# "GIRAFFE LANGUAGE" AND "JACKAL LANGUAGE": A STUDY OF TWO OPPOSITE COMMUNICATION RITUALS

Longina Strumska – Cylwik
University of Gdańsk, Poland

**Abstract**

This paper refers to the "giraffe language" and "jackal language", which allude to the "non-violent communication" concept according to Marshall B. Rosenberg. The two languages being discussed describe two different types of rhetoric and, at the same time, two opposite communication/social rituals used by people in their everyday life and also in the mass media, and omnipresent in the advertisement. The paper tries to draw attention that contemporary media is based on "jackal language" (often strongly rooted in our culture and mentality) being a language of violence, blocking empathy and stimulating conflicts and tension in interpersonal communication and relationships). Unfortunately media makes a tremendous impact on the customers (especially on young people). This paper aims to propagate and encourage using the "giraffe language" described as the language of love, understanding and clemency. The 'giraffe language' encourages constructive, matter-of-fact and unbiased communication. A long giraffe's neck became its symbol - a metaphor of perfect (objectivity) communication.

**Keywords:** *"giraffe language", communication rituals, non-violent, unbiased communication, empathy*

# 'BAHASA GIRAFAH' DAN 'BAHASA JACKAL': SATU KAJIAN MENGENAI DUA PENGAMALAN KOMUNIKASI BERTENTANGAN

**Abstrak**

Makalah ini menyentuh mengenai 'Bahasa Girafah' dan 'Bahasa Jackal' yang berlandaskan konsep 'komunikasi bukan ganas' yang diutarakan Marshall B. Rosenberg. Kedua-dua bahasa ini menjelaskan dua bentuk retorik dan pada masa sama turut memperkatakan tentang dua komunikasi bertentangan serta amalan sosial yang digunakan oleh manusia setiap hari dalam media massa. Bahasa ini begitu ketara dalam iklan. Berdasarkan kajian, makalah ini cuba menarik perhatian bahawa kebanyakan penulisan media massa kontemporari banyak berlandaskan 'bahasa jackal' (tertanam kukuh dalam budaya dan mentaliti masyarakat) yang merupakan bahasa yang ganas, membatasi empati dan menimbulkan konflik dan ketegangan dalam hubungan komunikasi. Malangnya media begitu berpengaruh dalam hal ini. Makalah ini mencadangkan 'bahasa girafah' yang berlandaskan bahasa kasih sayang dan pemahaman. 'Bahasa girafah' menggalak komunikasi tidak bias yang konstruktif dan objektif. Leher girafah yang panjang menjadi simbol atau metafora 'objektiviti' dalam komunikasi

*Kata kunci: 'Bahasa Girafah', amalan komunikasi, tanpa-ganas, komunikasi tidak bias, empati*

## Introduction: Communication rituals

At the beginning, the issue of everyday interaction rituals will be discussed within the context of the "giraffe language" and "jackal language". The notions will be defined and their meanings explained herein. What this work is going to emphasise are the relationships between language rituals and cultural and situational contexts, which determine the rituals. Characteristic features of language of media are focused on as well since they strongly determine the language quality and its contemporary use. They also have a great impact on its image, life attitudes, moral attitudes and its manner, culture of interpersonal communication, etc. What is most important here is language[1] and images exhibited in media[2], which are used to create a particular image of a contemporary human; also consequences resulting from using the images are highlighted.

The notion of ritual[3] originated in Latin (*ritus*) and means a rite, cult or

custom. Social sciences refer, first of all, to socially regulated behaviours and routine behaviours, which are schematic and characterise a given culture. Ritual behaviours, usually, define actions compliant with accepted behavioural patterns within a given culture (including its cultural habits). They refer to such activities as greeting, showing respect, interpersonal communication (manifested by ritual usage of a given language), etc., see: Pilch, (2003). It is worth to note that a culture within which one is brought up defines the pattern of interpersonal communication and language, and the communication - to a large extent - modifies this culture. Hence, using language is not only interpersonal communication but also a transmission of culture one represents. This refers also to media communication and its language, which influences the cognitive, emotional-volitional and psychomotoric area of the receiver. The cultures of communication and manner are learned in the process of socialisation (in which the media are participating more and more actively); at the same, one acquires the skill to live in the society. One learns a language, *modi operandi* and particular social games (rituals), which account for the cohesion among members of a society, see: Szopski, (2007). The culture is construed as a set of common rules and rituals, which govern behaviours, values, belief and attitudes of members of some community or society. It has been noticed that the non-verbal language plays a significant role in high context cultures. This results from the assumption that having broad common knowledge and history allows for inference of meanings. In low context cultures, on the other hand, what is more important are words, as everything needs to be explained and expressed at the level of verbal language, see: Tavris, Wade, (1999). Hence, all considerations over language and culture of communication should be related to cultural and situational context, in which they are set. The meaning of cultural and situational context turns out to be essential in the understanding of all cultural messages, and - in particular - media messages which make use of exceptionally rich language (being also the oldest basic material in media) and of large variety of signs, symbols, notions and images, which, at the same time, reflect the mental state of both senders and receivers. It turns out that the same signs, symbols, notions and images can have different meanings and can be understood in different ways. Sometimes, they even can have very different interpretations depending on the cultural and situational context.

Through differently applied contexts and different uses thereof, one can alter meanings of messages and conveyed information as well as manipulate their meanings. Such manipulations are common in everyday life. They are eagerly used by mass media, which juggle information and accompanying contexts in order to make particular impression and effects (hence, some presentations lack context or are detached there from). This so happens to manipulate the receiver more effectively, compare: Morreale, Spitzberg, Barge, (2007) and Gajda (2007). Information conveyed in such a way becomes a bargaining argument in the game played by the media, e.g. political, marketing or consumer

games. Understanding the meaning of contexts is, therefore, crucial for correct interpretation of gathered information and for conscious participation in various social games (rituals). Understanding thereof is especially valuable and useful in the global, multicultural, deterritorialised world, full of information chaos and ambiguous messages. Communication rituals are strongly connected with the culture they take place in and language of this culture. The language plays an important role in everyday life, helps people to create their own social worlds and define meanings ascribed to different people, events, situations or phenomena. This is why communication can be treated as a form of community creation, and the ways by means of which people communicate and in which they use particular communication styles, can be treated as creation of different kinds of communication. The language one uses everyday plays also a significant role in defining identity - both own and of other people (Who are we? Who are other people? How do we perceive and describe the surrounding world and ourselves?). People speak different languages, so they create their own, and at the same time, different images of the world. Differences among them, however, make the images different from each other and cannot be used interchangeably. This phenomenon was described by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, who formed the so-called Sapir - Whorf hypothesis[4], based on the phenomenon of language determinism, assuming that one's language determines our thought and perception - which means that the thought is based on one's language, Kapuściński (2007) and Morreale, Spitzberg, Barge, (2007).

Following this logic, it is to be assumed that images surrounding a contemporary human and determining his or her language are of some significance (to be mentioned later in this work). It is worth highlighting that the language of a contemporary human is more often perceived as a language of aggression, a "jackal language"[5].Images and language full of aggression and violence reach a contemporary human everywhere and surround him or her everywhere, or even corner him or her (conquering public and private space). One faces it in the street, billboards, tabloids or magazines, dailies or television programmes (also those for children and young receivers), in the cinema, the Internet and even in private homes. Hence, the opinion of Marshall B. Rosenberg is not surprising; he claims that most people, in everyday life, tend to use the "jackal language, which is deeply rooted in our culture and mentality. Using this type of language brings particular consequences. First of all, it blocks empathy[6] and provokes conflicts and their escalation. It also contributes to choosing such an aggressive strategy of communication by receivers. Moreover, it motivates communicating persons to use mechanisms of fight, resistance,or escape, which hinders effective communication. A jackal usually uses vocabulary originated in hierarchical political and social structures, which assume obedience to authorities and tend to yield to them. Hence, such a language does not favour building and strengthening one's autonomy and independent, critical thinking. However, it is this type of language that took root in our cultural consciousness, causing us to use it

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habitually (as a ritual). As a consequence, we treat such a type of communication as something entirely natural, accepting, therefore, all symptoms of aggression, see: Mudyń, (2003). In opposition to the "jackal language" there is the so-called "giraffe language*",* whichbelongs to the Nonviolent Communication concept by Marshall B. Rosenberg andis based on the idea of expressing one's feelings, needs and expectations freely, and the skill to understand them in other people's words, regardless of their form. It is called the "giraffe language" because a giraffe has a large heart, which is a symbol and metaphor or Love. It also has a long neck, which enables it to see "better", from a better perspective. Hence, this type of interpersonal communication has been named "the language of the heart". Such a communication method is, at the same time, the most democratic and effective, because it assumes equal treatment of both sides not activating any defensive mechanisms (the so-called fight or flight mechanisms).

## Language of images exhibited in the media

One other matter raised in this work are images exhibited in contemporary mass media and their image, which is discussed in the context of the "giraffe language" and "jackal language". This language is a part of good, inspiring images or of bad, distorted images, full of violence, ugliness, warped beauty and deformed reality. What is also presented is the relationship between a man and an image treated as a significant means of communication, exchange of information and cultural message, which has accompanied people for ages[7]. The images are not only related to objects (works) in the iconographic form, but also to human imagination and thinking, since a human, by means if his imagination, creates his own images (own representation) of the surrounding world as well as of himself and other people. The significance of images (both these created by a human and those arriving from the external world) is to be underlined. It is worth noticing that the language of images has become a centre of interest for sociology of image and anthropology of image, where the image as such constitutes a communication act and is a valid form of communication, because - by means of it - one can find out about the surrounding world and different cultures. The image, however, cannot replace particular sensations, which accompany a direct contact of a human with an object or phenomenon that can be cognised by means of senses (touch, smell, taste, "physical immersion" or manipulation, etc.). According to psychologists, the image is, however, a fundamental visual means in school education, which influences the ability to perceive phenomena, develops mental activities and has an effect on the efficiency of using the language. Hence, the quality and content of these images is of great importance, see: Węglińska, (2000).

Mass media play a specific role as they participate actively in the transfer of images, transmitting texts written in the image language. In the context of the above-mentioned Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which was based on language determinism, it is to assume that people create in their minds different (not exchangeable) images of the world, and the language they use determines

their way of thinking and creation of particular images (non-repeatable ones, characteristic of them only). Thus, people create their own, non-repeatable and unique narration of the world. However, the images are not constructed in vacuum - they are inspired by the external.

An external influence, that is, images coming from the surrounding world, become a sort of material used by people to create their own images. Contemporary media constitute, hence, one of the most important sources of images of the world (the global world), and the - promoted by their means -image of a contemporary human. They interact with a few senses simultaneously (activate a few perceptual channels), activate sight and hearing thanks to which they are assimilated quicker. It is to be noted, that contemporary media transmit images coming from the most remote corners of the world (they overcome territorial barriers resulting from country borders, distance barrier, and even the barriers connected with linguistic and cultural codes, since the world has shrunk both vertically and horizontally). What is worth paying attention to is the new phenomenon of globalisation, which requires of a contemporary human taking into account the stepping up importance of global as well as local conditions. Otherwise, images coming by means of media will not be interpreted correctly or can even pose a threat.

The necessity of having images has been known for ages. Not only children, but also adults need them. This is supported by numerous myths of creation of the world originating in ancient India, Babylonia or Egypt, by many legends and tales. Almost everyone has kept in their mind a colourful illustration, a picture from a book or an image created by their own imagination based on received information or a story heard - image having a more significant impact than anything else in the surrounding world (Carlgen, Arne; 1994). Such images based on stories, tales, fairy tales, etc., were a source of knowledge, life wisdom and even moral directives to be obeyed in life. Apparently, everyone had a favourite story told, read or watched in their childhood, which became a live or moral guide, a road sign or a caution (similar to the "good" and "bad" images). Stories, tales and legends contain the rules of life and behaviour (however, especially the contemporary ones, do not necessarily meet the condition). Recalling stories of main characters allows for experiencing both good and bad behaviours - they refer to the "good" and "bad" images, to honesty, obedience, patience, politeness, diligence, greed, sophistication, laziness or baseness. Thanks to them, a human gets a chance to get to know possible consequences of particular behaviours, since  the "bad" gets punished and the "good" is rewarded. Images of the "good" and "bad" make it easier to distinguish the "good" and truth. They can also be found in both animate and inanimate nature, in one's own experiences, stories and tales, in what one observes in the surrounding world of natural pictures.

Phenomena of the nature symbolise current rules, symbols of absolute and unavoidable rights that cannot be disregarded or contradicted (in Poland, every child knows that they must not hide under a tree during a thunderstorm as it may lead to paralysis and even death). Assuming that understanding of the truth

has a significant impact on human behaviour, by means of which the behaviour will be appropriate, what is important is rooting in a human both "true" and good images, which will constitute the foundation for wisdom and morality (Bruhlmeier; 2000). Media messages themselves do not teach epistemological criticism, that is, telling the truth and illusion apart, distinguishing between the good and the bad. This is due to the fact that media do not have a mechanism allowing for the distinction between the truth and lie, between the moral, good and the bad, between the safe and the dangerous, between the beautiful and the ugly.

Media, however, have another crucial feature - the power of influencing mass imagination of people, the power of having an impact on constructing their own images and images of the world. Hence, the media epistemology assumes that what really exists it that what exists in media. This is illustrated by means of metaphors such as "the truth of media", "the mediumistic fact", or "the existence in the media". As a result, it turns out that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the truth and the metaphor of truth, compare: Szczęsny, (2007). If adults may not be able to see some differences, it is even more difficult for children. For the reason that children's thinking is concrete (hierarchical and abstract thinking has yet to be developed), they tend to confuse the fictitious world with the real one and they are more vulnerable to "the truth of media" and to accepting them as if they were facts.

## The image of a contemporary human in media

This part refers to cultural texts rooted in the Polish reality, which constitutes the main research area. First, the language of media is characterised on the basis of the spoken and written word. Next, images presented in media and messages contained therein are analysed. A subsequent part of the work focuses on consequences resulting from using the "jackal language" in media within the context of own research.

The quoted research is deeply rooted in the Polish culture, which is not insignificant since, despite the passing of the time, it is still perceived as a linguo-centric culture, in which a language[1] plays the most important role as a carrier of tradition. For the Poles, the spoken and written word has been, for ages, the main tool used to express their dreams, wishes, patriotism, admiration or disapprobation. An image took root in the Polish culture deeply as well. The Polish culture is, to a large extent, perceived and identified with an image and sound. It is characteristic not only for the Poles, but also for other nations thanks to paintings by Jan Matejko, StanisławWyspiański and JózefChełmoński (e.g. unique landscapes of Poland), or thanks to music by Frederic Chopin and Krzysztof Penderecki, compare: Tanaś, (2007). However, the Polish culture was also influenced by the global world. This is visible by means of rituals and holidays borrowed from other cultures (such as Saint Valentine's Day or Halloween), or by means of more and more frequent use of English, the global

language. Such changes took place with the participation of media, which spread various cultural representations.

Nowadays, it is frequent that media take over the communicative functions of the language and determine its uniqueness. In order to present the language of media encountered by the Poles on everyday basis, the work makes use of a schematic and simplified division into the "giraffe language" and the "jackal language". It is an intentional technique used to contrast the two opposite communication rituals (styles). They are characterised, above all, by means of language of the overwhelming mass (popular) culture present in commercials and Polish magazines such as „Życie Na Gorąco" „Przyjaciółka", „Na żywo", „Charaktery", „Zwierciadło" „TwójStyl", „Twoje Imperium", „Najmagazyn", leaflets of hypermarkets such as TESCO, NETTO, Praktiker, as well as in newspapers. The material collected was not accidental. All magazines, newspapers and leaflets were brought by students for the subject of "animation and ritual" and were supposed to illustrate everyday-life rituals. Students were asked to collect newspapers, magazines and leaflets found in their homes.

The "jackal language" (focused on in this work) is explicit in the material collected; it seems to dominate over the "giraffe language"9, and is depicted in a form of a world shown in a distorting mirror, a fake world based on manipulating the receiver and on violence. The world and people presented are often not real, not true, modelled, photoshopped, or changed by means of other technical, cosmetic or surgical techniques. As a result, they create an illusion of perfection and "unreal reality" - unattainable and distorted. Hence, they mislead the receivers by providing them with illusions and setting unattainable ideals. Worth mentioning are images of women and man created by media. They are usually presented as impeccably "beautiful", always happy, slim, relaxed, fit, well-dressed, satisfied - people of success, from a fairy-tale world. There are stars, models and celebrities as well as perfect housewives and sexy teenagers. Their images (photographs) are intertwined with a product advertisement, which make them so beautiful, great and perfect (sometimes, the magazines give free samples of the products, giving, thus, a poor substitute for luxury aiming at involving one in the consumer game). The products advertised are rejuvenating, anti-cellulite or slimming creams, advertisements of cars which will attract the opposite sex, and many others. Each of the products advertised is, at the same time, unique, the only one of its kind, just perfect, e.g. the SORAYA cream, which promises "diamond rejuvenation of skin" and "wrinkle reduction by 97%", and GOODBYE APETITE will make one's body slim and almost brand new.

The best example of the way how the media show a false image of the world is offering to the audiences "miraculous prescriptions" and methods to bring happiness, success and prosperity into their lives. They often provide an illusion that everything can be achieved easily and without effort. Hence, it is easy to believe that one can become a muscle-man or a superman just by eating a particular (advertised) type of yoghurt of cereals. One can also believe that a recently-

bought cream is able to change their life and make their skin 10 years younger making them more beautiful than ever and, thus, their interpersonal relationships will be much better. Such efforts definitely favour effective manipulation of a contemporary man. Both children and adults believe in such promises. A well-designed commercial becomes an effective fetish attracting both young and older recipients and persuading them to use advertised products. At the same time, it can be observed that the content is a significant means of manipulation and the younger the recipient the more effective the manipulation becomes.The promises that a cream we purchase will make us 10 years younger in a short time and that, by purchasing another advertised product, we will miraculously improve our interpersonal relationships – definitely allow successful manipulation of today's consumer. These promises are an effective "fetish" attracting the consumers, both younger and older, to buy and consume. At the same time, we can notice that the transmitted content, which represents a significant tool of manipulation, is the more dangerous the younger is the audience.

What is also quite popular are the image and language of human tragedy and sensation, so much demanded by both viewers and readers. Hence, such popularity of magazines such as "Życienagorąco" or „Na żywo", which cross the borders of Sacrum, taboo and decency. They describe and reveal even the most private areas. They present the image of violence, rape, sex striped of secrecy and disclose all secrets.In order to discuss the consequences resulting from using the "jackal language" in media, research findings published in previous papers of the author are referred to, which related to the issue of communication and interpersonal relationships in the contemporary world, see: Strumska – Cylwik, (2008) and (2010). What is presented (for the purpose of this work) are selected results of own research, which refer to the issue discussed herein and illustrate it. For this reason, only some fragments of Respondents' answers (illustrating the threats mentioned above) are quoted[10] On the basis of an analysis of the research material collected, it is to be concluded that the images coming from media and the language thereof have a significant impact on the image of a contemporary human (the Pole), and shape their perception of themselves as well as of other people. The information society (media) does not seem to possess appropriate media competencies allowing for conscious participation in various cultural phenomena of the global world.The following six fragments exemplify this issue:

Example 1. "(…) I am worried about my daughter. Since starting education at the middle school, she has been losing weight, because she wants to be as slim as other girls. I do not think she is too fat (her weight is, or actually was, 132 pounds at 5'7" height and now it's much less (...). It's all because of those commercials and magazines with girls as thin as a rake; they do so much harm (...)". Example 2 "I'm fed up with my family (…) They are forever watching some TV serials. Even during the meals, the TV must be on. There is no time for chatting. And what could we talk about? TV shows? My friends prefer browsing the Internet

or playing games to meeting up in the real world (...)". Example 3. "(…) I live in the wrong time, I can't follow it, I'm too weak(..) I don't earn much and I'm not a superman, but an average man (…) I'm fed up with proving constantly that I am a man, although I'm afraid, some people might think I am not a man; what scares me most is that my wife and my children could perceive me as such a person(…)".Example 4 "In the contemporary world it's not relationships with people that really count (…) we collect hundreds or thousands of contacts, which, in fact, are only superficial. The number of contacts and really matters and not their quality. People often collect both real and Internet contacts (…)". Example 5. "My sister's son is a very sensitive and shy boy. He finds it troublesome to establish contacts with his peers. (…)Children tend to laugh at him that he is not fashionable, doesn't have a computer (…)". Example 6. "It is a quite common phenomenon that those poor persons, who don't have a state-of-the-art mobile phone or designer clothes, get excluded from the circle of acquaintances (…)".

An analysis of the answers quoted shows a large influence of commercials, mass media and the global world on the quality of life of contemporary people and their perception of themselves and others. Many answers (see Examples: 1, 3, 5 and 6) what is underlined is the tendency to make social comparisons, in particular against the "better", which - as can be noticed - are not always very motivating and do not always encourage one to develop themselves, but often invoke the feeling of discomfort, low self-esteem, frustration and unhappiness (especially, when one has a tendency to assess themselves in the categories of better-worse, which are commonly used in media to manipulate receivers). The characters described in Examples 3 and 5 seem to be the most miserable as, apparently, they are excluded by other people, because they cannot "follow" the contemporary world - see Example 3 - and their images seem to be totally different to those promoted by the contemporary media, concentrating on material attributes (such as a computer, designer clothes - see Examples 5 and 6), which become an integral part of the contemporary human and are supposed to reflect their value. It is not surprising, then, that lack of those attributes makes people feel frustrated, alienated or dissatisfied Especially depressing seems to be Example 3 - a man, who has not adapted himself to a contemporary model of man - a Superman - widely promoted by media, which makes him feel like not a man. At the same, a peculiar paradox becomes visible - the fact that the man is average means in fact that he is similar to other men, not outstanding or much different. However, nowadays it is not enough to be just average. Hence, those average ones are often treated as worse. In the contemporary world, the image of a man presents him as a strong, muscular and rich person - a man of success. Such an image is rooted in the culture, in the model of a "warrior", "winner" and "conqueror". It turns out that the significance of social-cultural influences on human behaviour is incredibly strong. At times, they happen to exert even stronger pressure than any other reasonable justifications and even biological processes. Example 1 presents this issue. As can be seen, the contemporary

culture (contemporary media) define how much one should eat and what they should look like. In this case, the cultural influence results in lack of eating and slimming down to fit into the preferred and widely promoted model of a slim body. The cultural influence and the pressure seem, in this case, contradict basic biological processes (the evolution programmed women to have some fat reserves to maintain good condition during the pregnancy and breastfeeding periods and for better estrogen production and storage after menopause). However, a young girl wants to contradict the nature and accepts the appearance models promoted by media (commercials), not being able to identify herself with her own (biologically programmed) body shape. Therefore, she started a fight with the nature. Such a fight can lead to negative consequences for her health, see: Tavris, Wade, (1995). The Respondents emphasise also the fact that by means of media, interpersonal relationships (within a family) undergo changes (Examples 2, 4 and 5) - as they claim, the relationships become superficial and they really miss the true ones. moreover, they pay attention to the increasing number of functionalised relationships (oriented at achieving some goals - i.e. self-interested relationships). Also the matter of driving direct contacts (such in the real world) away by media has been raised (Examples 2 and 4). Hence, it is not surprising that people (especially youngsters) often try to equal other people who, according to them, are better, more perfect, more beautiful and richer, making their own life a pursuit of new needs artificially-generated by media, which, as a result, are often not real and not justified reasonably. At this way, they try to equal their idols and dubious authorities. Eventually, it turns out that the blind and automatic submission to authorities may, in reality, mean submission only to their signs and authority symbols, and not to them themselves. Research findings indicate that the symbols of authorities are often exclusively external attributes and "the insignia of power" such as titles, clothes, cars, gadgets, or well-equipped offices and homes. However, persons being in possession of such symbols may often have a very strong influence on other people, even if they have nothing except for these symbols, which constitute a foundation for their authority,Cialdini, (2009).

## Conclusions

Research material shows that communication rituals are strongly connected with the culture they take place in and language of this culture. The language one uses everyday plays a significant role in defining identity - both own and of other people - who are we, who are other people, how do we perceive and describe the surrounding world and ourselves. Simultaneously language is not unambiguous - it is subjective, can be manipulated and its meaning can be changed. A feature of language is the fact that by its means it is possible to have a strong influence on own and others' perception. Thanks to language, a message can be more or less understandable. It is worth highlighting that the language of a contemporary human is more often perceived as a language of

aggression, a "jackal language". The "jackal language" (focused on in this work) is explicit in the material collected; it seems to dominate over the "giraffe language", and is depicted in a form of a world shown in a distorting mirror, a fake world based on manipulating the receiver and on violence. The world and people presented by media are often not real, not true, modelled, photoshopped, or changed by means of other technical, cosmetic or surgical techniques. Such treatments are aggressive and they are a part of "jackal language". As that, they create an illusion of perfection and "unreal reality" - unattainable and distorted. Hence, they mislead the receivers by providing them with illusions and setting unattainable ideals.

Simultaneously the cultures of communication and manner are learned in the process of socialization, in which the media are participating more and more actively. An analysis of the research material shows a large influence of commercials, mass media and the global world on the quality of life of contemporary people and their perception of themselves and others. Research material shows, that media have a great impact on people image, life attitudes, moral attitudes, manner and culture of interpersonal communication. What is most important here is languageand images exhibited in media, which are used to create a particular image of a contemporary human; also consequences. Nowadays, it is frequent that media take over the communicative functions of the language and determine its uniqueness. They play a specific role as they participate actively in the transfer of images, transmitting texts written in the image language. They also constitute one of the most important sources of images of the contemporary, global world, and the - promoted by their means - image of a contemporary human. They often define how much one should look like, how should think like. The best example of the way how the media show a false image of the world is offering to the audiences "miraculous prescriptions" and methods to bring happiness, success and prosperity into their lives. They often provide an illusion that everything can be achieved easily and without effort. For this reason, the significance of social-cultural influences (widely promoted by media) on human behaviour is incredibly strong.

## About the author

Dr Longina Strumska – Cylwik is a lecturer at University of Gdańsk, Poland and her area of research is on communication language. She can be contacted at ginacylwik@wp.pl

## Endnotes

[1]Language is used to describe the world around. It is subject to some defined rules (phonetic rules - responsible for sounds creating words, syntactic rules - managing symbols, ad semantic rules - responsible for meaning, etc.). In spite of these rules, however, language is not unambiguous - it is subjective, can be manipulated and its meaning can be changed. A feature of language is the fact that by its means it is

possible to have a strong influence on own and others' perception.   Thanks to language, a message can be more or less understandable, see: Adler, Rosenfeld, Proctor II, (2006). [2]mass media are usually all media used by people for mass transfer and exchange of information.

[3] Everyday rituals teach and control interpersonal relationships. A ritual always refers to a specific type of behaviour referring to particular situations and rules and is characterised by repetitiveness; its role is not obvious, though. The communicative and control function of rituals is of great importance as it is realised by authentication and reinforcement of social bonds.  Every society and every group having a sense of identity (which is often expressed by the personal pronoun 'we') shows the necessity of maintaining and reinforcing belief and feelings behind its unity. Social psychology emphasises the interactive dimension of rituals, which refers to personal experiences and to the level of explanation of individual behaviours, compare: Maisonneuve, (1995).

[4] The word *snow* was used to explain this hypothesis. It turns out, namely, that its use in different cultures is different. In some cultures, people use only one word to describe this winter phenomenon and its different states. In other cultures, on the other hand (especially, in cultures, for which winter is a long-term or even everyday phenomenon), there are various notions (words) describing different types and states of snow, its different consistency: from light and fluffy and loose, to heavy, wet and sticky, to a slushy mixture of snow, sand and salt. It is connected with different experience of people.  Hence, those for whom snow is "everydayness" and who observe it regularly in different states notice much more features and differences thereof , see: Morreale, Spitzberg, Barge, (2007).

[5] Such a a language refers usually to moral assessment, criticism, comparison, classification, valuing, diagnosing, interpreting and using phrases suggesting lack of personal responsibility. Such a language is often accompanied by a tendency to external attribution of reasons for our negative emotions and aggressive behaviours, as a result of which the responsibility is often shifted onto other people or circumstances. As Rosenberg underlines, there are four types of response to a negative verbal or non-verbal message: one can blame themselves, blame other people, empathise with one's feelings and needs or with feelings and needs of other people. Choosing the first or second option becomes a part of the "jackal language", see: Mudyń, (2003).

[6]The notion of empathy according to Marshall B. Rosenberg (with which I do polemicise), refers to the Rogeresque attitude to empathy. It can be noticed that Rosenberg clearly subscribes to Carl Rogers' point of view on empathy, which consists in "seeing oneself in the place of another person" (which can be perceived as a kind of fiction since one cannot, in fact, "get into the consciousness" of another person and feel exactly the same or perceive in the same way). Every person has different experiences (has experienced different images). For this reason, according to me, such an assumption is artificial and finishes the process of mutual understanding. This so happens because when one focuses on the necessity of understanding another person, they block, as a result, the process of understanding. The imposed necessity of understanding can, eventually, disturb and limit one's perception and hinder effective listening to the other person. Apart from that, understanding is not always possible (people have different personal experiences and differently build images of the world, which they acquired in various cultural and situational contexts). Moreover, as Milt and Stewart emphasise, such understanding of empathy means concentration on the so called "yours", which may turn out to be equally ineffective as the monologues concentration on the "mine".

According to Milt and Stewart, what is the most effective is the communication focusing on the "ours", basing on dialogue listening. The dialogue listening consists in the formation of common meanings, yet it allows for "openness", which sometimes means implicature, insolubility or lack of finalisation in a form of understanding - treated as an accomplished act. At the same time, it does not require agreement or consensus by all means. It is to be highlighted that, nowadays, the Rogeresque understanding of empathy has less followers, see: Stewart, Milt *(*2000).

[7] The oldest discovered images (iconographic findings) are the drawings in caves from the Paleolithic Period.  Such "picture communication" lasted until late Middle Ages.  It changed in the Gutenberg's Era (Gutenberg was the inventor of the industrial movable-type printing and in 1448 set up the first printing house). Next, photography came into being (the first permanent photography dates back to 1826 and was taken on glass by J. W. Herschel).  In introduced the new era called the "galaxy of picture". The next step was animation of stable images resulting in cinemas, television and other media, which take a contemporary human to the cyberspace of virtual pictures, compare: Zwoliński, (2004).

[8]Language is here treated as a tool in human thinking and as a means of interpersonal communication

[9] the "giraffe language", much less popular in media as it may seem, is also present. Its lower popularity results from the fact that it cannot be used for manipulation, to involve one in a consumer game, to "infect" with some particular ideas,   e.g. marketing or political ones. However, its presence in media gives the receivers the chance to commune with "good" literature, programmes and films, which make a mark among other mass messages. The language of such messages is based on constructive images, which induce reflection, seeking truth or forging true interpersonal relationships.

[10]The Respondents are full-time and part-time students (of different age) of the University of Gdańsk and the General Humanistic Higher School Pomerania in Chojnice, see: Strumska – Cylwik, (2008) and (2010).

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