Ways of Developing the Media Literacy of the Future English Language Teacher in the Conditions of Modern War

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Abstract: The problem of counteracting media manipulation has become particularly acute in the conditions of modern war. The author considers media literacy as a key competence of the future teacher. Higher education should improve knowledge of how to counter hostile propaganda and disinformation, maintain emotional and psychological stability, avoid mass panic, and make correct decisions based on carefully verified information. The future English teacher must master the algorithm for checking the quality of the content of Ukrainian and foreign media; learn to research the expertise of authors, sources of information, in particular, Telegram channels; master digital tools for quick and effective photo and video authentication; familiarize yourself with the key narratives and tactics of Russian propaganda in order to successfully counter them; learn to identify manipulative media content, distinguish between disinformation and harmful propaganda narratives, in particular, to be able to independently create quality content.

Keywords: media education; propaganda; manipulation; fact-checking

1. Introduction

The implementation of media education in Ukraine began in 2011. An acute need for media education was formed in 2014, primarily due to the information war. With its beginning, people felt why media education is needed. It explained how to fight in this war and not lose. Much has been said about media literacy, but nevertheless, this knowledge needs improvement. We are constantly under the influence of the media, streams of information that we receive daily and that are not processed properly. The spread of digital technologies, their penetration into all spheres of our lives is an undeniable advantage, but there are also reverse sides. Therefore, there are also dangers that can be brought by digital technologies, which we have to know in order to use the latest technologies with benefit. In general, Ukrainian society still

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knows very little about the information system, about information wars, about how in general, life happens in the modern digital world. This causes many problems (Fyodorov, 2010).

Media education is the basis for all subjects. When teachers work with information of their subject, they always work with its decoding, with its understanding, application and presentation. Therefore, media education is necessary for all teachers without exception. With the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, each of us felt acutely the need to protect the information space, develop resistance to manipulation and to build the right communication for the world. In other words, all of us have to work on our own media literacy.

2. The Media Literacy Skill

It is this skill that helps maintain emotional and psychological stability, as well avoid mass panic. Media literacy allows you to make the right decisions based on verified information. This, in turn, it affects our well-being, security and future planning. Systematic work with media literacy at the state level is a contribution to the development of democratic society. After all, media-literate citizens conduct constructive dialogues and make balanced political decisions.

Everyone is well aware of what ordinary literacy is. The easiest one is the ability to read and write. The next level of literacy is functional literacy. This is when we are not just that we know how to read and write, we use the acquired skills in practice in various situations in real life for understanding between people, development of ourselves and our own community. Media literacy is an extension of these abilities, which allows us to "filter" useful and verified information in the stream of numerous messages, news, etc.

This skill is critically important. After all, today we live in a situation of "overload information". The amount of knowledge and amount of news that is used to be, for example, could be accumulated during the entire 17th century, but now it is generated in a week. That is how a modern person is forced to perceive tens of thousands of times more information, than her ancestors 300-400 years ago. (Ivanov; Volosheniuk & Dziuba, 2012).

Media literacy is primarily an understanding of how media works and awareness that it shapes public opinion. According to the Detector research media from 2021, for example, 25 percent of Ukrainians were convinced that they are not affected by media in any way. That is, as much as a quarter of the respondents did not realize that everything they read on the Internet or watch on television, directly or indirectly shapes their worldview. However, media literacy is not limited to awareness of media influence and understanding of content creation processes. The second significant component of media literacy is the ability to evaluate messages using both

digital skills and fact-checking tools, as well as your critical thinking. And the third important component of media literacy is responsible creation and content distribution. It is about the ability to competently communicate your own thoughts and predict the consequences of such communication. This means that we realize and consider the impact of the content we create.

3. Comprehensive Study Results

In March 2021, the NGO "Detector Media" conducted a comprehensive study "Index media literacy of Ukrainians". Its results showed that media literacy of 15% of Ukrainians is low and only 8% has it high. The rest of the Ukrainians has an average level. In particular, the study found that a person's media literacy is influenced by a number of factors — gender, age, income and level of education. It is interesting that the biggest differences in the level of media literacy are observed among people with different material status. The study showed: among those who have enough funds only for basic needs — 72% have low or lower income from average level of media literacy. At the same time, among those who have sufficient income and can save money, media literacy is only 33%. A big role in the development of media literacy is played by trust, especially trust in the media. The more society trusts the mass media, the better it indicates its critical thinking. Of course, trust is primarily guaranteed by the quality of work of the mass media itself. The Ukrainians are wary and sometimes even hostile towards the media. For example, despite the fact that more than half of the population consumes content from television, only 10% of this content is trusted.

Audience and trust in television, radio and internet media have grown. And the increase in the number of news readers in social networks, which became 13% more than in 2021, related to the desire to receive information as soon as possible. The risks of reading fake or false information have increased significantly in racing internet media trying to get the news out as soon as possible. Among 76.6% of citizens using social networks as a source information, 66% choose Telegram, 61% - YouTube, another 58% - Facebook.

The key advantages of Telegram under such conditions are the chronological feed, simplicity of the interface, active transition to this network of state communication, in particular, and security, availability of multifunctional chatbots, communication speed, actual absence content moderation by the network, etc. However, these advantages have a reverse side. It is important to clearly distinguish facts from opinions and assessments. A fact is an event that actually happened, the truth of which can be verified, is not in doubt. An opinion is a concept about something based on interpretation of facts, on a subjective and emotional attitude towards them. Evaluation is a way of determining the weight of something.

In terms of information war in order to maintain information hygiene it is important to know which tools can be used for this. One of such tools is fact checking which means checking up facts. Previously, those who checked the newspaper from point to point were called fact checkers to the point, so as not to make mistakes in various numbers, surnames, proper names, specified facts, etc. Today, this word denotes a separate category of engaged journalism analysis and verification of statements by politicians, opinion leaders, messages in other media and social networks. Accordingly, those who engage in such activities are called fact checkers. To learn distinguishing fakes is more important than ever. Untruth affects our decision-making. We make decisions based on the information we receive. If we receive inaccurate information, then, accordingly, our decisions can turn out to be wrong too. So, no one should influence our decisions, as fact-checking has to become a daily habit. It is used to detect and refute fakes and manipulations. Actually, a fake imitates the real thing news, imitates reality. However, manipulations occur much more often in the news, as well as in social networks. Manipulation is a half-truth, when lies are strung on some real facts, suppressed in order to prioritize the most favorable or the most negative.

4. Disinformation and its Influence

It is possible to identify that there is something wrong with the news we read in the following ways: Title — the most frequent method of manipulation, because most often people do not read the news beyond the headline. So, it is necessary to take it as a rule – if the title bothers you, evokes emotions, then read the text of the news too. Also, another indicator that shows unreliability is when the news is built purely on anonymous or dubious sources. It is always necessary to pay attention to where this or that information came from. It often happens so that everything has a different appearance in the original source. Remember how the game works "broken phone". The same thing often happens in journalism. And even more often, if we are talking about propaganda and disinformation, then a distorted quote, facts are used deliberately. The new cannot be trusted if it reports the facts that all residents of the city and country claim. Generalization is also manipulation and a way of creating a fake. The next criterion is visualization, namely questionable photos and videos that accompany the news. Human nature is such that we believe what we see in front of us. However, visual fakes are no less popular than manipulations in text. Therefore, even if the news is accompanied by photo confirmation or video, but this news causes doubts, it is necessary to check it as well.

Propaganda is an integral part of war. In fact, it is an influence on public opinion with the aim of creating a certain image of thinking in the population in order to incline the audience to your side. When we talk about propaganda, we talk about a number of channels and tools, as well as methods that form information flows,

designed for the maximum audience. For example, these are mass media, opinion leaders, bloggers, bot farms. However, propaganda is not just news. We see the promotion of certain views and styles of thinking, stereotypes through literature, art, cinema, science, education, religion. Among the tools of propaganda are narratives, fakes (texts, photos and videos), rumors, networks, telegram channels, entire TV channels and radio stations, bloggers and opinion leaders, books, films, theater, names of streets and cities, own interpretation of history. In general, traditional methods of propaganda are simplifications (you noticed that fakes always very simple and clear), silence (when they try to give only part of the information) and displacement (when using certain information aids to distract attention from negative current events). In influencing they use the well-known half-truth method, which is also called 60/40 —when they take part of a lie, part of the truth and mix them together. Among others propaganda methods are false reasoning, violations, cause-and-effect relationships, substitution of concepts, labeling, edited photos and videos, fake documents. Propaganda uses special terms and messages designed for different audiences in different countries, it uses shortcuts, applying specific language.

In the conditions of a hybrid war, where there are hundreds of fakes, manipulations and info kids around, we can protect ourselves — in taking responsibility for our own consumption information. First of all, we are to take care of information hygiene. We have already mentioned how important it is to unsubscribe from all anonymous Telegram channels, analyze who and why you usually see in the news feed, which media you read, which of the experts you trust and from which reasons. The main feature to pay attention to when analyzing messages is emotions. If, after reading the news, you want to go somewhere, do something, or as much as possible quickly forward a message you've received — tell yourself to stop. More likely after all, they are trying to influence you. Do a digital detox — stop reading the news all the time. Especially before going to bed. Try to identify a few sources that employ journalists who value reputation and are responsible for what is written and said, and if mistakes occur, then recognize them. Determine when you read news and analytics. Discussions in social networks often heat up bot farms, so when you read comments or when entering into a debate with someone, make sure that it is a real person and not a bot. Another piece of advice is to get to the bottom of it, sit down and understand a topic that interests you or which information is being spread, but you do not know what it is, not simplifying, but trying to understand how it works.

If you want to be effective on the information front, you need a strategy and its understanding. It is very important to immediately build a system for your project, your own page, blog, through which the content will be delivered. Then this strategy will be implemented through clear tactical steps. There is a basic rule – the reliability of information. And nothing else than the truth, constructed on the credibility of the trust in you, could be more effective. Therefore, it is very important immediately form your information front on the basis of reliable and verified information. You must be sure of the sources you cite, have a list of them at hand. After receiving the

information, it has to be verified. The first thing when creating content is undoubtedly your goal: why it was created, what you want to convey, what your audience is, where they are. As the information you spread today will influence the future of a specific circle of your audience. You can't stop thinking about it or you won't create quality content. Consider what will be the general emotional field of your information front. If you interact through social networks, of course, it is primarily about responses to comments, timely questions, discussions. Your every action in interaction with the audience must match your strategy, and you must have developed scripts of your own behavior. For example, how to respond to a representative of your audience, who treats you favorably or criticizes you. It is also very important already at the stage of creating content to understand or predict the audience's reaction. When establishing any contact, remember the main rule of modern world – humanity. It is always important to do exactly as you would like to be done about you. Any field/direction/question has its relevant time. And if you are not the first creation and distribution, then you are already second. You should feel the speed of the modern world, to be included in the process of the world context. Everything should be clear at a glance: comprehension, literacy, facts, numbers, quotes. If the information is too complex, provide clarification immediately. If action sequences – offer clear steps. Short sentences instead of long ones, words that are understandable to the widest audience should be used. Clarity is the key to hearts. We perceive 90% of information with our eyes, because 70% of sensory receptors are in the eyes. A person uses about half of the neurons in the brain for visual processing information. It is several hundred times better for a person to follow instructions if he has one illustration. Roughly, the numbers are as follows: 10% a person remembers from what he heard, 20% - from read, 80% — from what was seen or done. We are not to lose touch with reality and try to provide information in the most accessible way.

Whether we like it or not, in today's world, everyone can be influenced disinformation, wherever it is. Accordingly, the skill of critical thinking is basic for information consumption and interaction in society. Today things like verification of information, search for sources, analytics are very important. At the same time each person has these skills developed differently: some have a high level, and some do not. Because you don't know the context of the environment the person is in, it is important to understand the basic skills of how to communicate with a him. If a person has been under such influence recently or simply consumes inaccurate information from time to time, each of us can influence to encourage him to think critically.

There is such a technique as deep listening, "deep listening". It is often used by journalists to reveal their hero in an interview. Your task is to encourage the interlocutor to speak as much as possible. Give the person a chance release everything he thinks and feels. In this way, you seem to clear the emotional bog, before getting to the heart of the matter and starting to make arguments that

contradict person's beliefs. According to psychotherapy research, people, who feel they are listened to, better understand what they are saying. As one of the most famous management practitioners Chris Voss writes, when people are heard, they become less defensive and less likely to attack. Instead, they are ready to listen to other opinions, this puts them at ease. In this condition they think logically and are ready to accept the opinion of others. Being silent and being able to listen is a simple skill, it seems. When you have much to say, when you burn from injustice, allow yourself a moment listening carefully to a person promoting propaganda, that is a super-task. Before starting to convince otherwise, it is important to build trust with interlocutor. This technique is also called imitation. People are biologically predisposed to open up and trust those who are like them. They are afraid of the other and reach for already familiar TRUST that appears between people who imitate each other. And this is a key element in conviction If we deliberately use the technique of mirroring/imitation with an interlocutor, he will be ready to open up to us more, will move towards rapprochement. And there is hope that in the end he will accept our arguments or at least think about it. It is important to understand what facts to use in response. If you understand with which propagandist narratives you may encounter, you need to know the facts, understand where they came from, have several sources to choose from, so that try to convey information. You can communicate with a person and get all the necessary information, and then gradually replace it with the correct one. You should be careful to show the sources that you think are worth to trust.

Corresponding programs were introduced in some Ukrainian universities, media literacy components were included in professional preparation of future teachers-philologists. In the following programs such tasks can be singled out as the formation of capability to perform professional search in philological and methodological journals, radio and television programs, philological, linguistic Internet sites, electronic dictionaries, reference books, web-pages of linguists and create their own electronic ones; participate in student conferences, press conferences, Internet conferences; contests, social and political events, the organization of native language holidays, language quizzes, participation in the scientific work circles and problem groups of a philological profile.

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