

## THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN LINGUISTIC UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION

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Although at the beginning this article was designed with a wider scope, the very start of our research showed that the Macedonian television production of the national television has made a masterpiece in the educational field that deserves to be noted. It is a show we all very well know, especially my generation - Tousled alphabet (or: massy hair alphabet). The title of the series is very original, picturesque and - FOR CHILDREN – TOUSLED ALPHABET.



Let us present its ID card (as in the show each letter has its own ID, we can make one for the whole show): it is a

- TV series, born in 1985 (31 episodes)

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- Parents: the playwright Goran Stefanovski and Slobodan Unkovski the director, and a whole wonderful cast: Sinolichka Trpkova Aleksandar Chaminski, Nenad Stijanovski, Jovica Mihajlovski, Mimi Tanevska, Kiril Ristovski, Peter Arsovski, Svetlana Stojanovska, Gjorgji Jolevski, Sofija Kunovska, Sonja Mihajlova, Dragan Spasov, Goce Todorovski, Marin Babic. The ABC – band belongs to its immediate family (Ana, Bodan and Vlatko) and a great cast of child actors.

Why have we chosen precisely this series? There is no need to extensively discuss the power of media as it is a well-known fact. Sociologists have written about it, psychologists have investigated it, and politicians have fought to make use of it. We are interested in the power of media, of which the most accessible and widely used is the TV (perhaps already as much as the Internet), in educational purposes. The negative effects on the development of young people are also widely discussed by different professional profiles: sociologists, psychologists and primarily educators. Aggressiveness in films and, unfortunately, even in animated series, negative effects of shows (some of them are even so literal-minded that they can have a stagnating effect on the personality development of young people) are discussed. But the positive role media can play is very scarcely mentioned, probably because there are not many shows of this type.

Media can have explicit and implicit impact. Explicit, proclaiming and presenting specific content, and implicit - by offering a model as an example (about communication, behavior, moral and aesthetic value). In my personal opinion, the second impact has a much stronger role in upbringing. The thesis, "Don't watch what I do, but listen to what I say" is a thesis that is an example of demagoguery that does not pass, particularly with children (it creates anger, rage, especially in the family).

In this particular case we will briefly discuss a program made with an explicit goal to act educationally, and as we will see, it has an impact on upbringing too. Its impact on upbringing is not explicit but implicit. It does not educate by using words but by acting. Programs that have an impact on upbringing are very scarce (at least the ones that have positive effect). The hardest thing is to make an educational program that will not be of the type "it pushes it down my throat." So, Tousled Alphabet is a children's program which is also watched with pleasure by adults, because it is subtle in its educational component that comes spontaneously and unobtrusively because of

the love with which it was made, the enthusiasm and creativity of its authors and the entire team. (It is quite understandable, given the age for which it is intended.)

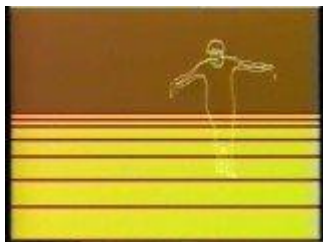
The program has no story, it is not educational in the classic sense, but has characters represented incredibly well. Each episode consists of several segments. It is multifaceted from both the technical aspect and the content-educational aspect. It educates linguistically and makes children literate; it educates generally and artistically: drawing - cartoon, graphics, music and a little literature. It is modern in expression (even after more than 20 years), and nurtures tradition (each episode has a SEGMENT with folk proverbs or riddles, and in the musical part the band ABC processes wonderful Macedonian folk songs).

The text that follows will show each SEGMENT separately and will concentrate on the educational objectives that are accomplished with it. Unfortunately, the segments may not be in that order in which they appear in the episodes, because this great children's program is not available for wider use in an electronic form.

### **SEGMENT 1: *ID of a letter***

Description: Computer-processed form of the letter made of human silhouettes.

Objectives achieved: Introduction to the letter, live and warm, a kind of its personification; aesthetic experience is present.



### **SEGMENT 2: *This letter looks like ....***

Description: Children dressed up as for a party, say what the letter looks like to them. For example for the letter O (it looks like) a ball, bagel, pan, J - (looks like) a fishhook, but also as "when someone is calling me with a finger!"



### **SEGMENT 3: *Noli and Sasho***

Description: The two characters, Noli and Sasho, correctly pronounce and write (printed and in manuscript), the respective letter on the whole board.

Objectives realized: Correct pronunciation and writing (educational – literacy); upbringing objective – Noli and Sasho compete with each other, but they compete in a healthy spirit in the sense of play and stimulation, and finally they shake hands.



### **SEGMENT 4: *The herb woman***

This is a character that is more interesting to older viewers who can understand it. The herb woman is a typical "woman", in love and amorous, "femininely" shy, naive and flirtatious. As a final result she is sweet and less funny.

Educational objective: Children learn about plants beginning in a respective letter and about plants in general.



### **SEGMENT 5: *The Hunter***

The Hunter is a character who speaks about wild animals and birds. He should be bold, but he is not such ... much. For an animal he says, "it is put under the protection

of the law." And he adds: "I am not under the protection of the law. I don't know what is being waited for!"

The objective is educational: Children learn names of animals and something about animals in general.

As for upbringing – there is again humor! Nice, sweet, and cute. Unobtrusive.



### **SEGMENT 6: *The Clowns***

Clowns are characters who pronounce words wrongly. The error is in the letter that is being studied. A *beep* follows each wrong pronunciation. Mistakes are repaired by Sasho and Noli (*you should not say ... but ...*) playing the role of teachers (who are just writing on the blackboard, Noli is wearing glasses in order to look "more like a teacher").

### **SEGMENT 7: Animation – cartoon dedicated to the letter**

Each letter has its animation. Animations are Dushan Petrichic's masterpiece. They are "tousled", childish letters that have a character (characters) and a story. E.g. M stands for bad luck (*малер* in Macedonian). The story is "unlucky" (*малерозен* in Macedonian). The letter P (П in Cyrillic alphabet!) "breaks" in the middle and it "becomes" an M. T is "hard" (*тврдо* in Macedonian), which is suggested by a hammer hitting the letter. O is a "mirror" (*огледало* in Macedonian – the half-circle is reflected in the lake (on water surface) and we see it as an O.

This is probably the most recognizable part of the "Tousled Alphabet". Wonderful, inventive, shown in a "tousled" manner story for every letter.

### **SEGMENT 8: Dialects (words with a respective letter in Macedonian dialects)**

Description: Young actors, dressed in folk costumes, say a word beginning in the respective letter in different Macedonian dialects (the name of the dialect is also mentioned).

Objective realized: Introduction to the concept of dialectology and dialects, as well as ethnology, but without mentioning these terms. Appropriate for their age, children find out that in their language the same word may sound differently in different areas, and that each place has its national costume (which looks really nice and luxurious).



#### **SEGMENT 9: *Proverbs and riddles***

Here we are introduced to the character played by Jovica Mihajlovski. Cornered between graphically designed teeth, he is telling proverbs and riddles. E.g. *A friend in need is a friend indeed*. A “fearful” character!

#### **SEGMENT 10: *What do I want to be***

Description: Children actors, at the swimming-pool, with complete "pool" costumes, list occupations.

Realized objectives: Beside learning professions beginning in a respective letter (ophthalmologist, otorhinolaryngologist), children learn the concept of words that denote gender (sex) differences - chimney-sweep, woman chimney-sweep (with the correct emphasis on the third syllable from the end of the word). And, of course, with wit and humor (profession "*weirdo*"!).



#### **SEGMENT 11: *Names***

Description: Children – actors/actresses say names beginning in the respective letter. In the adult world this science is called: Onomastics (Anthroponomastics). That is the educational objective.



### **SEGMENT 12: *Correct pronunciation and writing***

Description: This segment has only two “characters”: a big mouth on the screen that pronounces words containing the respective letter and a written text related to the pronounced content.

The realized objective is obvious.

### **SEGMENT 13: *ABC Band***

The Band Ana, Bodan and Vlatko sing segments of beautiful Macedonian folk songs.

What Ana sings can also be read on the screen. However, IT SHOULD BE HEARD.

Here the experience is artistic.



### **SEGMENT 14: *The Literate***

Description: This is a character of the actor Nenad Stojanovski. He talks about Macedonian literature. It is awesome to hear a lyrical folk song from K0stursko region. Really rare experience!

Realized objectives: Educational and artistic-aesthetic.

### **SEGMENT 15: *The learned man and the simple woman*<sup>2</sup>**

Description: This is a content that will be more understood by adults, but children can feel it. There are two characters. One is a learned man who flaunts international words (beginning in a respective letter), and the other is a simple girl who corrects him and

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<sup>2</sup> The last two names of the segments are free interpretations of the author of this text.

"translates". They are constantly in an amiable conflict, in which she outwits him (in a simple way).

Realized objective: This SEGMENT is something like a Dictionary of foreign words (international words). The educational objective is obvious.

What can we add in conclusion? Powerful is the role of media in education and upbringing. In both explicit and implicit way. Our presentation is dedicated to a program for children (and adults) that is really multi-layered (like "a cabbage with three hundred shirts"). It makes people literate, it educates and develops aesthetic values. It cherishes tradition and culture and uses multiple forms of expression. It is modern in its expression (though not so young, it is more than 20 years old) and is always fresh.

So where is the objection? The objection is not in the program, but after the program. Why cannot we find it anywhere to use it at home, and not just at home but maybe in preschool and school? Such pearls are rarely created and should be nurtured. New generations also need this program so that we are not the only ones who are richer for such great experience.

## **REFERENCES:**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1To\\_P7kwsds](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1To_P7kwsds) (Tousled Alphabet – introduction clip)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4BdtnKOQK4> (Tousled Alphabet – dialects)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4r4\\_c9tyY4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4r4_c9tyY4) (Tousled Alphabet – part of an episode)

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-2533839748201020288#> (fragments from different episodes)

<http://mesto.com.mk/video/7BW XK55O65GY/%D0%91%D1%83%D1%88%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D0%90%D0%B7%D0%B1%D1%83%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0> (Tousled Alphabet- picture book)

<http://www.mtv.com.mk/mk/emisii/obrazovni.aspx> (Tousled Alphabet, Lexicomaniacs, little peppers, little pearls) – but they can neither be watched nor downloaded

<http://www.mtv.com.mk/mk/emisii.aspx>