

Axiological Self-Determination of University Students in the Contemporary Media Landscape

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Abstract: In the article, the peculiarities of axiological self-determination of university students in media landscape are considered; the national and foreign experience in analyzing media landscape as a pedagogical phenomenon of the information society is summarized; and current approaches to assessment of results of the Russian media education are described. Particular attention is paid to the concept of *media competence* and indicators of its development, namely: media criticism, media knowledge, media use and media design. The authors consider media criticism, as an axiological phenomenon oriented to improvement of a person's readiness for evaluation argumentation. The authors have represented a model of successful process of development of axiological attitude of students to the media landscape, based on forming ability of evaluation argumentation, as well as comparative analysis of axiological interpretation of a friction text and a musical clip by Russian and German students (as exemplified by the Ludwigsburg University of Education (Germany) and the Orenburg State University (Russia)).

Key words: Media landscape • Media education • Axiological self-determination of a personality • Media competence • Evaluative judgment

INTRODUCTION

Socially oriented functioning of communicative technology creates a media sphere (media landscape) of a particular society. Transformation of the media sphere is, on the one hand, the result of the activity of social forces (groups, particular individuals) oriented to implementation of communicative innovations; formation of some definite legal system of using communicative technique, etc. and, on the other hand, it is one of the most important factors of social transformations, as it changes the people's way of life, social practices and, consequently, individual ways of thinking and perceiving the world [1].

In the early 1990s, German media pedagogues D. Baacke, U. Sander and R. Vollbrecht in their research "Media World (Media Environment, Media Landscape) of the Young People" showed that the life world is also the world of media (media environment, media landscape) and life stories always concern media in some respects. This allows to admit "that media take part in social processes of individualization and biographization of the life" [2]. In Russian media education, S.B. Tsymbalenko emphasizes the creative activity of the rising generation

inside the informative and psychological space by determining it as a form of existence of individual consciousnesses. The values of survival that have existed for centuries start being replaced with the values of self-fulfillment [3]. In the media pedagogical discourse, such a concept is actualized as *axiological self-determination of a personality*, which is the process of acquiring sense, goals and resources of a person's life in the space and the time of education by the person [4]. The axiological self-determination of the university students is possible only after their life and education space have been determined as media landscape.

Body of the work. There are many points of view with regard to the problem of media. Some people perceive it as a source of knowledge and others can see just an obstacle in education and nurturing. Media are both a means of versatile development of a person and a destructive factor [5].

A.V. Fedorov suggests that media education should be understood as "the process of teaching and developing a personality with the help and using the materials of mass communication media with the purpose of forming a culture of communication with media, creative and communicative abilities, critical thinking,

skills of interpretation, analysis and evaluation of media texts, as well as teaching certain forms of self-expression using the media technique” [66].

Despite the focused attention of scientists to the problem of implementation of media education at general education schools, study of mass media, the means of mass communication, the onscreen art, the development of media competence, federal state-owned educational standards are oriented to ICT and the development of ICT competence [7]. Standards indirectly reflect the requirements for the development of media competence (media literacy, informational literacy of schoolchildren).

As for the university educational landscape, the presence of media education elements can be seen currently not only in the emphasized informal teaching to communicate with media, but also in changing the standards for higher school that reflect the requirements of the information society. The new generation Russian standards (FGOS VO - 03) in some part direct to the achievement of media educative results [8].

Axiological approach, being a methodology base of the research of media education problems, allows determining the contents and the hierarchy of values, which not only vector the student's activity, but also determine his interaction with the world and people.

The problem of axiological self-determination of students holds a special place in the axiological paradigm of the university education. It assumes qualitative changes in the attitude of a person to his life due to forming an integral image of the world with a person and his realization of his own place in it. Axiological commitments are the basis of self-determination of a personality during its own life. Commitment assumes the future and it is necessary for a person to understand the sense and to set a goal as well as to determine the ways of its achievement. The commitment process assumes assimilation of values by a personality, transformation of the personality based on the values, the forecast of the personality's further development based on the global dialectic law of prominence of demands.

We consider media landscape as a context of life activity of a student who can set not only resources for establishing the subjectness, but also their limits.

So, what is the result of media education within the university-based educational landscape? What indicators can help to determine the level of its development?

As a media education result, we considered the *media competence* concept in our research. Following the conceptual approach of D. Baacke and the model of media competence of K. P. Treumann, U. Sansder and D. Meister

[9], the concept of media competence can be determined as the result of personally subjective acquisitions of a student in the course of formal and informal education, which characterizes individual readiness of a person for handling media.

The research of the university students' media competence problem assumes taking into account the following four main indicators of the level of its development:

- Media Criticism: Media criticism is oriented to critical evaluation of separate media [10]. We focus our attention on the fact that media criticism is an axiological phenomenon oriented to improving person's readiness for evaluative argumentation.
- Media Knowledge.
- Media Use.
- Media Design [11].

A sociological poll of experts in the sphere of Russian media education (E.A. Bondarenko, V.V. Gura, A.P. Korochensky, E.V. Muryukina, A.A. Novikova, S.N. Penzin, N.F. Khilko and V.L. Kolesnichenko) determined that the development of the ability of critical thinking is the most important factor [12]. The development of critical thinking in mass media education was the subject of researches made by A.V. Sharikov [13], F.V. Fedorov [6], E.V. Muryukina and I.V. Chelysheva [14].

The German media pedagogue B. Schorb emphasizes that after having organized private television, it was necessary to pay close attention to the concept of *media reflexion*, as currently it is already not possible to hide the social responsibilities of the thinking and the acting within the TV landscape, which is based on commercial interest [15].

As an axiological matrix of the development of media competence of university students, the following coordinated chain of mechanisms was applied at them: *search* → *evaluation* → *selection* → *projection*, which ensured that a personality would rise to values (A.V. Kiryakova) [16]. These mechanisms are used by teachers as a regulating and informative landmark at forming the axiological attitude of students to the media landscape [17].

The axiological attitude of students to the media landscape is formed by developing the ability for evaluative argumentation, which, following G. Marci-Boehncke and M. Rath [18, 19], when expressed as media criticism, is the main informative element of the development of media competence of university students.

For developing compelling thinking on problematic issues within certain media text, we used a modified model of D. Mieth's axiological analysis of media texts [20]. The author explains the development of values of the rising generation through didactic application extracted from narrative ethics of the analysis of text narrating:

Model Analysis: What is the subject of the text? What is narrated in the media text?

Analysis of Narrative Practice: How is it narrated? In what form is the narration carried out?

Analysis of the Morality of the Narration: Why is it narrated? What values are described? What dilemma expresses these values? How does the author intend to achieve it?

We offered students to analyze an extract from the romance by M. Kundera *the Genuineness* [21]. Some students express *axiological neutrality*. They describe the situation and retell the contents without any subjective assessment: "... He couldn't demand help from F. - from my side, it was no way friendly" (Anna K.). "When he lost his friend Jean-Marc, he started talking about the value of friendship" (Evgeny O.).

Still, we can also note the *axiological pragmatism* of students sharing their ideas while talking about the media text: "The idea is friendship, that is how much we appreciate friendship and that we do not think of its negative properties" (Olga P.). "The idea is that the word *friendship* is misunderstood". (Igor V.). It is notable that students express these opinions as if they were their own, because it shows either the proximity of views of the students and the author of the text, or the lack student's ability to see life stances or values of other people.

While analyzing the narration form, the students note "the dialog of two characters. They use a lot of comparisons with respect to the word *friendship*, rhetoric questions and figures of speech." (Anna K.). "It seems like Jean-Mark tries to convince himself of what the truth and the lie are." (Igor V.).

Friendship was marked by the students as the main value represented by the text author. Some students while feeling the *axiological resonance* in the media text distinguish such moral dilemma as the interrelation of values of friendship and mutual aid: "The fact that we have friends does not mean they must help us every time" (Regina D.). In addition, the dilemma between friendship

and justice was noted: "The author is sure that justice is unreachable, but one can reveal the truth about friendship".

Thus, we have applied in the education process the algorithm of reflexive activity, the main component of which is the determination of a moral dilemma in the text, which is expressed by the author through a collision of two values. We find it important to use this model, because encouragement of students to use it helps to address their own life, analyze their own values and compare the values with each other and with the standards of morality and, consequently, modeling their own axiological positions and identity.

In order to compare the ability for evaluative judgment of Russian and German students, we asked them to describe a music video-the *Natural Blues* song by Moby. German students described the video in the following way:

"A hospital. The situation is very unpleasant. White walls, disease, wheel chairs-all of them represent the *Death*. Only in the end, it changes to the *Birth*." (Bart M.).

"The video shows complete rejection of elderly people by the society. Human evanescence is emphasized. Care of other people is not appreciated. Rejected and cornered." (Franciska T.).

"Is it awful to be old? Recollection of one's own life seems threatening and happy at the same time." (Caroline L.).

"... This view is to encourage people to reconsider the attitude to elderly people so that the society would not isolate them, but guarantee a well-deserved quietus." (Deborah Z.).

"The video draws our attention to the attitude to elderly people in our society today. If they are old, weak and cannot function in the society, the society rejects them. We must reconsider our attitude to the hoary age. Otherwise, we will face the same attitude when we grow old." (Ann-Kathrin K.).

"The music complements both the feeling of sorrow and the inevitability of the death." (Anita K.).

Russian students expressed the following opinions on the video:

"The video has hidden philosophical meaning. The main problem is the life of people from dawn until sunset. Having watched the video, we experience a kind of emotional and anxious feeling." (Oleg P.).

"Nobody needs the people here. The only wish of all the elderly people in this care center is to stop suffering." (Anna K.).

“The death is shown not like we all imagine it to be: an angel, bright light and then the person becomes a little baby - as he was when he was born.” (Regina K.).

“The author of the video wanted to tell people that they needed to take the maximum of the life, enjoy it, so that they would feel happy recollecting it when they grow old.” (Olga N.).

“... This is the grim reality, which catches the people rejected by their families.” (Evgenia R.).

Analyzing and comparing the description of the video by Russian and German students, we can notice that both the Russian and German students come to the same conclusion: “old people live on memories of the past”, “life is a cyclic process”, “one can't return the past, the rest is ahead.” But we found it important that the German students noticed the social concept of the author of the video: criticism to the society can be traced as well as a call for reconsidering the current situation with the elderly people in the society. The Russian students only described what was happening in the video and touched the philosophical problem of human being.

Summary: During the research, we stated the following differences in the axiological perception of the media by students:

- During the analysis of the author's narration, the represented values in fiction, Russian students did not manage to determine the subjective attitude of the author precisely.
- It is necessary to emphasize the big difference in the evaluations of the music video by the German and Russian students. Major part of Russian students did not interrelate axiological self-determination in media landscape with social responsibility. German students saw a social problem expressed in this video, sounded it and offered to think of it. We can presume that, in the German society, media are used for sending calls to solve problems of elderly and ill people and we could notice such axiological attitude expressed by the students. As for media, they are the strongest factor of personality socialization [22-24]. We also can presume that media educational events integrated in the process of teaching schoolchildren and students efficiently result in the development of media competence and knowledge of handling media, at which the most important element is the developed media criticism.

Thus, at developing media criticism, it is pedagogically reasonable to draw the attention of young people to the author's idea of a media text, to the social basis of the media product appearance and to the translated values in this product. By practicing reasoned evaluative judgment of the author's idea and the values of the characters of media texts and by talking about collisions of characters' values, we develop axiological and critical (creative) attitude of young people to media landscape, their own life landscape and axiological self-determination in the media landscape.

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