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THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING AS A KEY COMPONENT OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS' TRAINING IN THE US UNIVERSITIES

It has been proven that the formation of critical thinking plays an important role in the process of professional journalists' training in the US universities. The article emphasizes that providing the skills of critical analysis and evaluation of information is becoming necessary in media platforms.

It has been investigated that critical thinking has several key aspects in journalism. First, it is the ability to analyze sources of information and determine their reliability and validity. Journalists must be able to distinguish fact from conjecture, understand potential conflicts of interest and watch for biases in presenting information.

Second, critical thinking includes the ability to analyze and evaluate an argument. Journalists must be able to understand what evidence supports this or that statement, what logical fallacies may be present, and what may be the hidden motives of the participants in the discussion.

It has been analyzed that requirements for modern journalists are becoming more and more complex. It is substantiated that the formation of critical thinking is a necessary guarantee for a successful career in the field of journalism, namely helps journalism students to analyze and evaluate information from various sources, carry out a thorough analysis of events, facts and sources of information without bias, defend their point of view and respond to informational provocations, recognize stereotypes and manipulative methods, which is considered to be important in the era of wide access to information.

It is argued that critical thinking develops the skills of critical analysis of social problems, which are necessary for quality journalistic production. Journalism students who possess critical skills are able to determine the veracity and reliability of information, verify its sources, and analyze the context in detail. This contributes to a balanced and objective coverage of events and the development of conscious citizenship.

On the basis of the conducted research, it has been concluded that US universities, providing training in critical thinking, form the future generation of journalists who will be able to perform their professional activities by analyzing social, economic and political problems.

Key words: *journalists, professional training, USA, critical thinking, communication, professional activity.*

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РОЗВИТОК КРИТИЧНОГО МИСЛЕННЯ ЯК КЛЮЧОВА СКЛАДОВА ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ ЖУРНАЛІСТІВ В УНІВЕРСИТЕТАХ США

Доведено, що формування критичного мислення відіграє важливу роль у процесі професійної підготовки журналістів в університетах США. У статті наголошується, що забезпечення навичками критичного аналізу та оцінки інформації стає необхідним у медіа платформах.

Досліджено, що критичне мислення в журналістиці має кілька ключових аспектів. По-перше, це здатність аналізувати джерела інформації та визначати їхню надійність та достовірність. Журналісти повинні бути вмілими відрізняти факти від домислів, розуміти потенційні конфлікти інтересів та стежити за представленням інформації.

По-друге, критичне мислення включає в себе здатність аналізувати та оцінювати аргументацію. Журналісти повинні бути здатними розуміти, які докази підтримують твердження, які логічні помилки можуть бути присутніми та які можуть бути приховані мотиви учасників дискусії.

Проаналізовано вимоги до сучасних журналістів, які стають все більш складними. Обґрунтовано, що формування критичного мислення є необхідною запорукою для успішної кар'єри в сфері журналістики, а саме допомагає студентам-журналістам аналізувати та оцінювати інформацію з різних джерел, здійснювати ретельний аналіз подій, фактів та джерел інформації без упередженості, відстоювати свою точку зору та реагувати на інформаційні провокації, розпізнавати стереотипи та маніпулятивні методи, що є важливим в епоху широкого доступу до інформації.

Аргументовано, що критичне мислення розвиває у студентів навички критичного аналізу суспільних проблем, які є необхідними для якісного журналістського виробництва. Студенти-журналісти, які володіють критичними навичками, вміють визначати правдивість і достовірність інформації, перевіряти її джерела та детально аналізувати контекст. Це сприяє збалансованому та об'єктивному висвітленню подій та розвитку свідомого громадянства.

На основі проведеного дослідження зроблено висновок, що університети США, забезпечуючи навчання з критичного мислення, формують майбутнє покоління журналістів, які зможуть виконувати свою професійну діяльність, аналізуючи соціальні, економічні та політичні проблеми.

Ключові слова: журналісти, професійна підготовка, США, критичне мислення, комунікація, професійна діяльність.

Topicality of the research. It is important to emphasize the formation of journalist's critical thinking in the US universities is crucial to their professional training and success in the media sphere.

Critical thinking is the basis of objective and reliable journalism. US universities provide journalism students with the opportunity to develop critical thinking through critical analysis and evaluation of information, facts and sources.

The formation of critical thinking helps journalists learn the skills of critical analysis and critical thinking, which are necessary for effective coverage of current issues and events.

It has been researched that formation of journalists' critical thinking in the US universities is a relevant topic because future journalists should know how to recognize bias, manipulation and fake news. This helps them provide objective and truthful information for readers, listeners and viewers.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Among scientists who have made the research on the concept of "critical thinking" from the point of view of cognitive processes should be called J. Anderson, V. Bibler, B. Bloom, J. Bruner, M. Lipman, D. Halpern and others; on theory and methodology – A. Bairamova, I. Bekha, T. Voropai, N. Dementievska and others.

In many US universities, there are scientists and researchers who study the development of journalists' critical thinking. Some of them are worth mentioning:

Robert Hunt, professor of journalism and communication sciences at the University of Texas, specializes in research on the development of journalists' critical thinking. James Stoney, a professor of journalism and media communications at the University of California, San Francisco, is researching methods for teaching journalists critical thinking.

Melissa Zimmerman, a professor of journalism at the University of North Carolina, explores the role of critical thinking in the production and consumption of news. Jonathan Morrison, director of the Center for Critical Thinking and Media Releases at the University of North Carolina, specializes in developing critical thinking among journalists. Alicia Sheridan, a professor of journalism at the University of Colorado, conducts research on the impact of teaching critical thinking on the professional practice of journalists.

These scholars and researchers are actively working to understand and improve the process of critical journalists' thinking formation in the US university environment.

The purpose of the article is to analyze peculiarities of forming critical thinking in the process of professional journalists' training in the US universities.

Main material. It is important to state that the development of journalist's critical thinking plays a significant role in their future professional activities.

Critical thinking is gradually becoming one of the main criteria of educational reforms in leading European countries and the US in particular.

Nowadays, critical thinking is considered to be a trend in the system of American education.

According to G. Onkovych, journalism major provides for the presence of professionally trained, qualified personnel for the media industry. Exactly the qualified training of media workers indicates the presence of journalism in media education direction (Onkovych, 2014).

To think critically means to freely use high-level mental strategies and operations for formulating reasonable conclusions and making decisions. Critical thinking is a special type of mental activity, characterized by the signs of which are the development of decision-making strategies in solving tasks, problem situations based on obtaining and processing information; implementation of reflexive actions (analytical, control, evaluation) regarding any object or phenomenon, in particular one's own thinking process; balanced analysis of different opinions and views, identification of one's own position (Kharchenko, 2018, p. 7).

It is necessary to point that the development of critical thinking becomes relevant precisely during intense times of social changes, when it is impossible to act without constant adaptation to new one's political, economic or other circumstances, without effective resolution of problems, a large part of which is unpredictable.

The scientist L. Terletska defines critical thinking as thinking that has the following characteristics, as: depth (insight) of thinking; sequence; independence; flexibility; speed (Methodical bulletin on the topic: «Development of critical thinking», 2017).

D. H. Clark and A. U. Beadle define critical thinking as the process by which the mind processes information for the purpose of understanding or generating ideas or solving a problem. According to B. Beyer, critical thinking is a method of assessing the authenticity, value or accuracy of something (Rakhimov, 2016, p. 12).

It is significant to emphasize that critical thinking is connected with language competence and is related to the intellectual development of future journalists and is improved through intensive practice, including learning a foreign language, conducting experiments on media platforms using various narrative structures. The development of

critical thinking, the ability to analyze and interpret information conveyed in comments, arguments, and research reports is a necessary component in the professional training of journalists. The ability of media professionals to work with numbers contributes to their better understanding of statistics and basic economic concepts. A competent journalist must be prepared to work successfully on various media platforms, from print to video, digital, mobile, including forms that have not been invented yet. Just as «computerized reporting» once enriched research efforts. Technological innovations can be disruptive, requiring a competent journalist to accept new society's challenges (Clark, 2014).

According to O. Pometun, critical thinking is a complex and multi-level phenomenon. To think critically means to use freely high-level mental strategies and operations for formulating reasonable conclusions and assessments, decision-making. From a pedagogical point of view, critical thinking is a set of mental operations characterized by a person's ability to analyze, compare, synthesize, evaluate information from any sources; see problems, ask questions; put forward hypotheses and evaluate alternatives; make a conscious choice, make a decision and substantiate it (Pometun, 2017).

The scholar M. Lipman stressed that for formation and development of journalists' critical thinking they need a clear understanding of what it is and what can be. It is necessary to distinguish the essential ones characteristics, signs and features of critical thinking compared to other types of thinking, know results and fundamental conditions of its formation and strengthening. So the scientist singles out such aspects of the critical thinking: «critical thinking is responsible, skillful thinking that contributes to good judgment because: a) it is based on criteria; b) self-correcting; c) sensitive to the context» (Lipman).

As M. Lipman pointed out, the intellectual environment within which journalists are often filled with fragile structures. Journalists are capable of thinking more logically. They need to justify their reasoning, opinions, statements and all other components of thinking. Appealing to reasonable criteria is one way to develop their thinking on a stronger foundation. The author emphasizes: «In order to think critically, you need to gain a large number of cognitive skills» (Lipman, 1988, p. 1).

It has been claimed that fundamental the goal of modern education is not to simply give information to students, but to develop a critical way of thinking (Bakhanov, 2011 p. 34).

The scientist B. M. Bagai stresses that the role of critical thinking in modern education is growing and largely determines the quality of education, and therefore the competitiveness of the educational product also increases. The role of higher institutions education in the future will consist of encouragement society to the active use of critical thinking (Bahai, 2016, p.9). The author developed a technique for forming critical thinking, to which she suggested key stages: actualization («challenge»). Goal – formation of personal interest for receiving information. Students have to think and tell others (with the help of individual, pair, group work; brainstorming; joint forecasts; voicing problematic issues etc.) about what they know about the chosen topic.

Discussion – this is how previously acquired knowledge is realized and becomes a basis for assimilating new ones. The teacher's task at this stage is to generalize knowledge of students, help each to determine «your personal knowledge» and the main goals for obtaining new ones. The second stage is understanding. Students get to know new information. They should track their understanding and write it down in form questions that they did not understand – in order to later to fill these «white spots». After reading the information, each student should say which phrases/words helped him to understand information, and which, on the contrary, confused him. The main principle of the comprehension stage the teacher should give students the right setting for individual information searches and further group discussion and

analysis. The third stage is reflection (thoughts). Students should consider what they also learned how to incorporate new concepts into their own idea; discuss how it changed their thinking vision, behavior.

It is also necessary to point out that media literacy as an effective method of personality development and is connected with critical perception of information, the ability to analyze it, create a media product, and evaluate media texts. And it is possible to achieve this in media US education classes through the introduction of game elements, tests (Pysarenko, 2021, p. 79–80).

Conclusions and prospects for research. On the basis of the study, it has been concluded that critical thinking is an extremely important skill for journalists in today's information society. Journalists play a key role in reporting news and analyzing events, and their decisions can have a major impact on public opinion and attitudes. Critical thinking helps journalists gather, verify, and analyze information to provide an objective and credible context for their stories. Journalists who possess critical thinking have the ability to distinguish facts from opinions, to recognize hidden motives or interests that may influence the content of information. They ask questions, check sources, analyze evidence, and assess the relevance and credibility of information. Critical thinking helps journalists avoid populism, manipulation and the spread of unreliable news. It has been investigated that the professional training of journalists in the US universities is focused on practical aspects mainly on the development of critical thinking.

The peculiarities of critical thinking formation of journalists in the US universities should be deeply and thoroughly analyzed.

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