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DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA LITERACY OF APPLICANTS FOR AGRONOMIC SPECIALITIES BY THE MEANS OF JOURNALISTIC WEBQUESTS

I. S. Lazarenko*, T. M. Rybak**, V. A. Konovalova***, M. V. Moroz****

The article is dedicated to a topical issue of developing media literacy in non-language university students as a component of teaching them English as a foreign language. The notions of media, mass media, media education, its aim, tasks and media literacy as its result, WebQuest and Journalistic Task WebQuest are commented upon. Media are understood as the modern channels of communication including physical and online newspapers and magazines, television, radio, telephone, the Internet, fax and billboards. Media education is interpreted as teaching the theory and practical skills of acquiring and applying mass media as a part of pedagogical theory and practice. It is aimed at developing students' ability to use mass communication effectively in the society. The tasks of media education relate to the critical analysis of information, creating media texts; evaluating their sources, as well as their political, social, commercial, cultural interests and context; interpreting media texts and values spread by them; selecting appropriate media to create and disseminate media texts; accessing necessary media as a means of obtaining and transferring information. Media literacy is viewed as the result of media education. Among its components are the ability to interpret and evaluate various documents by means of observation, reading, applying logical inferences to evaluate the reliability of arguments; the ability to effectively cooperate with various partners and to make ideas clear for others; the ability to apply both previous abilities in using different types of media. The term of "WebQuest" is understood as "an inquiry-oriented lesson

* Highest Category Specialist, Trainer-Methodologist (Zhytomyr agrotechnical professional college)

inessa.lazarenko@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-8275-5508

ີ້ Trainer

(Zhytomyr agrotechnical professional college)

fiziktany1973@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-0656-8954

* Highest Category Specialist, Trainer-Methodologist

(Zhytomyr agrotechnical professional college)

viktoria0412@ukr.net

ORCID: 0000-0002-4430-3340

Senior Trainer

(Polisssia national university, Zhytomyr)

moros.m.w@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-9557-9275

Вісник Житомирського державного иніверситети імені Івана Франка. Педагогічні науки. Вип. 1 (108)

format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web". The Journalistic Task WebQuest presupposes the critical evaluation of the reliability of information and using it to answer questions, present events or problems.

On the basis of the theoretical analysis of scientific literary sources and samples the authors suggest a Journalistic Task WebQuest designed for the first (Bachelor's) level students of 201 "Agronomy" specialty and substantiate its expedience.

Keywords: Agronomy students, English as a foreign language (EFL), media file, media literacy, media education, WebQuest types, Journalistic Task WebQuest.

РОЗВИТОК МЕДІАГРАМОТНОСТІ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ АГРОНОМІЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ ЗАСОБАМИ ЖУРНАЛІСТСЬКИХ ВЕБКВЕСТІВ

І. А. Лазаренко, Т. М. Рибак, В. А. Коновалова, М. В. Мороз

Дана стаття присвячена актуальній проблемі розвитку медіа-грамотності студентів немовних ЗВО як компоненту їх навчання англійської як іноземної мови. У статті визначено поняття "медіа", "мас-медіа", "медіа-освіта", її мету, завдання та медіа-грамотність як її результат, "веб-квест" та "веб-квест журналістського типу". Поняття "медіа" розуміється як сучасні канали комунікації, серед яких фізичні та онлайн- газети і журнали, телебачення, радіо, білборди, телефон, Інтернет і факс. Медіа-освіта інтерпретується як навчання теорії та практичних умінь освоєння та використання мас-медіа як частина педагогічної теорії та практики. Вона спрямована на розвиток у студентів здатності ефективно використовувати масову комунікацію в суспільстві. Завданнями медіа-освіти є критичний аналіз інформації, створення медіа-текстів; оцінювання їхніх джерел, а також політичних, соціальних, комерційних, культурних інтересів і контексту; інтерпретація медіа-текстів і цінностей, що вони поширюють; відбір відповідних медіа, щоб створювати та розповсюджувати медіа-тексти; оцінювання медіа як засобів отримання та передачі інформації. Медіа-грамотність розглядається як результат медіа-освіти. До її компонентів належать: здатність тлумачити та оцінювати різноманітні документи за допомогою спостереження, читання, застосування логічних висновків, щоб оцінити надійність аргументів, здатність ефективно співпрацювати з різноманітними партнерами і пояснювати їм свою думку; здатність використовувати обидві попередні здатності до різних типів медіа. Термін "веб-квест" розуміється як дослідницький формат уроку, в якому більшість чи всі інформація, з якою працюють студенти, надходить з мережі Інтернет". Веб-квести журналістського типу передбачають критичне оцінювання надійності інформації та її використання для відповіді на запитання, презентації подій і проблем.

Спираючись на теоретичний аналіз наукової літератури і зразків, авторами було розроблено та представлено у статті веб-квест журналістського типу, призначений для здобувачів освіти першого (бакалаврського) рівня вищої освіти спеціальності 201 "Агрономія", а також обґрунтовано доцільність його використання.

Ключові слова: студенти-агрономи, англійська мова як іноземна, медіа-файл, медіа-грамотність, медіа-освіта, типи веб-квестів, веб-квест журналістського типу.

Introduction of the issue. The term "media" refers to the modern channels of communication used to disseminate news, music, movies, education, promotional messages etc. and including physical and online newspapers and magazines, television, radio, billboards, telephone, the Internet, and fax. If a medium is supposed to reach a large

amount of people, then it is defined as a mass medium [9]. Media channels can operate using media files (text, graphical, video and audio) to transmit information.

Teaching the theory and practical skills of acquiring and applying modern mass media viewed as a part of a specific, autonomous branch of pedagogical theory and practice is called media education [6]. It differs from using media as additional means of teaching other fields of knowledge. Its **aim** is to help people understand the way mass communication is used in the society, to teach them to communicate with other people by means of media. The **tasks** of media education include teaching how:

- 1) to make the critical analysis of information and create media texts;
- 2) to define the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial, cultural interests and context:
- 3) to interpret media texts and values spread by them;
- 4) to select appropriate media to create and disseminate media texts and to draw the public attention to them;
- 5) to access necessary media as a means of obtaining and transferring information [1: 10].

The result of media education is **media literacy** which includes:

- 1) an ability to interpret and evaluate various documents by means of observation and scanning reading, applying logical inferences to evaluate the reliability of arguments;
- 2) an ability to effectively cooperate with various partners and to make ideas clear for others;
- 3) an ability to apply both previous abilities in using different types of media [1: 42-43].

Media literacy empowers a person to differentiate between a fact and opinion, information, identify fake understand view point and cultural political scientific, and background of an author, the value of information and the reliability of the source. That is why media literacy is especially important in the current situation of a hybrid war with Russia where media technologies have been defaming the image of Ukraine at the international level by the fabrication of false evidence. That is why, the ability to analyze media information should be formed in school and university students. It will help them to defend their national dignity and human rights

proclaimed in international documents and ratified in our country.

Except for its undeniable global and national importance, media literacy plays crucial role in the professional education would-be specialists. of University students are supposed to be able to find, critically analyze and interpret various media texts that relate to their professional fields when their formal education is finished. This ability will help them to evaluate media sources and files critically and to select reliable ones. As a substantial number of these are created and published in English, media education is supposed to become an integral part of teaching foreign languages to university students meant provide them with substantial theoretical material and practical activities. In this context the need to elaborate or choose the methods and forms of training that could be used to provide such media education becomes quite topical.

Current state of the issue. According the National Curriculum to for Universities "English for Specific Purposes" students who aspire to obtain the bachelor's degree in a non-language university are supposed to be able to communicate in English in the professional environment:

- to discuss educational and professional questions to reach mutual understanding with an interlocutor;
- to prepare public speeches on a number of sectoral issues using appropriate means of verbal communication and adequate forms of conducting discussions and debates;
- to find text, graphical, audio and video information located in English-language sectoral materials (both in printed and electronic forms) using appropriate search methods and terminology;
- to analyze English-language sources of information to find data necessary to fulfil professional tasks and take professional decisions etc.

It can be seen that the demands indicated are intertwined with media literacy.

As the conducted analysis of scientific studies has proved, the problem of media education is thought to be topical internationally. There are projects aimed at developing media literacy of the society (e.g. Media Sapience, Медіа Literacy, Media IQ, Stopfake.prg, МедіаДрайвер, Медіаграмотна Місія etc.).

According to R. AlZou'bi media education improves students' critical thinking skills [3]. S. Kapel, K.D. Schmidt; B.O. Akinbadewa O.A. Sofowora [2; 5] explain that being media-literate students have to be able to sort out information according to the chosen criteria. A number of scientists (K. Martzoukou, C. Fulton, P. Kostagiolas, C. Lavranos; M. Saparuddin and K.Y.S. Putri [7]) link media literacy with the necessity to form digital competencies of non-language university students. In her dissertation E. A. Brewer analyzes the use multimedia WebOuest in increasing middle school students' understandings of cyberbullying". The author agrees that WebQuests may expose students to knowledge and information they might not otherwise experience by facilitating effective learning with access to digitized primary sources such as photographs, documents, art, and music, as well as structured evaluation of these resources with teacher supervision [4]. The use of WebOuests has recommended itself as a method of developing media literacy. However, no investigations into the possibility of using Journalistic Task WebQuests for developing non-language university students' media literacy have been found.

Outline of unresolved issues brought up in the article. The article represents a study of educational potential of Journalistic Task WebQuests for developing non-language university students' critical thinking which is an

essential component of their media literacy.

Aim of research is to consider the benefits of using Journalistic Task WebQuests as a method and means of developing non-linguistic university students' media literacy.

Research tasks of the article include: the analysis of the essence, structure and examples of Journalistic Task WebQuests, as well as the possibilities of using them in developing the critical thinking of the target audience of the research.

Results and discussion. According to the definition by B. Dodge and T. March, WebQuest is "an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web". It was developed by these researchers (in the frameworks of San Diego State University, SDSU/Pacific Bell Fellow, San Diego Unified School District and the Teach the Teachers Consortium at The Thacher School in Ojai, California) in 1995 [10]. Analyzing scientific literature, E. drew the conclusion WebOuests are instructional tools which use classroom technology in ways that challenge students to become critical thinkers and active learners using higher order thinking skills to navigate their own educations [4].

To understand the reason of choosing Journalistic Task WebQuests, it is necessary to investigate into the classification of their types suggested by B. Dodge [8].

There are 12 types of WebQuests:

1) **Retelling task type** is based on absorbing information followed by the demonstration of understanding. Students can show what they have learnt PowerPoint or anv presentation, posters or reports. This type in widely spread and it engages lower order thinking skills (LOTS) which makes it less difficult for students but prevents the development of media literacy. The demands for a Retelling Task WebQuest include: using a different format of the report compared to the primary text(s); a presence of an aim and a model of the report given to students; the need to summarize, distill and elaborate information. This type is often combined with others [8].

- 2) Compilation task type common features with the previous type but it engages information from a number of sources that has to be put down to the same format. The result of such compilation can look like a booklet (leaflet) of an exhibition / museum, a cookbook of recipes, a compilation of poems / stories of different authors who lived in the same period or belonged to the same literary movement etc. It can be published online or presented in a paper variant. The demands put forward for this type are: the necessity to follow the selection frame suggested by the teacher, to organize, paraphrase and transform information taken from several sources according to the format suggested. Like the previous type this WebQuest uses alongside with higher LOTS thinking skills (HOTS). It does not employ the analysis of information, its verification etc. [8]. Thus, this WebQuest type is not the first choice for developing media literacy.
- 3) **Mystery** task type presents information in the form of an intriguing question or a puzzle that needs to be answered or solved as a result of participating in а sequence information-seeking activities. Students can be provided with the same set of evidence that scientists used to answer the same question or to solve the same puzzle. The demands for this synthesize include: the necessity to information from a number of sources, to process it by comparing, generalizing, selecting data, eliminating false trails that might seem to be likely answers [8]. This type of WebQuests has a potential for developing students' media literacy if a question or a puzzle seems natural for their future profession which is not always possible.

- 4) **Journalistic task type** employs an event that has some professional and educational value for students. They are supposed to act like reporters while covering it: to gather information from a number of sources, to analyze it looking biases and prejudices differentiating between fact and opinion, to organize the materials into a text which is characterized by an appropriate style and genre. The demands for a Journalistic Task WebQuest include: using several sources to find the direct account of the event and background information that might help to avoid biases and prejudices in the report, the necessity to ensure fairness and accuracy, not creativity; highlighting divergent opinions [8]. It is obvious that Journalistic Task WebQuests provide an appropriate framework for developing students' media literacy which served the basis for choosing them a subject of this research.
- 5) **Design** task *type* WebQuests presuppose the creation of a product or a plan of action that accomplishes a predetermined goal and works specified constraints. These constrains can include limitations in the budget, time, choice of materials, colors, cities, sizes, legal restrictions etc. Otherwise students will design a plan by the motto "anything goes". The demands for a Design Task WebQuest include: the necessity to create a product that is by genuinely needed somewhere someone using the resources constraints typical of the real designers of such products; students should be creative [8]. As this type of WebQuests is connected to the analysis information, it is not appropriate for developing media literacy.
- 6) *Creative Product task type* is aimed to teach students a particular topic by means of producing a story, poem, painting, play, skit, poster, game, simulated diary, song etc. Alongside with the previous type, Creative Product WebQuests presuppose constraints, but these have more artistic nature like:

adherence to a particular style, genre, format, historical accuracy, internal consistency; limitations on length, size, or scope etc. This WebQuest type focuses on creativity and self-expression. The *demands* include: open-endedness, creativity, closeness to real needs for a particular artistic product [8]. Thus, this type is not relevant to the development of students' media literacy.

- 7) Consensus Building task type is designed around supposed to be controversial topics which imply the possibility of different opinions, believes, value systems, experiences of people who will deal with them. Students have to face such controversies, express different points of view (which sometimes requires playing different roles) and to learn to agree by building consensus with their peers. Such controversial topics can be found in history, business, politics etc. relevant WebOuest demands a possibility include: of taking on different perspectives by studying different sets of resources; authentic differences of opinion that really exist; the necessity to differentiate between opinion and fact; the necessity to create a common report for a specific audience (e.g. policy white paper, recommendation to some government body, a memorandum of understanding) [8]. This type of WebQuest has certain potential for developing students' media literacy as it deals with the analysis of information.
- 8) **Persuasion task type** is aimed at the formation of students' ability to prove their point of view finding arguments to convince an external audience. To do this they have to explore information from a number of sources, to develop a convincing case that is based on what they've learned and in which they will stand their ground. The format for this WebQuest type can be a mock city council hearing, a trial; writing a letter, editorial or press release presenting a viewpoint; a poster or videotaped advert to sway opinions. This type is often combined with Consensus Building type.

- The demands for this WebQuest type include: sources that empower a student to choose and prove his or her standpoint, the choice of a plausible audience for the message whose point of view is different or at least neutral [8]. Like the previous type Persuasion type has some potential for developing students' media literacy as they will analyze information.
- 9) Self-Knowledge task type is aimed at self-reflection and self-understanding by means of guided exploration of onand off-line resources and mainly psychological through tests or questionnaires connected with long term goals; ethical and moral issues; selfimprovement; art appreciation; personal responses to literature etc. The relevant demands include: the necessity to expose students to questions about themselves that have no short answers [8]. This WebQuest type is not connected to the development of media literacy directly.
- 10) Analytical task type of WebQuests is used to develop students' thinking (and primarily analytical) abilities by discussing similarities and differences between concepts or phenomena, figuring out the implications for such similarities and differences, looking for relationships of cause and effect and discussing their significance. The demands for this WebOuest include: the necessity to find and analyze logical connections between objects or ideas by means of specially designed techniques [8] (like Venn and Fishbone diagrams, 6 Thinking Hats, FRIEDs techniques etc.). This WebQuest type can be a helpful tool of developing students' media literacy.
- 11) Judgement task type is a WebQuest aimed at developing students' evaluation skills by means of applying a certain evaluation system, represented in its turn by special techniques (e.g.: a rubric with a set of criteria, ranging, rating or Tic-Tac technique, Fishbone diagram etc.). The demands for this type of a WebQuest include: the necessity of studying and understanding information which needs to be evaluated and is worth

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evaluation, choosing or elaborating an evaluation system and making an informed decision among a limited number of choices. The format of applying this WebQuest can be a mock trial, a family discussion a business report etc. This WebQuest type has a limited potential in developing students' media literacy.

12) Scientific task type is directly connected with developing students' ability to carry out a scientific research which presupposes: making hypotheses based on "understanding of background information provided by on- or off-line sources; testing the hypotheses by gathering data from pre-selected sources; determining whether the hypotheses were supported describing the and results implications in the standard form of a scientific report" [8]. The relevant demands include: the necessity to find a research question that has a scientific value and is feasible for students, the selection of sufficient resources that would allow students to answer it [8]. This type of WebQuest has a focus that is not directly connected with the development of students' media literacy.

The idea of classifying WebQuests by their tasks belongs to B. Dodge who asserted that the **task** is the most important part of a WebQuest as it provides a goal and focus for student energies and it specifies the intentions of the designer [8].

The information about **Journalistic Task WebQuests** is rather limited. Most of it is presented on the website "WebQuest Taskonomy: A Taxonomy of Tasks" and has been commented upon above [8]. Among the examples of Journalistic Task WebQuests are: The Vietnam Memorial WebQuest, The Mexico City EarthQuake WebQuest, The Gilded Age WebQuest and others.

Like any other, Journalistic Task WebQuest are supposed to includes: Introduction (sometimes preceded by the Welcome Page), Task(s), Process and Evaluation Resources, Rubric, Conclusion and Teacher's Page. The main activities are concentrated around the Process and Resources section where, using a step-by-step instruction, students can act like reporters covering the event, gathering facts and organizing them into an account within the usual genres of news and feature writing. In evaluating how they do, accuracy is important and creativity is not [8]. But, for example, Gilded Age WebQuest was created in a simplified format. It has only one, Process and Resources page, which includes a number of instructions accompanied by web-addresses and questions that students are supposed to answer.

The following is a fragment of the activities mentioned:

- A. Use any academically appropriate website to find the answers for #1-2.
- 1. Where does the term Gilded Age come from?
- 2. Who coined (came up with) the term?
- B. Go to http://www.pbs.org/wqbh/amex/carnegie/peopleevents/pande01.html ... #3-9
- 3. What industry did Andrew Carnegie help build? etc. ...

On the basis of this example, we can agree with B. Dodge that a teacher needs to provide students with sufficient resources and establish the importance of fairness and accuracy in reporting [8]. Besides, a Journalistic Task WebQuest should include (e.g. as a part of its Process and Resources Page) a special assignment aimed at developing

students' ability to check the reliability of information. Website Evaluation WebQuest on www.zunal.com includes a list of instructions that can be used in this case. According to the authors, to analyze the reliability of information presented on a website requires the ability to:

1) Define its kind.

- 2) Find the information about the author or the organization owing it.
- 3) Compare the information on the website with other similar websites.
- 4) Look for any manipulative content or biases in its position.
 - 5) Check acknowledgements.

The following **guidelines** can be taken into account to design a Journalistic Task WebQuest:

- 1) The *level* of linguistic complexity should be chosen according to the National Curriculum for Universities "English for Specific Purposes".
- 2) The *topic* should correspond with the syllabus of learning English as a foreign language used in the educational program.
- 3) The *event / problem / question(s)* chosen for a WebQuest should be:
- related with students' future profession;
- correspondent with current events;
 - commented upon in the media.
- 4) While selecting *websites* that students are supposed to analyze, academics should give the priority to the ones which:
- present a definite point of view on the problem or event;
- include biases or manipulations to provide students with training;
- are written by native speakers or compiled of original materials;
- are feasible for students of a definite language proficiency level.

Using the guidelines suggested we have designed a Journalistic Task WebQuest for students of the first "Bachelor's" level of higher education of the specialty 201 "Agronomy" (ECTS level – B2).

Title: The Topical Questions of Agroecology.

Introduction: this WebQuest is dedicated to considering topical questions of agroecology.

Tasks: students are supposed to:

1. Get acquainted with a number of topical questions.

- 2. Read and analyze suggested materials.
 - 3. Answer the questions.
- 4. Compile an accurate and detailed article.

Process and Resources

- I. Working with resources.
- 1. Read the following questions and choose 3-4 of them that you can answer using the following link: https://www.agroecology-pool.org/faq/
- 2. Write down each of your answer(s) in 3 or more sentences.
- 3. Click on the questions, read the information and compare it to your answers. What details does the author add?
- 4. Evaluate the reliability of the source of information by the following plan:
- What kind of information is it (a journal article, a blog article, a scientific article, an organization website article, a social network publication, an encyclopedia entry)?
- Is the author of the information indicated? Who is it or they (an individual or an organization)? What is known about the author?
- Are there any acknowledgements or references to other information sources? What journals are quoted?
- What conclusion can be made about the reliability of the information?
 - *II.* Working on the article.
- 1. Find information using the following question outline:
 - What is agroecology?
- Why is it useful: what problems and questions can it help to solve?
 - Who can use it?
- Can it be used in Ukraine? Why / why not? What for?
- 2. Prepare an article (500 words) on the basis of the materials you have written out. (This step can be followed by an article example).
 - 3. Check if there is logic in the article.
 - 4. Proofread for errors.

Table 1

Evaluation Rubric

| Criteria | Not | Satisfactory | Good | Excellent |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | satisfactory | | | |
| Independen | No answers to | The answer | The answer | The answer |
| t answers to | the questions were | consists of 1 | consists of 2 | consists of 3 or |
| questions | submitted | sentence which | sentences which | more correct |
| | | form and content | contains many | sentences. |
| | | are poor. | mistakes. | |
| Reliability | No questions | 2 questions are | 3 questions | 4 questions are |
| evaluation | are answered | answered | are answered | answered |
| Information | No questions | 2 questions are | 3 questions | 4 questions are |
| search | are answered | answered | are answered | answered |
| Article | The article is | The article is | The article | The article |
| accurateness / | not submitted. | poor in its content | has logical or | meets the |
| correctness | | and form. | technical | requirements |
| | | | drawbacks. | |

Conclusion: by completing this WebQuest you have learnt to evaluate the reliability of information and to create your own article on its basis.

Conclusions and research perspectives. Journalistic Task WebQuests accomplish an important educational role. Firstly, they promote non-language development of university students' ability to read and understand authentic information related to the topics they are studying while learning English as a foreign language. Secondly, they form the ability to analyze the reliability of information sources by answering a set of questions. Besides, students learn to formulate their thoughts in writing. Thus, this type of WebQuests teaches them not only media literacy but also analytical reading and writing.

The research presented in the article is limited to one WebQuest type and in the course of a further research can be enriched by the investigation into the possibility of applying other types to develop students' media literacy. The relevant potential is observed in Mystery, Consensus Building, Persuasion, Analytical task types.

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