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THE MOBILE PHONE – A NEW FORM OF COMMUNICATION

In recent years new means of communication have been significantly intensified. What I mean here is electronic media (e-mail, discussion forums, communicators, chat) and mobile phones. We are facing their quick growth as these media undergo a permanent technical evolution. It is, in turn, connected with the change of their important parameters, such as weight, the increasing number of available functions and the spread of transmission. If we additionally take into consideration their widespread use, their globalisation seems to be obvious. There are no limits or restrictions for electronic media. Any attempt to introduce any kind of censorship is in this case pointless. Obviously, it involves the danger of propagating terrorism, pornography as well as other illegal behaviours. The mobile phones of the new generation, in turn, are slowly becoming complicated machines which give the user the possibility of not only oral communication but also of sending short written messages (SMS) and pictographs, or even using the Internet (WAP). Future models of mobile phones will have the system showing your exact position on the Earth (GPS).

Thus, we deal with not only more and more complicated and technically advanced mobile phones but with embracing new areas and, in this way, with extended semiosis. The message itself acquires new meanings independently of the type of media. Communication is possible at any distance, from any place, and in any weather conditions. One could therefore speak of new globalisation – the world is beginning to shrink and there are no inaccessible places. Semiosis embraces all the inhabitants of the Earth and there are no limits to it. Moreover, we all are potential senders or receivers. The sphere of communication knows no borders, which causes a specific

communicative unity to appear. As a result, semiosis, being the expression of communication and giving meanings, becomes common. At the same time we observe a growing expansion of a few languages (Spanish, English, German, French) that mark the direction of irreversible changes and it also facilitates globalisation. So, all the evidence confirms the statement that the presence of electronic media and mobile phones resembles the rapid development of television, which from a scientific experiment turned into an important way of influencing the behaviour of millions of people. Soon, thanks to these new media, we will be able to get closer to other people creating the “global village”. Simultaneously, it is worth noticing that television works only in one direction, while the Internet and mobile phones – in two directions.

New media that emerge from evolving technologies lead to quick communication and broaden our cognitive horizons because the transmitted messages may introduce linguistically verified elements of reality that may surprise us with their strangeness, uniqueness, and novelty. Hence, in the receiver’s mind they create epistemologically revelatory substitutes, rationalising the unknown. If we take into account the fact that the process mentioned above is of a mass character, the semiosis viewed from a global perspective gives new meaning to actually everything. It is really important for linguistic pragmatics as it turns out that all communicative barriers disappear. We are all involved in this process of new communication no matter what our attitude is.

Therefore we could say that globalisation, independently of its economic and social conditioning, possesses its own communicative uniqueness. Worth noticing is the proximity of a number of factors authenticating this complicated communicative mechanism. In the first place the virtual functions of the sender and receiver should be mentioned. It is also known that these participants of a communicative act can get in touch with delay (voice mail). Listening to a voice mail message causes a characteristic delay but it does not change the value of the text.

Such a situation has another characteristic feature. It forces one to limit themselves to the minimum of the necessary information. A hypothetical long message after some time would become only communicative noise. It can also happen in the case of a very short message. The second very important factor is the space in which the

sender and receiver are located. It plays a very important role enforcing the appropriate type of communication. In other words, the interlocutors have to adjust their language to their location. It is not only the very idiolect that matters but, first of all, the location. There exist isolated places (church, theatre, lecture hall) excluding the use of mobile phones but the voice mail may remain active there. Similar remarks are applicable to SMS messages. The maximal number of characters is in this case 160. It obviously results in the optimization of the use of language and the choice of words.

This situation necessitates the sender of the messages to follow the “mini-max principle”, which means transmitting the largest possible number of sensible structures described by the smallest possible number of words. For sure, the language of such messages differs from both literary and colloquial language. The aforementioned reasons influence the whole system of abbreviations that are understood by both sides and therefore conditioned by the uniqueness of a given language. In most of them one has to give up the use of phonemes (graphemes) which do not occur in the model English. It involves new complications, as frequently in such cases there appears communicative noise. It results in inaccuracies and incomprehensibility of the message. Next important thing is to observe the similarity between the possibility of conversing and sending or receiving SMS messages. What is meant here is the problem of space in which the sender and receiver function. If we make use of a sound signal, it is clear that we cannot talk or read everywhere.

There exist, however, a solution – a vibration signal, which reduces but does not eliminate the obstacles mentioned above. The conversation has to be postponed but SMS messages may be read or even responded to. Through mobile phones one has also the access to so called “chatting”. The same concerns pictographic messages which one can select in the Internet, create and place them in the Internet and later download or order them using SMS messages. No matter how they are acquired, they constitute an untypical iconic piece of information.

In the hands of an experienced user, the cell phone is becoming a powerful tool for mass communication. And exactly this aspect should especially be considered here. Naturally, in the first place comes globalization. That is to say that the potential sender, being at the same time the receiver - thanks to roaming- is able to make contact with the

farthest borders of our globe. Semiosis thus received initiates a new quality of study. Thus we are able to inform from any given place and at any time what is our geographical position. This is in reality a lot, and yet it does not exhaust the possibilities of the cell phone. Constant technical advancement is the cause for the popularity of the group form of interpersonal contact. Here we are dealing with the manifold increase of semiosis – its multidimensional and complex form. Therefore it encircles all of those communicating with cell phones as if by a spider's thread. In the same way all of us are under the laws of the semiosphere, in other words we exist in a world that has constant contact with sensible word creations.

Consequently – we are forced into certain language behaviors instead of others. It is not a new concept that „language is the home of existence”. It holds us within boundaries, limiting us, because we are not able to express our language communications beyond language itself. So, therefore what is the cell phone? It is a substitute - a replacement allowing for free and unrestricted interpersonal communication. Striving toward globalization obviously coincides with the strong conviction for the development of the means of mass communication. The number of cell phones sold is reaching high numbers, especially in developing countries. It confirms the general trend that a new type of telephone is encompassing the globe.

The market, of course, is demanding which explains why the different phone companies are fighting over their clients. All of this caused that the problem long ago lost its technical conditioning, and instead gave voice to financial interests. It's not at all surprising that the powerful corporations are contending over clients. However it is important to remember that along side with this goes constant technological development: as cell phones are improved and the mass production lowers its prices, the inflow of clients is the result. Services are being offered by the different phone companies, whose task is to stay ahead of the competition, mainly thanks to lower rates for specific services as well as providing services not available through other phone companies.

In such a situation we can observe the fluctuation of charges paid within the bounds of the service fee and specific calls with different telephone subscribers. In the final settling of accounts the given receiver/sender is not free at all – he depends on the

specific phone company, who determines every parameter of his contact with the world. From this it can be seen, that man is ensnared by technology, what more he is harnessed by the gears with which the machine controls him. It may be worth pondering, although it is in the realms of ethics, whether such a situation is moral beyond reproach. This problem can also be seen as utilitarian as the simple exchange of goods – one side offers a new technology, and the other agrees to pay a specified amount of money to attain it. Thus cell phones have opened a new chapter in the field of mass communication. Advancing globalization, and at the same time semiosis, mark the direction of these changes. It appears that in the current state of affairs, we are witnesses of a technological revolution.

The new form of communication which is the cell phone, reaches practically everywhere. It is fitting therefore to observe, that beyond natural ground barriers preventing sending and receiving, and possible flaws of the appliance itself as well as the depletion of the battery, the cell phone makes human communication easier even in extreme conditions. Especially since the newer models are improving the previous parameters, that is to say that they are increasing their range, showing the executed function, and activating radio or games. It's quite clear that one can dispute, to which degree we are dependent on the phone company, which determines the price of the contract, cost per minute, and the potential rates. Undoubtedly it is a booming business, which swallows up huge amounts of money, but also brings enormous profits. Here we are dealing with classical feed-back.

The development of the trade requires a great deal of investment, which in addition must be constant, while at the same time allowing the potential user to truly enjoy the needed appliance serving for mass communications. Conclusions resulting from this are clear – the cell phone conquered the world, and within a few years has become all the rage. Not only this, work is being done on its following generations, using combinations of artificial intelligence. Therefore it has to be assumed that they also will become a prized and sought after commodity. The near future is highly promising, which foreshadows successive alterations in the market. From the standpoint of the average cell phone owner these aspects are less important than further facilitation and simplification, which will become a part of his appliance.

Consequently it will result in communication becoming even more accessible, commonly understood, as well as for that purpose which the designers were aiming - becoming a marriage of several functions. Such a portable computer would have as its task helping the owner with every day life: filling the role of translator, calculator, topographer, and a complete range of other services.