



Getting Reading Right – Critical Awareness in Handling International Media

‘Language is the dress of thought’
(Johnson)

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MESS HE CAN!

SEE SUNSPORT

WILLIAMSON OUT

LEAKY CHUMP TIME

By STEVE HAWKES

DEFENCE Secretary Gavin Williamson was sacked yesterday over leaks from a national security summit. Last night he faced calls for a criminal investigation after the PM said there was "compelling evidence" he briefed confidential details about tech giant Huawei.

Full Story — Pages 8 and 9



**Defence Sec sacked
over Huawei secret**



SEE
PAGE
4 &

New picture ...
Princess Charlotte
in mum Kate's snap
for birthday today

£10
each



For more
Weekly Little Helps

TE
Every





The decline of public language

- ‘A healthy public language knits public and political leaders together and precisely because it succeeds in drawing ordinary citizens into the debate.’
- “When public language loses its power to explain and engage, it threatens the broader bond between people and politicians.”

The three dangers:

- Spin
- 24 hour news cycle
- Big data – tell people what they want to hear.

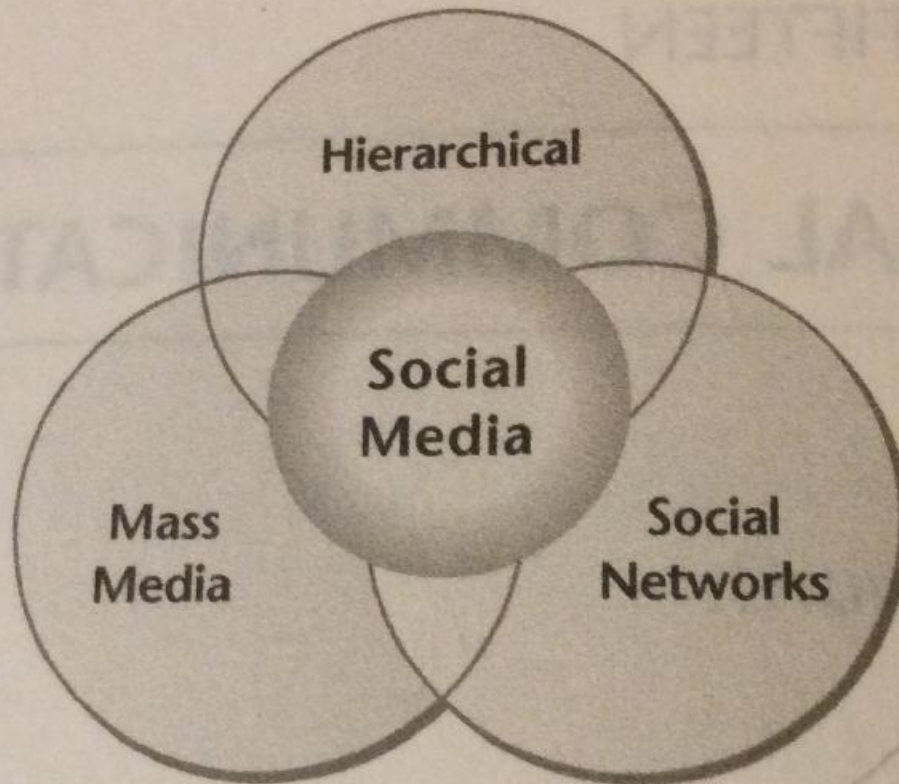


How do we get our news?

- Books
- Press (Newspapers, journals, etc)
- Media (TV, Radio, running captions)
- Internet (Huffington Post)
- Social media (Twitter, Facebook,
- Citizen journalism (Blogs/Vlogs etc.)

ABOVE ALL: Downloads

FIGURE 15.1 BUILDING BLOCKS OF AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM





What's the problem?

- Facts vs impressions
- Opinions vs information
- Bias (conscious or unconscious) vs balance



The dilemma



- General Knowledge

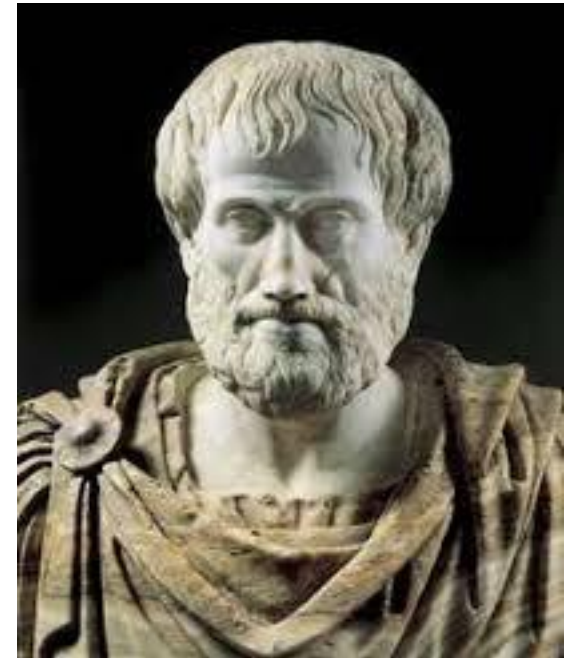
VS

- Know how to
(Google is my friend.)



Aristotle

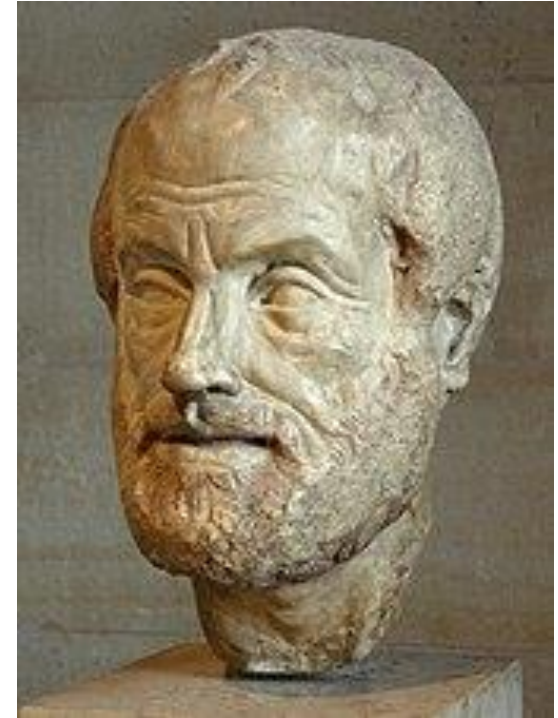
- Two forms of Discourse
- Dialectic (Argument)
- Antistrophos (Rhetoric)
- ***“The language of explanation and persuasion”***





Aristotle (Rhetoric)

- **Logos**
(Facts)
- **Ethos**
(Empathy- say what people want to hear)
- **Pathos**
(Personality –ability to connect)
- **Auxexsis**
(amplification or exaggeration)







Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

- Welcome to the race **Sleepy Joe. I only hope** you have the intelligence, **long in doubt**, to wage a successful primary campaign. It will be nasty - **you will be dealing with people who truly have some very sick & demented ideas**. But if you make it, I will see you at the Starting Gate!
- 2:22 PM - Apr 25, 2019
- 78K people are talking about this



Post Truth

- *‘an expression of frustration and anguish from a liberal class discombobulated by the political disruptions of 2016.’*

Evan Davis ‘Post Truth’ 2017



What are the techniques?

1. Parataxis (the tri colon)

- *‘We knew Saddam Hussein’s record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using, weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently.’*
- *George W. Bush*



2 Near truths

The £350 million bus

“Don’t rely on experts.”





3. Constructive ambiguity metaphors

- *‘Observe calmly; secure our position; cope with affairs deeply; **hide our capacities and bide our time**; be good at maintaining a low profile; and never claim leadership’. (Deng Shao Peng)*
- *taoguang yanghui,*
- *‘**hide brightness, nourish obscurity**’*
(Huang, 2011; Chen & Wang, 2011).



4. Neologisms

- *smart* power,
- *smart*phone,
- *smart* city,
- *constructive* ambiguity,
- *a just* war,
- *enlightened* self- interest
- *The new normal*
- *Post truth*
- *Fake news*



5. Persuasive language

- ‘Don’t sell the steak, sell the sizzle.’
- ‘Shall I fill it up?’ (gasoline stations)

(Elmer Wheeler 1937 ‘Tested Sentences that Sell’ Prentice Hall)



6. Nonsense expressions for effect

- *'I am not here to present a future of tomorrow. For my country, the future is today not tomorrow.'*
- Matteo Renzi Davos Conference



7. Harold Evans advice

Look for materials that

- don't use the active voice. (avoid responsibility, place blame)
- aren't specific. (too general)
- don't use concrete terms. (too vague)
- use lots of abstract nouns. (too abstract)
- use lots of emotive adjectives. (emotion destroys balance)
- use lots of adverbs. (As above)
- repeat themselves a lot. (indocrination?)



8. Harold Evans advice

- **Avoid ‘zombie’ nouns.**

Eg. Implementation vs implement

Eg. Parking facilities vs car park

- **Avoid ‘flesh eaters’.**

Eg. At this point in time vs. now

- **Avoid pleonasms (redundant words)**

Eg. Free, gratis and for nothing



But remember...

- ‘Argument without character is lifeless. The crowds drift away. Character without argument is dangerous’ (Thompson, 2016, p.161).
- You need Logos but also Ethos and Pathos.





What should teachers do?

1. Broaden selection of text – short articles, headlines, cartoons)
2. Choose texts which may display bias.
3. Study for message comprehension and language.
4. Analyse for phrases which express opinion or show bias.
5. Help students identify words and phrases which display attitude.
6. Reflect. What have they learned?



What can teachers do?

- Use authentic materials. (headlines, tweets, blogs, etc.)
- Read between the lines.
- Get students to distinguish between facts, and opinion (and opinion disguised as facts). Logos, ethos and pathos.
- Distinguish the rhetoric.
- Read short articles (paragraphs). Students look for and learn to identify language stratagems in this presentation.
- Students read articles and edit them to make them more concise and factual.
- Reading and writing skills develop together.



**And remember,
these are the ones
who'll be affected**





Thank you



- Thank you for coming.
- Good luck in your work.
- For more information, feel free to contact

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