The ITVs short report on the troops in Afghanistan was similar to the BBCs as it was very much supporting the troops but disagreeing with the government.

With quotes from a dead solders farther saying " I don't think all his (Tony Blair) stories about fighting for a democracy are true" it leads us to believe that the government's decision to go to war isn't as supported as we might believe. While watching the Channel 4 news broadcast on the ' Taliban buy out' as the presenter called it I noticed a lot of tongue and cheek comments against the government's initiative, the first shot behind the anchor man was of Gordon Brown and president Hamid Karzai shaking hands which implied deal done, the main argument of the Channel 4 news was basically the war has failed for example they said throughout the broadcast " the war has failed so far" and " after marching eight years in Afghanistan to nowhere".

And that this new strategy is rubbish, by calling it " plan B" and " the big Taliban buy out" the anchor man put the question to Gordon brown saying " why should the tax payers pay the Taliban who killed their sons to stop fighting and how do you know some people won't pretend to be in the Taliban for themoney? Gordon browns response was pretty poor which led me to believe that this mandate isn't a good idea and isn't going to work. I

found that the Channel 4 news were very sarcastic even to the extent of saying " the UN, Nato, and .... the USA of course" implying that the USA involve themselves in everything, yet in my opinion the USA have as much say over the war in Afghanistan as the UK.

It seems that all the news broadcasters when they were reporting about the war in Afghanistan were very careful not to say a bad word about the army, yet most of their quotes from the reporters or general public were negative against the government. It is hard to be impartial when broadcasting the news due to individual believes and values, organ, culture, political and social pressures pulse the time of when the event is happing. We are all bias to opinion so there is no such thing as impartiality In conclusion In this essay I have defined both personalisation and impartiality looked in-depth into television news showing how news broadcasters show impartiality and personalisation in their broadcasts. I have given recent examples to back up my arguments and givenacademicquotes to back up the theories I use in this essay.