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MEDIA EDUCATION INTEGRATION RESOURCE IN THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION

The article is devoted to understanding the integration function of media education, implemented at the regional and global level. In the context of the problem of communication integration of the Eurasian region examines the development of media education in the states — participants of the Eurasian Economic Union. It raises issues of international media education systems that reflect the needs of the integration units in the global media discourse and the ability to withstand external threats to information.

Интеграционный ресурс медиаобразования в Евразийском экономическом союзе

Статья посвящена осмыслению интеграционной функции медиаобразования, реализуемой на региональном и глобальном уровне. В контексте задачи коммуникационной интеграции евразийского региона анализируется состояние медиаобразования в государствах — участниках Евразийского экономического союза. Затрагивается проблема развития межнациональных медиаобразовательных систем, отражающих потребности интеграционных формирований в глобальном медиадискурсе и способных противостоять внешним информационным угрозам.

The goal of media education in the information society is to develop the audience capacity to determine the political, social, commercial and cultural interests of media sources, to analyze and critically evaluate the media, that is, to achieve a certain level of media competence and media literacy. The latter in the most general sense can be defined as the ability for a qualified, creative and independent action in relation to the media [1].

The diversity of approaches and interpretations of media education has been reflected in various theories: «injective» («protectionist», «civil defense», whose goal is to neutralize the negative influence of the media), «practical» and the theory of satisfying needs (making use of media), the theory of critical thinking (protection from manipulation by the media), semiotic («correct» reading of media texts), culturological (enriching knowledge and perception of the audience). At the same time, the functions of media education, regardless of theories, are reduced to information-communicative, educational, cognitive, correctional, social, psychological, culturological, aesthetic, ethical, and practice-oriented. In our opinion, in the modern world, media education is able to perform another function, not sufficiently meaningful in the scientific discourse, — integration, which is based on the formation and

dissemination of a single code necessary for understanding the content of media messages.

As declared by UNESCO and the AC (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations), the introduction of media literacy in the global education can improve understanding between different cultures and civilizations, prevent conflicts, encourage international cooperation and strengthen mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue, which is an important condition for ensuring freedom of speech, information and free flow of ideas and knowledge [2]. Proceeding from the fact that the life of a «media» person in the modern world depends on his understanding of the socio-cultural and political context of code systems, and the traditional type of citizenship is replaced by «media» [3], the integration of the individual into the social system, as well as the integration of social and political systems are based on the principles of network communication [4].

Integration function fully corresponds to the content of the new communication concept of media education, based, in turn, on the notion of noospheric education. The latter is a pedagogical concept built on the basis of self-developing systems and implemented in the conditions of academic freedom, mediaecology and an integral approach to education. Thus, the basis of the new concept is the idea of the global interdependence of the information exchange participants.

At the local and regional levels, the integration potential of media education is realized through the affirmation of national and cultural identity, the stimulation of the manifestation of various forms of civic activity in the structures of civil society, the actualization of local problems, the establishment of effective models of interaction between regional media and the audience, as well as an understanding of the contradictions in the principles of media activities at various levels. As a result, a socially oriented media environment is formed in which the media activity of citizens is realized, based on a conscious need for socially useful activities, and the basis of the media security of society is laid. At the interethnic level, the integration function of media education provides a unified understanding of global media texts — regardless of the socio-cultural differences of the audience, the ability to see the political and ideological subtext in messages, to reveal the hidden interests of actors in the political sphere. In other words, it provides social support for objectively viable integration projects.

One such project is the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which in 2015 turned from a theoretical construct to a real education with the world's 1st territory, the 5th GDP and the 7th population. The consistent evolution of integration formations, of course, requires adequate information support. The political decisions made at the highest level determine the leading mass content media in the EAEU member countries. In parallel, the spontaneous process of interaction between

the media spheres of states and regions is being developed, which can lead to the formation of a unified information space for the union. The latter, in the context of globalization and informatization of world politics, becomes the leading factor and the most important indicator of the effectiveness of integration processes.

The information unity of the EAEU is based on a stable cultural basis (formed in the USSR period), the absence of language barriers on the territory being integrated, and the dissemination of Russian-language media, the practice of interstate broadcasting and a stable auditory interest in events in the former Union states. At the same time, the task requiring an operative solution is to include the problems of the EAEU in the discourse of regional media, since at the present time this powerful resource is not being used effectively enough. Thus, our analysis in the Republic of Belarus showed that local media structures are more often limited to a retransmission of official information, without resorting to its comprehension taking into account the needs of the regional audience. The latter eventually creates a position of distancing from the political decisions of the center, a misunderstanding of the benefits of integration processes in terms of pressing problems. At the same time, we cannot fail to note the growing presence of integration themes in the Eurasian media discourse: first of all, this concerns large national broadcasters.

The contradictory situation around the media image of the EAEU in the minds of a heterogeneous and fragmented audience confirms the thesis that information support of integration processes on a transnational scale cannot be effective without proper level of media information education of citizens. Therefore, development and unification of their media education systems is one of the important directions for optimizing the communication interaction of the EAEU states. And here we note the presence of contradictions and significant differences in the ideology of media education.

In Armenia, for example, at present there is no unity of approaches to media education, which is mainly connected with the work of the specialized Internet portals www.dpir.mskh.am and www.mediaeducation.am, reflecting the activity of media education centers. The Center www.mediaeducation.am, aiming at developing media literacy for both children and young people and the adult population, implements research projects, develops didactics, and conducts mass events. One of the tasks of the center is to promote the use of media resources to strengthen democratic ties, develop citizenship, and integrate into the international educational system. The resource www.dpir.mskh.am reflects the activity of the media education center «Mkhitar Sebastatsi» (media congresses have been held for several years in the center), there is also a media library named after Tigran (www.gradar.mskh.am). However, all this activity is complicated by the lack of theoretical and methodological researches related to the comprehension of existing experience, as well as the long-term

strategy for the development of media education in the country and the institution of professional media pedagogy.

In the Republic of Belarus in recent years there has been a significant increase in interest in media education — both in the academic community and in the pedagogical environment. What is significant in the context of this article, the number of Belarusian researches touch upon the issues of communicative unity of the society, the introduction of media practices in the process of general humanitarian education of students. The most active theoretical development of problems of media education is carried out in the Belarusian State University, the Grodno State University, the Mogilev Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and other universities of the country. In the school curricula, media education is not included as a separate academic subject, its implementation in the system of secondary and higher education in Belarus is carried out through the introduction of media components in the academic disciplines. A common problem, in our opinion, is focusing exclusively on the «technological» side of media education and insufficient attention paid to its ideological, political, social and cultural potential.

In Kazakhstan, the issues of the formation of mass media literacy are still considered in the context of specialized profile education. Culturological peculiarities do not allow the mechanical duplication of foreign media education programs and standards in this region, so there is an atypical situation: the theory follows the practice. For example, researches of the Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science implemented the project «Development of Media Education Technologies for the Formation of the Intellectual Potential of the Country». The same research group created the site of the Kazakhstan school of socially responsible journalism (<http://unesco-kaznu.ucoz.kz>). Among the factors of accelerated development of media literacy in Kazakhstan is the desire of the state to integrate into the global information space, which implies the need to rethink their own information priorities, and, as a consequence, the development of population media literacy. Therefore, Kazakhstan researchers are increasingly concerned with the establishment of interstate educational cooperation within the framework of Eurasian integration projects.

The media education process is also being paid attention to in Kyrgyzstan, where the issues of media culture formation, media interaction with the audience were studied. In 2012, optional special courses «Media Literacy» were organized in the country, aimed at increasing the level of media competence of schoolchildren and students: the development of critical thinking and the ability to navigate through the flow of media information. In Kyrgyzstan, there are about 100 so-called «Innovative schools», where creative methods of teaching, the newest multimedia equipment are used. Our priority in the development of new information and communication tech-

nologies, typical for Central Asian states, in our opinion, should be accompanied by the development of a unified concept of media education based on political realities.

The basis of such a concept can be the work of researchers from the Russian Federation, and their so-called «civil» approach to media education as a long-term socio-political activity. In 2014, the Association of Media Education Specialists of Russia was created, designed to consolidate the disconnected media education community. Also, the open educational and information space, including network resources, correspondence schools of journalism, universal online resources, electronic academic library «Media Education», etc., continues to develop actively.

Russian researchers argue that in order to realize the civil purposes of media education and its integration potential, it is necessary to take into account the following conditions:

- a) implementation of the principle of universality of information (the presence of a developed language of mass communication);
- b) freedom to choose the information channel;
- c) equality of recipients before information.

Under the language of mass communication, in this case, we mean a single code (sign, visual, cultural, etc.) that has been established in the society, interpretations of media texts implemented in a single system for decoding media messages. This position is correlated with the position adopted in the research environment, according to which the media systems «have their own sense-forming, world-forming tendency that engenders specific cultural practices, for the understanding of which philosophers and culturologists need to look for new languages and methods» (our translation. — S. V.) [5].

Unification of media education projects and the language of mass communication of the EAEU member countries seems to us to be a largely political task, requiring strategic decisions at the interstate level. On the one hand, this task should be solved by the information integration of national media systems, on the other — the interaction of formal, informal and informational education systems. Media education, divorced from the political sphere and devoid of ideological basis, cannot be considered a full-fledged integration resource.

The question of the possibility of developing interethnic media education systems that reflect the needs of integration groups in the global media discourse and that can withstand external information threats is quite debatable. The search for answers to it will inevitably affect:

- a) the educational environment in which media literacy courses should be introduced (at various levels of training), taking into account interstate information interests;

b) the media sphere, which includes the content of all types of media (both national and allied) and carries out a spontaneous impact on the audience citizenship;

c) political reality, predetermining the attitude of citizens to the information provided to the media and, on the other hand, experiencing the consequences of the audience's information choice;

d) institutions of civil society (local, national and transnational), whose viability largely depends on the sustainability of the information sphere;

e) ideological climate in integrable societies.

It is also necessary to take into account the fact that the conditions of globalization of the world political, economic and information space, the spread of multiethnicity and multiculturalism, the growing role of technology and information make the problem of preserving national identity more urgent than ever, including integration formations. In such a situation, there is inevitably a contradiction between the «internal» image of the state, its ideal image, cultivated by politicians and designed to maintain the stability of the social system, and the image of «external», spontaneously formed or deliberately created media of others, including partner states.

Proceeding from the fact that the cultural values of the Eurasia nations are too diverse, it is necessary to teach citizens (media audience) to perceive the cultural context of integration. Then the communal integration, based on media competence, can compensate for the shortcomings of political associations, solving their tasks at the micro level of economic, humanitarian and cultural interaction [6]. Such an «ascending» integration vector is based on traditional cultural ties, a language community (based on Russian as a cultural narrative of Eurasia), tolerant attitude to representatives of «our» ethnic groups, mutually beneficial economic cooperation at the level of small and medium-sized businesses, a psychological sense of ownership and empathy, weighty factor of which is the media activity.

Such information integration, relatively autonomous from political programs, is the essence of the so-called “informal” cooperation is more inert than institutional cooperation, but more stable. For example, in general, the loyal attitude of the population of Georgia to the Russians has not changed, despite the political differences and the military conflict of 2008. Another example: to Kazakhstan, a partner of the Republic of Belarus for the EAEU, the Belarusians formed a much colder attitude than to the Russian Federation — another strategic partner. Informal cooperation, which can develop without state support (or even in spite of the obstacles created by the authorities), ideally should form the core of integration processes, ensuring their entry into the cultural context.

Thus, the effectiveness of the implementation of integration projects in the EAEC is directly dependent on the media communication activity and media competence of the population. If an effective interstate media education system is created,

we will be able to talk about the increasing feedback in the system of integration entities, in which information integration creates the basis for the development of informal connections at the levels from regional to national, and then these links become the basis for deepening institutional cooperation. The achievement of an adequate understanding by citizens of the partner countries' geopolitical interests in the integration processes, the unified perception by the heterogeneous audience of the integrable region, the image of which in the media sphere as much as possible to the requirements of objectivity, can serve as an accurate criterion for the coordinated media education activity effectiveness.

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