

6

The Journal is published for the Council four times a year by Peter Peregrinus Ltd. (a member of ESIP)

**Editor:** Florence Marriott

**Editorial Assistant:** Beatrice Alleyne  
British Council  
10 Spring Gardens  
London SW1A 2BN  
Telephone 01-930 8466

**Production Editor:** David Mackin  
**Graphics Manager:** M. C. Partridge  
**Marketing Manager:** R. C. Sutton  
Peter Peregrinus Ltd.  
PO Box 8  
Southgate House  
Stevenage  
Herts. SG1 1HQ  
Telephone: Stevenage 3311  
(s.t.d. 0438 3311)

**Advertisement Manager:**  
Trevor M. Bell  
Peter Peregrinus Ltd.  
Station House  
Nightingale Road  
Hitchin, Herts. SG5 1RJ  
Telephone: Hitchin 53331  
(s.t.d. 0462 53331)

**1975 subscription rates:**  
Libraries: £8.20  
Individuals: £6.00  
Bulk rate: details on application to marketing manager.

This publication is copyright under the Berne Convention and the International Copyright Convention. All rights reserved. Apart from any copying under the UK Copyright Act 1956, part 1, section 7, whereby a single copy of an article may be supplied, under certain conditions, for the purposes of research or private study, by a library of a class prescribed by the UK Board of Trade Regulations (Statutory Instruments, 1957, No. 868), no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission of the copyright owners.

Multiple copying of the contents of the publication without permission is always illegal.

Opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors concerned and do not necessarily represent the views of the British Council or the publisher.

*Cover photo:*

Printed in England by  
Hull Printers Ltd.  
PO Box 32, Great Gutter Lane  
Willerby  
Hull HU10 6DH

© 1974: British Council

# educational broadcasting international

**A Journal of the British Council**

**Volume 7**

**December 1974**

**Number 4**

## Contents

### General

Access television <i>Edward Goldwyn</i>	170
Planning for the development of educational media in Thailand <i>Nicholas Bennett</i>	176
Community television techniques: possible applications overseas <i>John Johnson</i>	180
ETV in Malaysia—a personal assessment <i>Chong Seck Chim</i>	184
Effects of the mass media on individual morality <i>Professor Sir Alfred Ayer</i>	188
Outlook—No. 8: John Cain, Head of Further Education, BBC TV <i>Interviewed by Edward Walton</i>	194
The media selection process <i>John Tiffin and Peter Combes</i>	201
Research Notes. Experiments in ETV: effects of adding background <i>J. Baggeley and S. Duck</i>	208

### Information

Training in educational technology by the British Council <i>R. Sherrington</i>	210
---	-----

### Technical

Conversion to colour: Phase 3 <i>R. L. Fletcher</i>	214
---	-----

# Research Notes:

## Experiments in ETV: Effects of adding background

JON BAGGALEY, Audio-Visual Aids Unit, University of Liverpool, and  
STEVEN W. DUCK, Department of Psychology, University of Lancaster

In an earlier paper (Duck and Baggaley, 1974), the authors discussed the unintended biasing effect of one ETV production technique: namely the inclusion of audience shots in a televised lecture. By counteracting the otherwise monotonous effect of a single camera angle, many techniques of this sort are supposed to serve the valuable functions of sustaining the audience's attention and enhancing the production's overall impact. In most instances the final product is undoubtedly polished by such methods, but their side-effects are often overlooked and their actual value in relation to the material's educational impact remains to be seen.

A technique commonly used in the straightforward 'head and shoulders' delivery of information is the addition of a visual background, either by means of a rear projection or a 'keying' process. While setting the speaker in a context relevant to his subject matter, background images may in some circumstances be usefully changed apace with the exposition. Even in situations where the image is not actually essential to the delivery, it is evidently supposed that the viewer's interest is retained or increased by the provision of such extra stimulation; and the tendency to avoid a plain background at all costs is frequently to be noted in network presentations, especially of the news.

However, it is as yet an open question whether this addition of background detail is justified on the grounds given, or more importantly whether it has unconsidered and unfavourable effects on

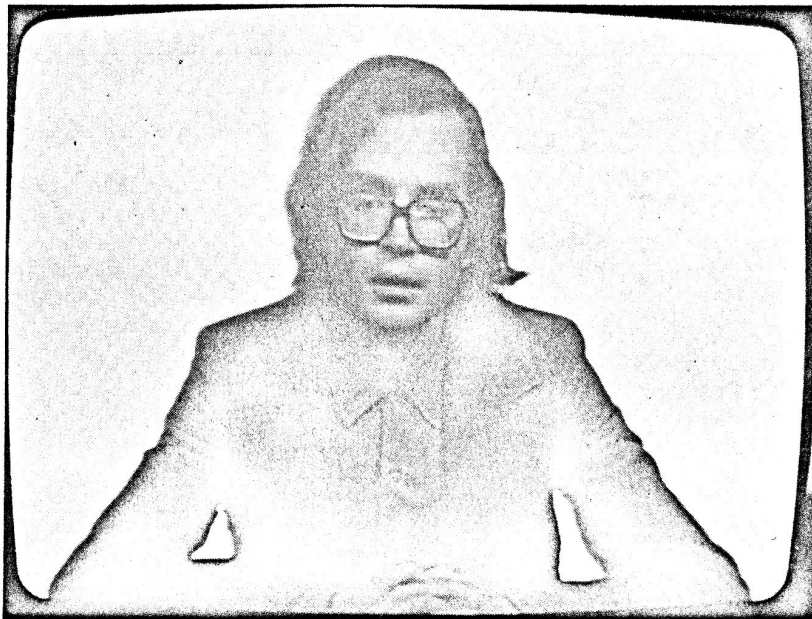
the material's overall impact. It is possible that viewers become confused by the additional background information; alternatively, and in view of the findings reported in the previous paper, their assessments of such characteristics as the speaker's authority and credibility may be unwittingly affected by the added context. A resolution of this issue would have several implications, whichever direction the effects were shown to take; and a method of assessing the effects of adding background in a television reportage situation was designed as follows.

of Liverpool University was prepared by a professional television news writer. Two versions of the material were prepared using two cameras immediately adjacent. The speaker's image on one camera was used as an 'external key source' for the studio mixer and the normal problems of keying in monochrome thus avoided. In the one version, the speaker was seen against a plain studio screen, and in the other his image was combined by the keying process with that of a landscape background (see Figures 1 to 3). The two recordings were made simultaneously and all characteristics relative to the speaker's performance (e.g. speed of delivery, vocal inflexion, facial expression, and bodily movement) were thus invariant. The tapes were shown one

### The experiment

A 70 second news-type report of an archaeological dig by members

Fig. 1



to each of two student audiences, and audience assessments of the speaker's performance were obtained by means of psychological rating scale techniques.

Analysis of the ratings revealed that the speaker was *not* seen as more interesting when the keyed background was present. Indeed, the average ratings of 'interest' in the keyed and non-keyed versions were statistically indistinguishable. However, compelling effects in other directions were observed. When presented against the picture background, the speaker was construed as significantly more honest, more profound, more reliable, and more fair than when seen against the plain background. The keying process had the entirely unforeseen effect of heightening the speaker's 'credibility' as a performer and of increasing the amount of trust which viewers were prepared to invest in him. It should be re-emphasized that the two recordings of the actual performance of the speaker were identical and that the viewers' attitudes to him were thus influenced by the presence of the background alone.

On the other hand, the manipulation did nothing to distort the viewers' perceptions of the speaker's expertise as in the televised lecture

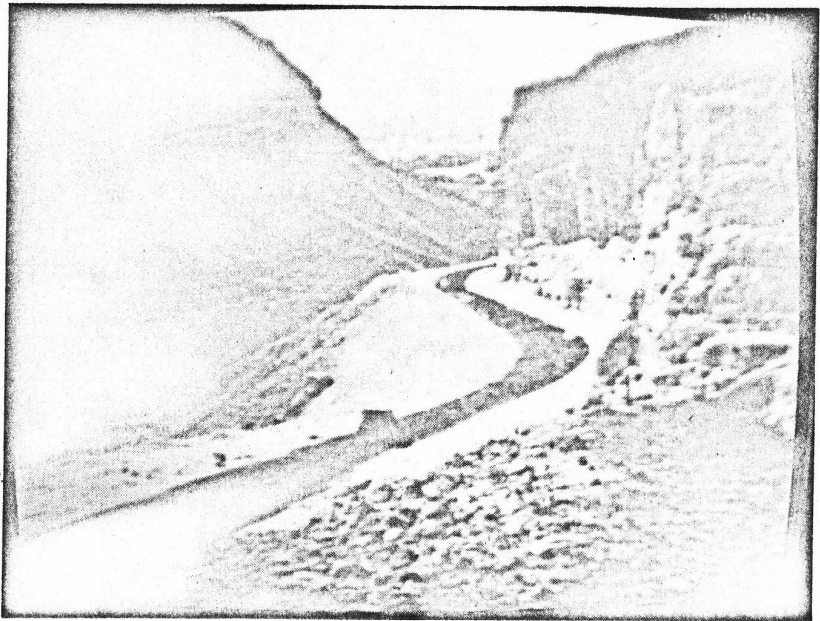
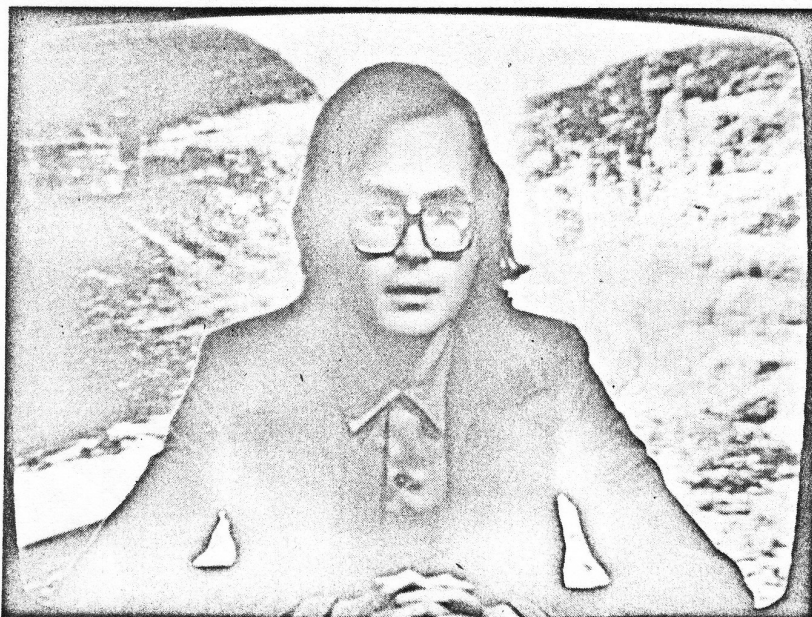


Fig. 2

situation reported previously. It may be that viewers attribute lesser expertise to a speaker in television reportage situations than in a lecture setting—realizing, for example, that most news reporters generally work to someone else's script—although they are prepared to applaud his impartiality and objectivity. While the usual justification for visual background in

Fig. 3. By use of keying technique, Figs. 1 and 2 combine



terms of its contribution to a production's overall interest value is called into doubt by the experiment, the addition of a relevant background seems to have led on balance to a favourable increase in the speaker's perceived honesty. This is clearly a finding which must be withheld from the politicians!

This paper and its predecessor indicate the subtlety of the psychological effects which standard television production techniques may have upon the viewer. In ETV usage certain production strategies may influence a programme's educational impact powerfully and quite unwittingly. In order that beneficial effects may be repeated, detrimental ones avoided, it is important that the circumstances in which they operate be investigated. In view of the vast potential of ETV and the stage which its development has now reached, it would seem unfortunate to present sceptics with easy arguments simply because we have no bank of investigation studies by which to counter them.

#### Reference

1. S. W. Duck and J. P. Baggaley: 'ETV production methods vs. educational intention', *Educational Broadcasting International*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1974.