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Basic concepts of environmental journalism

Giving a clear definition of the term «environmental journalism», it is most reasonable to start from the concept of journalism. As far as we know that journalism is the collection, processing and dissemination of information, accordingly it we can safely give a definition of environmental journalism as a collection, processing and dissemination of data associated with the theme of ecology. In the field of environmental journalism, the main role-plays the journalist, who seeks to enrich the public knowledge about ecological issues of different levels. He reaches his goal by elevating the quality, range of his publication and depth coverage of different environmental disasters. Nowadays, when we are often faced by such definitions as political journalism, social journalism etc. the definition ecological journalism begins to be more interest for the society and the state.

Key words: Environment, journalism, ecology, data, environmental journalism.

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Экологиялық журналистиканың негізгі ұғымдары

«Экологиялық журналистика» терминіне анықтама бере отырып, автор қоғамның назарын осы мәселеге өз туындысы арқылы қалай аударуға болатынын талдады. Экологиялық журналистикада басты рөлді журналист атқарады. Экологиялық проблемаларды терең зерттей отырып, саяси журналистика және әлеуметтік, спорттық журналистикадан ерекшелене түсіп қоғамдық сананы өзіне аударады. Сондай-ақ мемлекеттің де назарын экологиялық проблемаға бұрады.

Түйін сөздер: экологиялық журналистика, экология, мәліметтер, қоршаған орта.

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Основные концепции экологической журналистики

Давая определение термину «экологическая журналистика», наиболее разумно исходить в целом из концепции журналистики. Поскольку традиционно считается, что журналистикой являются сбор, обработка и распространение информации, то, соответственно можно в этом русле определить экологическую журналистику как «сбор, обработку и распространение данных, связанных с темой экологии». В экологической журналистике главную роль играет журналист, стремящийся обогатить общественное понимание в отношении экологических проблем любого уровня. Он достигает своей цели путем повышения качества своих публикаций и глубоким освещением тех или иных экологических проблем. Сегодня, когда мы чаще сталкиваемся с такими выражениями, как политическая, социальная, спортивная журналистика, термин экологическая журналистика, или журналистика окружающей среды, вызывает новый интерес со стороны общества и государства.

Ключевые слова: экологическая журналистика, экология, данные, окружающая среда.

**BASIC CONCEPTS OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
JOURNALISM**

Environmental journalism formed at the junction of two sciences – ecology and journalism sticks.

The founder of the ecology is considered the German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834- 1919 gg.), which for the first time in 1866, used the term «ecology». He wrote: «By ecology we mean the general science of the relation of the organism and the environment, where we include all the conditions of existence in the broad sense of the word. They are part of the organic part of inorganic nature». At that time, the term meant only the name of science; it represents one of the sections Biology.

Journalism (from the French journal – a diary, jour – day. Goes back to the Latin Diurna – daily.) – One of the most important social phenomena of modern life, the kind of mass-information activities, ensuring the smooth interaction between the individual, group of people and society as a whole, between different social spheres and even between generations. The process of journalistic activity consists of collecting, processing, storage and dissemination of relevant periodic public information [1].

Nowadays, we are often faced in our lexicon with such expressions as «environmental journalism», «political journalism», «economic journalism», «crime reporter, «the church press» etc. The phrase «environmental journalism» occurs much less frequently. The society was able to use this expression in different way; nevertheless, as a specialty, it was formed relatively recently, during the adjustment period.

Discussion of environmental problems, both at a high political level and at the local, there would have been available to the public without the active illumination of the subject in the media. «... The media is the main channel for the challenges of sustainable development, – says L.A. Kokhanova. – Confessing principle differentiable approach to the audience, they provide a separation of the individual and group needs within the community, establish relationships between states. Print, radio and television united with the computer – this is a bridge to the future «[2].

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definition of environmental journalism as a collection, processing and dissemination of data associated with the theme of ecology.

Who is the Environmental Journalist?

Who owns the information, he owns the world, or can change it?

The main goal of the Environmental journalist is to educate people about the serious state of the environment, to catch their attention and force them to think and act. Many people are simply not interested in environmental problems; society tends to assume that things like land, trees, plants, animals, and water resources – the resources they depend upon for their livelihoods – will always be there [3].

Unfortunately, there is large amount of people thinking that climate changes, which are occurring on the planet, will not touch them. They used to hear about environmental problems, but rarely faced it. The society is also used to think that environmental problems are secondary, in contrast to economic, political, social etc. They are right to some extent, but ignoring them can end in disaster for us and for future generations.

Journalists working in the field of ecology have a unique power to help solving some disasters. Using the power of media, journalists notify about challenges and make the environmental problems more available and understandable to the public. The ability to highlight the seriousness of such problems as air pollution, climate warming, the disappearance of some animal species etc. and help the society to realize the importance of such factors should be the main qualities of the environmental journalist.

Summing up we can say that without journalism, the society is not able to be informed about some environmental disasters and to realize their significance. Therefore, journalism is effective on both the government and the public platform; it is influential in making change in environmental problems.

The definition of «Ecology» and «Environment»

While determining the concept of «environmental journalism» more narrowly, we can say that it implies a continuous, extensive coverage of environmental issues of both global and local significance, and the subject of such journalism can be not only problems but also positive examples in the field of use and protection of the Environment.

What is ecology as a field of knowledge? In general, a modern general ecology (often it is not exactly called the global environment) – the scientific direction, examining the totality of natural and social phenomena, and partly subjects from the point of view of the status and development of ecosystems,

interrelated sets of organisms of different species, as well as its interaction with the environment. Translated from the Greek «oikos» – a house, «logos» – science, knowledge. Thus, the «ecology» – the science of the house, about the relationship between living organisms and their environment. The concept of ecology is often identifying with the environment: even appeared definition – «good environment», «bad environment», although the protection of the environment – a collection of a variety of activities aimed at the preservation, use and reproduction of living and inanimate nature [4].

Environmental Journalism Features

Environmental journalism like any other science has some specific functions, which can be defined as follows:

Information function: providing audience clear awareness about the situation of the environment, information about of existing or potential risks to human health, the breach of ecosystem, threats to stability of sustainable development;

Educational function: Love and care for the environment from an early age, the risk and the negative effects of human impact on the environment; the formation of relationships between individual events, such as car exhaust and global processes – the greenhouse effect, or the loss of the ozone layer and, consequently, climate change or the occurrence of a health risk;

Organizational function: Here the Environmental journalism has some sub functions as brings people together to make important decisions, «inspiring» the society to start thinking and worrying about the environment around them, actions aimed to prevent any environmental problems.

There also some specific topics while talking about environmental journalism, which are interested as for the society as for the journalist:

– Information about the elements of the state of the environment, such as air and atmosphere, water, soil, landscape and natural sites, biological diversity and its components, including genetically modified organisms, and the interaction between these elements;

– Information on the factors influencing the state of elements of the environment, such as substances, energy, noise and radiation; and activities or measures, including administrative measures, environmental agreements, policies, affecting or likely to affect the elements of the plans and programs of the environment; analysis of the costs and results in decision-making on issues related to environment;

– Information on the health and safety of people, the living conditions of people, cultural sites

and buildings to the extent that they are or may be exposed, consisting of elements of the environment

Environmental information

The expression «Environmental information» can be define in various options and means any information in written, visual, aural, electronic or any other material form on:

a) The state of elements of the environment, such as air and atmosphere, water, soil, land, landscape and natural sites, biological diversity and its components, including genetically modified organisms, and the interaction between these elements;

b) Factors, such as substances, energy, noise and radiation, and activities or measures, including administrative measures, environmental agreements, policies, legislation, affecting or likely to affect the elements of the plans. In addition, there are cost-benefit analysis and other economic analyzes and assumptions used in decision-making on issues related to environmental decision;

c) The health and safety of people, the living conditions of people, cultural sites and buildings to the extent that they are affected or may affect the state of elements of the environment or, through these elements, factors, activities or measures referred to in subparagraph.

Naturally, this definition is only one of many possible. However, it is most fully reflecting the essence of the concept. First, the definition reflects the fact that environmental information is not limited to «information on the state of the environment», whether it is the concentration of airborne pollutants, or the number of animal populations. To analyze or try to solve environmental problems is meaningless without affecting their causes. In addition, the importance and consequences of such problems, which include not only a change in the state of elements of the environment, but also the impact on public health, socio-cultural environment. Such investigations often determine the significance, the relevance of environmental issues. Another important aspect of this definition is that environmental information includes information of different types. In addition to all sorts of measurements, scientific papers and textbooks it may be regulations, plans and programs, information, economic, etc.

At present, the environment was divided into a number of scientific and applied fields and disciplines, sometimes far from the original understanding of it as a biological science. The term «ecology» is not always used in the canonical sense. Even more evident following the trend today is almost everything that you can at least to some extent

linked to the environment, the problems of man and nature interaction, called ecology. There were many specific areas of environmental science, where the word «ecology» is already being used, rather, in a figurative sense: the ecology of culture, ecology spirit, the environment and architecture, etc. [5].

The problems of environmental journalism

Environmental journalism can be attributed to one of the forms of scientific journalism. Nevertheless, there is a great ignorance among the population. The reason is the lack of real educational standards in this field. This is despite the fact of surveys show the interest of the population in healthy lifestyles and a healthy environment. In other words, on the basis of interviewed people I can say, that almost 85 out of 100 persons are interested in the safety of environment. Many of them are discourage about the air condition in their town, the polluted water and the disappearance of some animal species. Many families have children, and the understanding that their children will grow up in the bad ecological condition worried them a lot.

The society is interested in the safety of the nature, but do not do a big effort for it. As the survey shows, many people are not ready to abandon cars and start using environmentally friendly transports such as bicycles or tram, eco-buses etc. Information read or heard by them from Mass media about some ecological issues not much affect them. As I mentioned above environmental issues are less important for the society and even for the government. On the background of other problems such financial, economic, political or social issues, the field of ecological disaster sounds less important. Therefore, environmental publications are less popular compared to other topics. As an example in Kazakhstan there are some scientific environmental magazines called «Ecology and Sustainable development», «Ecology and Industry of Kazakhstan», Youth Environmental Magazine «I and the Earth», which are mainly read by Scientifics, students of the faculty of biology and less by usual readers. According to my survey, 1 out of 10 citizens know or heard about these magazines.

There is another side while talking about the problems of environmental publication, which is called the state. Sometimes the state becomes a big barrier in the way of publications on environmental issues. Occasionally the state prohibits or impedes journalists to publish or to announce some environmental information in the interest of their own purposes. Such situations happen while the government wants to construct roads, bridge or buildings in the place of parks, forest etc.

There also are some challenges for journalists who are working in the field of environment such as:

1) Lack of environmental and scientific training. Reporters or pen-writers without specialized training might ignore complicated environmental stories altogether or, if they attempt them, the results might be less than satisfactory for readers.

2) Limited access to governmental data on environmental conservation. As it was mentioned before, sometimes the government can prohibit the activity of reporters in the purpose of safety or even their own. In this case, the reporters are obliged to stop any activities.

3) The existence of forest mafias (which is quite rare) threatens their professional activities as well as their private lives [6].

Results

As I mentioned above modern human activity – production and consumption – has a clear negative impact on the environment. Moreover, if a person

is sometimes difficult to trace a healthy relationship between his activity and the care of the environment around him, then he creates all the conditions of a risk of an environmental disaster. Environmental disaster will impose direct threats to life and health of human, as well as future generations.

Environmental journalism is one of the tools in solving environmental problems. In addition, it imposes a responsibility on journalists covering environmental topics. It is particularly important to the journalist he understood the essence of the problem, which it says.

The ability of a good highlighting of a problem or qualitatively written article will definitely puzzle the listener or reader and will force to act. No matter what actions people will take, will they start planting trees or will stop littering or even prefer bikes instead of cars, the information or data given by the journalist made them think, worry and act. This is the main goal of the environmental journalist, not to allow his readers to be indifferent to the ecology.

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