

THE ROLE OF MEDIA TEXTS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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In the middle of the previous century in the teaching practice of many countries (Great Britain, the USA, Australia, Canada, etc.) they introduced a new perspective approach – the media education – urged to help pupils and students to adapt better in the world of media culture, to master the language of mass media and to learn some strategies of media texts analysis.

According to the representatives of the British system of media education C. Bazalgette and A. Hart, the essence of media education consists in studying of six key concepts: “media agencies”, “media categories”, “media technologies”, “media languages”, “media audiences”, “media representations” [1; 2]. The leading Russian expert in the field of media education Yu. Usov determines media education as the development of the personality by means and on material of mass media [3].

We agree with this definition given by Yu. Usov though we will consider a bit different, narrower approach to the use of mass media in class in the higher school. Traditionally media education assumes inclusion of screen and sound means, amateur films created by students, the analysis of movies, intersubject connections of literature and motion picture art, the use of cinema as complex education of students, their esthetic and art education [4; 5].

In the modern world they distinguish two branches of media education: special and integrated. Special (or social cultural) media education is carried out within a separate course at school or in the system of additional education. The integrated media education which represents the study of traditional school subjects such as native and foreign languages, literature, social disciplines, with the use of mass media, that is widespread in twelve countries of the world today: Austria, Germany, Ireland, Finland, Australia, Denmark, Canada, Netherlands, USA, New Zealand, Norway, Great Britain.

In general there are several approaches to the use of mass media and information in education [6]:

integrated approach – through already available subjects of literature, fine arts, history, music, etc.;

facultative approach – creation of a network of open classrooms, circles, clubs, carrying out actions;

special approach – introduction of a new subject, the special course connected with media culture.

Taking into account the increasing influence of mass media on the way of life, behavior and mentality of a modern person, the special approach to use of mass media in educational process should be accepted. This approach is especially relevant in the work with students of the faculty of foreign languages. In this case the teachers are faced with a complex challenge assuming an increase of media competence necessary in the conditions of the development of modern society and also introducing to the living and actual language of communication.

According to the modern linguists, the language of mass media is the most natural in social communication at this stage. As the main part of the international communication and Internet communication is arranged in English, it is important to seize skills of English-language media communication.

Thus, the introduction of both theoretical and practical disciplines in the field of mass media is expedient. Concrete examples of such disciplines are optional courses for students of the 5th year of the faculty of foreign languages – “Media linguistics” and “Language of modern British and American mass media”. In our opinion, these disciplines promote the increase of media competence of senior students, and also make a logical conclusion of their formation as qualified teachers, experts in the field of foreign languages.

Why is it necessary to pay much attention to the development of media competence in work with students? The matter is that a modern person faces media texts daily (on the Internet, television, radio, etc.). Their perception, understanding, creation of own texts implies an existence of some information culture. However building-up of information culture is possible only in the course of purposeful work.

As J. Potter considers, the development of media competence is based on a number of components. “The first component is experience. The more experience

of contacts with media and with the real world we have, the more is our potential for the development of higher level ... The second component is an active application of abilities in the sphere of media. The third component is maturing / readiness for self-education” [7, p. 18].

In our case when developing the program for the disciplines named above we, after J. Potter [7, pp.28, 53], were guided by the following criteria of a high level of the development of media competence:

- 1) allocation of the main sense of the media text;
- 2) analysis: identification of basic elements of the media text;
- 3) comparison: definition of similar and unique fragments of the media text;
- 4) assessment of value of the media text or its fragment; judgment on the basis of comparison according to a certain criterion;
- 5) summarizing: ability to create the short, clear and exact description of the media text;
- 6) generalization;
- 7) deduction: use of the general principles to explain separate data;
- 8) induction: generating the main principles from supervision of separate data;
- 9) synthesis: ability to collect repeatedly elements in a new structure.

So, taking into account the role of mass media in modern young people's life, it should be noted that media communication represents not only a source of information having educational value, but also an incentive for values' formation. It occurs not only at passive perception of media texts, but first of all in attempt to create independent texts, using language of mass communication. This ability is especially of current concern for linguists. They need to have knowledge of specifics in functioning of language and texts in the media sphere, to know a perspective of the language studied in different types of mass media, to get acquainted with key types of media texts (journalistic, PR, advertizing), to create skills of the communicative and pragmatological analysis of mass media texts of various genres.

It goes without saying that studying such disciplines as “Media linguistics” and “Language of modern British and American mass media” requires the use of the knowledge and skills created in the course of the previous disciplines of the linguistic cycle (“Stylistics”, “Lexicology”, “General linguistics” and some others).

In course of studying these disciplines students can have some difficulties of psychological character, and also connected with the saved-up knowledge base, level of proficiency of language. As for communication barriers, one of the most widespread is the perception barrier which is fixed on such signs as speed and accuracy of perception, duration of concentration of attention, speed and accuracy of switching of attention. The effective way of its overcoming is the corresponding physiological spirit.

Another difficulty is the barrier of understanding. It can be overcome, making actions on analogies and independent creative actions. For example, the mechanism

of influence of advertizing texts becomes more clear if the task on drawing up own advertizing texts is offered to students. They have to try to convince the audience to buy this or that product. Here the knowledge of stock of the communicative strategy and tactics having the influencing potential can carry out a support function.

During the work with various genres of media texts there is a development of abilities of identification and comparison, experience accumulation. Transition from action by analogy to creative action is possible only in the presence of a certain volume of knowledge (including technological – how to work with a photo, TV and video equipment, etc.) and a wide associative field.

Within the course of media linguistics the barrier in interpersonal communication can be a considerable problem (misunderstanding of the essence of a creative task given by the teacher, a complex of qualifying standards, etc.). It is easy to break this barrier in case of control of communication, developing various ways of transformation of information, accuracy of the addressee, a detailed description of requirements to a message form.

Thus, such disciplines as “Media linguistics” and “Language of modern British and American mass media” are of special importance in the context of the higher school. They promote not only an increase of media competence, but also improvement of speech skills of teachers of foreign languages, replenishment of their vocabulary, ability to use mass media both in educational process and in ordinary life.

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