

Media literacy in the system of the secondary education in Russia

Alfabetización mediática en el sistema de la educación secundaria en Rusia

BYKOV, Iliia A.¹

MEDVEDEVA, Maria V.²

Abstract

This article is devoted to the issue of media education in Russian school. The main attention is paid to the concepts of media education and media literacy. The authors have studied the issue of media literacy in the education system of Russia. They have discovered that today an insufficient attention is paid to the problem of media literacy and media education at the school level. The authors argue that the educational standards and the school textbooks do not take into account the need to teach methods of protection against manipulation in the media.

Key words: media education, media literacy, mass media, secondary education, Russia.

Resumen

Este artículo está dedicado al tema de la educación mediática en la escuela rusa. La atención principal se presta a los conceptos de educación mediática y alfabetización mediática. Los autores analizan el sistema educativo moderno en Rusia y resaltan algunos hechos importantes. En particular, que no se presta suficiente atención al problema de la alfabetización mediática y la educación mediática a nivel escolar. Los estándares educativos y los libros de texto escolares en general no tienen en cuenta la necesidad de enseñar métodos de protección contra la manipulación en los medios.

Palabras clave: educación mediática, alfabetización mediática, medios de comunicación, educación secundaria, Rusia.

1. Introduction

The modern ever-changing world and the development of new technologies for political and social communication makes a person constantly be on the alert, so as not to become a victim of misinformation, fake news or not to be deceived. One needs to be on top of the current events. But how, can you resist the onslaught of information if you do not have the technology and techniques to retrieve information and verify if it is correct? The answer to this question can be found, in our opinion, in the development of media education and media literacy. From the early stages of person development these tasks should be in the centre of socialisation. A very important role in the development of media education belongs to the education system, including primary and secondary schools, secondary education, higher education and additional forms of education. In this paper, we will study the system of media education in Russian schools, as well as compare international and Russian educational standards for the development of media literacy.

¹ Saint-Petersburg State University, 199034, Russia, Saint-Petersburg, University Embankment, 7/9, E-mail: i.bykov@spbu.ru

² Saint-Petersburg State University, 199034, Russia, Saint-Petersburg, University Embankment, 7/9, E-mail: st081073@student.spbu.ru

2. Defining media literacy and media education

The Central concept of this study is certainly the concept of media education. D. Buckingham offers the following most general definition: “Media education is the process of teaching and learning about media” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 11). The idea of media education appeared in the 1970s, when “UNESCO announced about media education as a priority area for the next decade. UNESCO documents emphasize that “Media Education (media education) is interconnected with all types of media (printed and graphics, sound, screens, etc.) and different technologies; it enables people to understand the communication media used in their society and acquire skills of using these media to communicate with other people” (UNESCO, 1999, p. 73). R. Hoobs in his book gives a more detailed definition: “Today, activists, librarians, business leaders, government officials, and creative media professionals are part of the media education community, even if they use terms like “new literacies,” “critical literacy,” “connected learning,” “digital media and learning,” “digital citizenship,” or other terms. As we see, media education is aligned in relation to a dialectic of empowerment and protection, reflecting the public’s complex love–hate relationship with mass media, popular culture, and digital media. Each of these perspectives offers insight on how copyright and fair use are conceptualized as a dimension of learning and teaching” (Hoobs, 2018, p. 6). According to the editor-in-chief of the magazine “Media education” A. Fedorov, «the most important task of media education is to teach the audience to analyze media texts of various genres and types, and also to comprehend the mechanisms of their creation and functioning in society” (Fedorov, 2017, p. 44). I. Zhilavskaya with colleagues thinks, that today “media education becomes universal, it goes beyond the purely mass communication and covers a wide range of channels and sources of information” (Zhilavskaya, 2018, p. 5).

The result of media education is media literacy, that is, the ability of an individual to understand media flows and information due to a certain set of media competencies that a person acquires during life. It is also quite significant to note that media education, media literacy and media competence play a significant role in the development of such a concept as citizenship. In support of this thesis, in addition to media education in educational systems, the phrase digital citizenship is also found in a significant part of works. The so-called digital citizenship or digital citizenship skills are very closely intertwined with the concept of media education. It is also important for the learning process. Thus, A. Lauricella believes that the role of modern information technologies is greatly increasing: “The world in which young children are growing up in is different than that of previous generations. In just the last decade, we have seen increases in regular access and use of digital technologies across all age groups. In addition to access and use of technology at home, many school districts are intentionally incorporating technology into their educational objectives and goals and districts are often providing 1:1 access starting as early as Kindergarten. As a result, there has been a recent push to extend expectations of educators to include global digital citizenship curriculum within their classrooms due to the increased access and use of digital technology by youth” (Lauricella, 2020, p. 1).

Thus, the importance of media education is constantly increasing and it is gradually finding its place in the educational standards of various countries (Bykov, 2019). Considerable attention has been paid to this concept in recent years by the International Society for Technology in Education. It is a non-profit organization that serves educators interested in using technology in education. Back in 2017, quite interesting material appeared on the Community's website in the digital and media literacy section «How podcasts are making students better researchers» (Krueger, 2017). The study says that more than half of teachers believe that while modern technology provides access to much greater depth and breadth of information, it also makes it harder for students to find reliable sources of information. Also, more than 40 percent of students say that they have problems evaluating sources in research, and many go to College without getting basic research skills, such as searching for and verifying information from different sources. This trend can be seen all over the world. This

highlights the global nature of the problem and once again speaks of the need for uniform educational standards for media education.

In this regard, it is important not to forget about the benefits of media education of the individual. D. Buckingham gives a well-established definition of media literacy as a result of the process of media education: “Media literacy is the outcome – the knowledge and skills learners acquire” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 11). However, W. Potter points out the difficulties of finding a common understanding: “Even today, there is the label, media literacy, but one of the challenges now is that everybody has heard that term and they all have ideas about what that means. If you were to interview 100 different people, you’d probably get 150 different definitions about what it really means. So we are much better off than we were maybe 30 years ago, because we have reached a rallying point, but that could mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. But at least we have a common forum, and we are building more with organizations like yours which have done a tremendous amount, trying to bring people together and share outlooks and experiences. We really are still on the frontier; there is still so much more that has to be done” (Potter, 2010, p. 677).

R. Hoobs gives this definition of the digital literacy: “As we understand it, the competencies of digital and media literacy include the ability to make responsible choices and access information by locating and sharing materials and comprehending information and ideas; analyze messages in a variety of forms by identifying the author, purpose, and point of view and evaluating the quality and credibility of the content; create content in a variety of forms, making use of language, images, sound and new digital tools and technologies; reflect on one's own conduct and communication behavior by applying social responsibility and ethical principles; and take social action by working individually and collaboratively to share knowledge and solve problems in the family, workplace, and nation and by participating as a member of a community” (Hoobs, 2015, p. 121). It is important to note that this approach is closely related to the concept of media competence, as well as digital literacy. Generally speaking, it is quite difficult today to talk about unambiguous interpretations of all these terms. rather, it is more correct to say that today there are some keywords or markers that are significant for the operationalization of these concepts. So, Reisoglu and Cebi come to the conclusion that: “Many concepts such as digital competence, media literacy, digital literacy, information literacy have emerged as a result of the rapid development of technology in many fields. This is due to the fact that definitions are easily affected by rapidly changing and developing technological developments. Although the definitions are not separated from each other by sharp boundaries, they have their own characteristics. Digital literacy is usually confused with digital competence. However, it is safe to say that to be digitally literate is the ability to make and share meaning in different modes and formats, to create, collaborate and communicate effectively” (Reisoglu, 2020, p. 1).

3. Materials and methods

First of all, we need to set that all materials and methods are applied only to the level of secondary or school education in Russia. Assuredly, we paid considerable attention to the study of the educational program on social studies for schoolchildren due to the fact that social studies, according to the goals and objectives of this subject, should be engaged in, among other things, the education of the individuals, and therefore to teach them how to understand various media discussions and learn them how to distinguish between false and true information (Bykov, Medvedeva, 2020).

We also take into consideration the Federal standard for social studies and the concept of teaching this subject. We searched for words and phrases that somehow indicate media literacy and mass media in this document (Federal standard for social studies). However, almost nothing was found. We came across information that is related to the media only in the Federal educational standard for natural science. However, there was an

indication that students should be taught to distinguish and verify popular science information, since the media can greatly distort the facts.

In this regard, we need to say a few words about what this item is and why it appeared. The Introduction to social science is a complex of disciplines that focus on various aspects of society. As an academic subject, the Introduction to social sciences includes such fields as philosophy, sociology, social psychology, law, economics, political science, etc. It focuses on the special knowledge necessary to effectively solve the most typical problems in the social, economic, political, and spiritual spheres of life. In the secondary education system of Russia at first it appears at the beginning of the XX century. Gassanova with colleagues notes that "the first social science program was published in 1925. The basis of social science is the study of modernity, and history should be an illustration of it" (Gasanova, 2015, p. 1). However, only today the Introduction to social science become an obligatory part of education in secondary schools from 6th to 11th grade.

The main methods for this work are analytical and comparative. We paid much attention to the analysis of the literature on this issue, as well as to the comparison of the state of the problem in Russia and abroad. In our work, we used data from the websites of the International Society for Technology in Education, as well as official information from the website of the Ministry of education of the Russian Federation, in particular the Federal educational standard for social studies and the concept of teaching social studies (The concept of teaching the subject "Introduction to social science", 2018)). We also used the European Union's digital development strategy from the European Commission's website (Strategy Shaping Europe's digital future, 2020).

In the empirical part of the study, we also studied 10 of the currently active the Introduction of social theory textbooks in Russia from grades 6 to 11, which we were able to find in bookstores and on the Internet in free access. Using the content analysis method, we searched the textbook paragraphs for information about media education of children. For the most part, it was not presented, but some textbooks still contained such data, not always complete. -. The results of this work we have classified the books into three categories: where the most provides information about media literacy, just presented, is there any data and are not represented at all. We have compiled the results of our classification in a table.

4. Results

In search of an answer to the main research question of this work, we analyzed how media education is currently developing in the countries of the European Union, as well as in Russia, as well as how media literacy is formed in modern schoolchildren. The Russian Ministry of education has not yet included media education as a separate subject in the list of mandatory subjects for school. It should be noted that this discipline is only found in specialized fields of study, such as journalism, advertising and public relations, and political science, even in higher Education institutions. However, within the framework of various subjects, the individual still faces this discipline directly or indirectly. In our work, we also consider the concept of teaching social studies and the Federal state educational standard of secondary general education, where we are also interested in what social studies should give to a modern schoolchild (Federal state educational standard of general education, 2012).

Let's start with the state educational standard for social studies. According to it, "social studies " (basic level) - the requirements for the subject results of the development of the integrated educational subject "social studies" should reflect:

- 1) formation of knowledge about society as an integral developing system in the unity and interaction of its main spheres and institutions;
- 2) possession of the basic conceptual apparatus of social Sciences;

- 3) possession of the ability to identify cause-and-effect, functional, hierarchical and other relationships of social objects and processes;
- 4) formation of ideas about the main trends and possible prospects for the development of the world community in the global world;
- 5) formation of ideas about methods of cognition of social phenomena and processes;
- 6) the ability to apply the knowledge gained in everyday life, to predict the consequences of decisions;
- 7) the formation of skills for evaluating social information, the ability to search for information in various types of sources for the reconstruction of missing links in order to explain and evaluate various phenomena and processes of social development”.

In all this, we are largely interested in point 7. It is quite indirect, but nevertheless refers us to the concept of media education as the ability to search for information in sources. However, media education is not directly included in the educational standard as a concept. The concept of social studies teaching, however, has more specific formulations about media education, but the term itself is still not included. It is only about the media and information culture that is formed in children.

We also reviewed one of the textbooks for the 9th grade, which has been used for several years by all Russian students in social studies, edited by L. N. Bogolyubov in 2020. It should be noted here that the content itself is rather political and legal in accordance with the section names. In the textbook, edited by L. N. Bogolyubov for the 10th grade, there is a paragraph about mass culture. However, it is the only one and quite small. In this paragraph the author introduces the reader in detail to what mass culture and mass media are, but does not talk about such phenomena as fake news or political manipulation of public opinion in the media. But we can say that some paragraphs imply that information coming from the media should be taken critically. Although in the textbook for the 11th grade, we did not find a suitable paragraph that would raise these issues. In other words, we can say that, in principle, media education in the Russian educational process is assigned only indirect roles.

We also reviewed the textbook, edited by O. B. Soboleva, for the 7th grade in 2012. There is a whole paragraph dedicated to the media as the fourth power. Moreover, the author discusses in some detail the role of the media and the Internet in human life. It is also pointed out that any information in the modern world has a master, as well as the fact that the mass industry today is a huge and profitable business, but the term media education or media literacy, as well as media competence, is not found in the paragraph. Students are asked to think independently about the quality of information provided by the media.

In the textbook, edited by O. V. Gatman-Golotvina for the 11th grade, there is one paragraph devoted to the media as the fourth power in the state. The information part of the paragraph does not offer any information about media literacy, manipulation of public opinion, or framing. However, in the recommendations for conducting classes, there is a rather interesting 15-minute workshop where students are asked to read about the main ways to manipulate public opinion and answer questions. It is noteworthy that the methods of protecting a person from this manipulation are not mentioned at all.

In addition, in search of an answer to the question of how media literacy and critical thinking can be formed in schoolchildren, we analyzed the Federal standard on natural science, where we found just a little information about what is necessary to form critical thinking in schoolchildren, but in the context of the perception of scientific information.

"Possession of the conceptual apparatus of natural Sciences that allows you to learn the world, participate in discussions on natural science issues, use various sources of information to prepare your own work, and be

critical of media reports containing scientific information". So, here we again do not see any signs of critical thinking and attitude to news reports, they are apparently offered to take everything on faith. For a more detailed and clear view of the list of textbooks, as well as some of the content aspects, please see the table below (Table 1).

Table 1
Problems of media literacy in the textbooks
within the field of the Introduction to social science, Russia

№	Introduction to social science (textbook)	Issues of media literacy have been detected		
		in full	not in full	not detected
1	6th grade, ed. by Bogoliubov			+
2	7th grade, ed. by Bogoliubov			+
3	7 grade, ed. by Sobolev's	+		
4	8th grade, ed. by Bogoliubov			+
5	9 grade, ed. by Kravchenko and Pevtsova			+
6	9 grade, ed. by Bogoliubov			+
7	10th grade, ed. by Greenberg		+	
8	11 grade, ed. by Bogoliubov			+
9	11 grade, ed. by Bogoliubov (advanced level)		+	
10	11 grade, ed. by Gantman-Golovina	+		

Source: Composed by the authors (2020)

5. Discussion

An interesting fact is that if we consider this issue from the point of view of the scientific community, we can find out that neither Russian nor international science today has a clear definition of what media education, media literacy and media competence are. There are many different interpretations, from which you can distinguish individual terms and individual key factors that play a significant role in the concept. For example, one of these key concepts (factors) can be critical thinking, because it is it that significantly contributes to the protection of the individual from false information. However, when we talk about Russian schoolchildren and Russian school education here, it may be worth noting that critical thinking is developed not so much within the school curriculum as within extracurricular activities. And there may be a huge amount of additional materials that teachers use, and we are talking not only about social studies, but also about the Russian language, literature, and more natural science subjects.

In the European Union, the situation is somewhat different. Of course, it seems quite reasonable that the educational departments of the EU member States solve the problem of media education in their own way, but as we can see from the website of the European Commission, it is also not ignored at the level of the entire structure. First of all, it should be noted that the Union has its own digital development strategy. According to which, by the way, the category of media education can be considered even much wider than only within the framework of school education.

“The European Commission is promoting various initiatives aimed at increasing training in digital skills for the workforce and for consumers; modernising education across the EU; harnessing digital technologies for learning and for the recognition and validation of skills; and anticipating and analysing skills needs” (Strategy Shaping Europe’s digital future, 2020).

However, as we understand all the strategic documents of the European Commission are of the most General and extensive nature, so there are also few specifics about media education. The authors of the strategy emphasize that Europe is just beginning to use all digital opportunities.

However, an interesting fact that we found in the same strategy is the policy of open education: “The world of learning and teaching in Europe is still traditional. In order to reshape education in Europe successfully, learners should engage in more personalization, collaboration and better links between formal and informal learning, with the help of teachers who are confident in sharing and creation of educational contents. Learning can't anymore be confined to specific classroom and timetables but take full advantage of technology to break boundaries and learn across cultures, ages, and geographical divides. Opening up education means taking advantage of the considerable benefits the digital revolution has to offer” (Strategy Shaping Europe’s digital future, 2020). This most open education provides a significant basis for reasoning about what is possible when developing specific concepts, the participating countries will also take into account the inclusion of media education.

An interesting fact is that in Turkey, for example, the following approach is being implemented in relation to the development of media education and media literacy. “In Turkey, middle-school students can enrol in two elective courses: ICT Literacy introduces students to software tools and Media Literacy introduces students to critical analysis of news, advertising and information, where students create their own media messages. Developed in 2006, the Media Literacy elective course has grown in popularity. In the 2013–2014 academic year, more than 4 million children participated in the course” (Hobbs, 2017, p. 2).

6. Conclusions

As a result of this work, we analyzed how media education is developing at the documentary level in modern Russian schools, as well as abroad.. We considered several concepts of media education by different authors and came to the conclusion that media education is only indirectly present in educational standards and textbooks in Russia. In particular, we did not find a direct indication in school educational standards and textbooks that media education and media literacy should be taught to children. However, in the concept of teaching social studies in schools, there are indications that within the framework of this subject, the student must learn to navigate in the surrounding space.

Having also considered various definitions of media education, media literacy, media competence and digital competence, we concluded that there is a connection between all these concepts, but scientists from different countries and different scientific schools today interpret these concepts quite widely.

Another conclusion is that there is almost no data in the textbooks for the Introduction to social science about how to evaluate the information presented by the media. Moreover, the media and mass culture are given a maximum of one or two paragraphs for the entire educational course in social studies. But we also found information in such an educational subject as natural science that popular science information should not be taken on faith. Moreover, this is indicated in the concept of teaching natural science. However, we cannot identify social science and natural science, as well as scientific and news information, although, of course, it is a fact that sometimes scientific information is news.

In the countries of the European Union, the situation looks a little different. At the level of the European Commission, educational issues, including media education, are regularly raised. At the level of European countries, the situation may change depending on the state. In recent years, researchers have recorded interest in media education and media literacy also in Turkey, where this subject is optional, but in 2013-2014, more than 4 million children showed interest in this discipline.

Thus, media education and media literacy in Russia at the school level are in a state of development. At the state level, there is presumably a growing awareness that this should be included in the school curriculum. The result is the gradual appearance of concepts in school textbooks recommended by the Ministry of education of the Russian Federation, as well as indirect indications in Federal standards and concepts of social studies teaching.

7. Acknowledgement

The reported study was funded by RFBR according to the research project № 20-311-90033. Also, we would like to express our gratitudes to prof. V. Achkasova for valuable advices during our work.

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