PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

68

The Media in English (2): Radio and Television. Advertising in English-Speaking Cultures: Linguistic and Semiological Aspects

Los medios de comunicación en lengua inglesa (2): Radio y televisión. La publicidad en las culturas anglófonas: Aspectos lingüísticos y semiológicos.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

Índice

1. INTRODUCTION
2. RADIO IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
    2.1. From company to Corporation
    2.2. Competition, youth and the digital age
    2.3. The language of radio
3. TELEVISION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
    3.1. The BBC monopoly
    3.2. Commercial and satellite television
    3.3. Regulation and the present
4. RADIO AND TELEVISION IN THE UNITED STATES
    4.1. A commercial model
    4.2. Television and public broadcasting
5. ADVERTISING IN THE ANGLOPHONE WORLD
    5.1. History
    5.2. Regulation
6. LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF ADVERTISING
7. SEMIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ADVERTISING
8. PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS
9. CONCLUSION
Fuentes

1. INTRODUCTION

The morning after commercial television began in Britain, on 22 September 1955, the critic Bernard Levin wrote in the Manchester Guardian that he felt "neither depraved nor uplifted by what I have seen", and added, "I have already forgotten the name of the toothpaste." The remark is a good starting point, because it shows two things at once: how suspicious the British were of selling on the airwaves, and how quickly that suspicion was overcome. Seventy years later, radio, television and advertising are not three separate worlds but one system, in which sound, image and words work together to inform us, entertain us and persuade us.

This topic is the second part of the study of the media in English. I will first trace the history and present state of radio and television in the United Kingdom, from the British Broadcasting Company of 1922 to the Charter review now under way. Secondly, I will consider the United States, where broadcasting grew from a commercial, rather than a public-service, model, and the mixed systems of other English-speaking countries. Thirdly, I will examine advertising in both cultures, with its history and regulation. Then I will analyse its linguistic features and its semiological dimension, that is, how advertisements produce meaning through signs. Finally, I will consider the pedagogical and didactic implications for the Secondary classroom.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted. For the language of advertising I have used Geoffrey Leech's English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in Great Britain (Longman, 1966), Guy Cook's The Discourse of Advertising (Routledge, second edition 2001) and Torben Vestergaard and Kim Schrøder's The Language of Advertising (Blackwell, 1985). For the semiology of the image I have drawn on Judith Williamson's Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising (Marion Boyars, 1978) and on Roland Barthes's essay "Rhetoric of the Image" (Communications 4, 1964). For institutions and data I have relied on the BBC, Ofcom, the Advertising Standards Authority, the Federal Communications Commission and the Library of Congress. As for the legal framework, the content is placed within the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020 of 29 December), Royal Decrees 217/2022 and 243/2022, and the Extremaduran Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022.