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MEDIA EDUCATION AS AN ANTI-FAKE FACTOR

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the possibilities of media education in the fight against the informational challenge of our time - fake news. Fake news can damage both the reputation of an individual object (politics, brand, organization), and destabilize the situation in the whole country or even in the world. Fake news is not a new phenomenon, however, in the modern world, the increasing role of the media is a particular danger. Fake is not always a weapon in the information war: the emergence of fake news is often associated with unprofessionalism of journalists, while the lack of media literacy of the recipients does not allow to recognize the fake even with its obvious signs. Fake news appears both in world and all-Russian media, and in regional media projects and is associated with various pressing socio-political topics. Around the world today, an active search is being conducted for effective methods of combating fake news, which, first of all, include technological developments, legislative initiatives and media education of the population. The article emphasizes that media education is the most important factor in the fight against fake news and highlights the relevant aspects of media education. Moreover, media education is understood both as a process of professional development of a journalist, including a technological one, and as a process of personal development of his addressee with the help of and on the material of media formats.

1. Introduction

The term "fake news" in the meaning of "disinformation, information hoax" has been actively included in Russian speech practice in the last three years. Sometimes its introduction into widespread use is associated with the campaign of D. Trump. It is significant that the word *fake* was included in the Top-10 of the most used and significant words in Russia in 2017 under "The Word of the Year" project. This, in particular, symbolizes that the fake phenomenon in the context of the increasing role of mass information flows is of particular danger and therefore attracts the attention of the academic and journalistic communities, authorities and other actors of society.

Fake news is studied both as a result of insufficient training of journalists (Ilchenko, 2018), and as a product for maliciously creating turbulence in society in the context of information wars (Vasilkova & Legostaeva, 2019). There are classifications of fake news on various grounds (Suhodolov & Bychkova, 2017). Over the past three years, media researchers have been particularly interested in technological developments that are used both to mislead media recipients and to identify inaccurate information (Atanov, 2019; Chertovskih, 2019; Filatova, 2018; Ivanov, 2016;). All these vectors of discussion about fake news are directly related to the problem of their recognition, refutation or prevention. These problems cannot be solved without specific training of all actors in the process: journalists, authorities, readers.

The conversation about the need, ways and methods of media education systematically began in the Russian academic community since the 2000s; to this moment, its terminology has been formed (Krivyh, 2016), a pool of experts and enthusiasts has arisen, today the journal "Media Education", indexed in international databases, thematic conferences on media literacy are hosting.

2. Problem Statement

In April 2019, the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) conducted a mass survey of the population about fake news that demonstrated not only the urgency of the problem (more than a third of news consumers in Russia faced fakes), but also the inability of the population to distinguish criteria for identifying fakes (more than a third believed in them before the official refutation). At the same time, it is significant that people with a higher social status and education are less trusting to the news, and younger people more often consider the dissemination of fake news as a deliberate action, and not a mistake of journalists.

Today it is obvious that fake news can not only cause reputational damage to a specific object (person, brand, organization), but also destabilize the situation within one country and in the international arena.

Media researcher Ershov (2018) rightly believes that today fake news is not only a professional problem for the journalistic community, since fake is a communication strategy and practice of organizations, including commercial and state ones, which are fighting against an alien ideology and striving to discredit individuals, companies and entire countries, while receiving political dividends and / or paid orders. Journalists and media outlets use these practices as platforms or advertising inventory (p. 252).

In March 2019, Russia adopted two laws related to the topic: the law on disrespect for the authorities and on the ban on disseminating inaccurate socially significant information (the latter was called the "fake news law" in the media). The law differentiates the punishment for publishing fake news depending on the severity of the consequences that they entailed. And although it is still early to analyze the effectiveness and law enforcement practice, the legislative initiatives of the Russian authorities were met with skepticism and fears of the expert media community.

A large number of experts agree that blocking fake news and the punishment for their distribution is not the most effective way to deal with fake media content.

In parallel with the implementation of legislative initiatives around the world, technologies are being developed to help journalists deal with inaccurate information and help the user identify it. So, for example, in Europe there already exist at least a dozen designs of special robots for recognizing fake information, primarily visual. However, with the improvement of anti-fake technologies, bots for the production of fakes are more and more improved. Some of them can take advantage of the most common owners of smartphones. So, the FaceApp service - ranks first in the top of free apps in the Play Market and the App Store. With the help of the Deepfake technology used in it, you can, for example, change the gender of the person shown in the picture or age any image.

Thus, in the world community in parallel, various ways to combat fake news are developing: technological, legal and educational. Moreover, the educational vector is associated with the technological and in Russian realities is clearly not used enough. The model of anti-fake education is offered by the most famous Russian researcher of modern media fakes, professor of St. Petersburg State University, Ilchenko (2018). However, the media educational trajectories suggested by him concern only the professional community of journalists and are not related to the technologization of information processes. It is important to identify a wider range of opportunities and areas of media education in the process of preventing the destructive consequences of fake news for an individual and society as a whole.

3. Research Questions

3.1. Which media discourses mainly include fake news?

3.2. What are the expert assessments of the potential of media education in the fight against fake news?

3.3. What approaches and areas of media education should be updated in the process of combating false information?

4. Purpose of the Study

In this article we will analyze the situation associated with the use of fake news in the media sphere, which is due to the professional training of journalists and the media literacy of their target audiences. An analysis of the functioning of fake news is important to carry out both in regional and federal media formats, identifying differences in the presentation of news and reactions to them.

Features of the functioning of fake news content and expert opinions on countering such content serve as a guide for setting goals in the field of media education of various actors of the communication process.

5. Research Methods

To achieve the goal of the study, we use content analysis and discourse analysis of socio-political federal and regional media of various political orientations. First of all, such media were selected for the study, which are considered to be qualitative, having a large audience and publishing verified information (Meduza, Kommersant, Novaya Gazeta, Vedomosti). It is also productive to research regional media content, as the regional media are in close proximity to their target audience, which imposes additional obligations on journalists in relation to verification of facts and gaining trust. In this case, the media content of the Novgorod region is considered.

The method of expert interviews was used to identify the self-reflection of the journalistic community in relation to fake news and to predict the prospects for the existence of the journalistic profession in the face of a decrease in confidence among the population around the world. Experts from the media community with a journalistic education and professional journalistic identity were selected for the survey. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted with journalists and editors of federal and regional Russian media of various political orientations and various media formats (television - VGTRK, TC "Russia 24", TC "Moscow 24", Novgorod Television (ANO NOT); Internet agencies - IA "Regnum", newspapers – "53 news", "Pravda.ru ", "Novaya Novgorod newspaper"). In the framework of using this method, questions were asked regarding the prospects and possibilities of combating fake news, increasing confidence in journalism and confidence in society as a whole, the crisis of journalistic identity in connection with the development of blogging and new communication formats. An expert survey showed the obvious need to educate the population in terms of media literacy and the confidence of journalists in proven research sources. In this regard, the opinions of journalists coincide with those of scholars-futurologists and historians. Thus, the author of the bestselling book "21 Lessons for the 21st Century", the Israeli historian and philosopher Yuval Noah Harari (2018), although he believes that "the tantrum surrounding fake news is clearly inflated", nevertheless notes fakes among the challenges of our time. He also suggests "getting out of the brainwashing machine" by turning to science and trusting only the opinions of trusted experts.

In the process of describing the functioning of fakes and recording expert interviews on the basis of analysis of specific situations with fake news, we identified possible directions and participants in media education in terms of combating the impact on society and disseminating fake news in the media content.

6. Findings

6.1. Using the keyword fake search, the sites of all mentioned mass media issue from 100 ("Medusa") to 286 ("Novaya Gazeta") publications. This is usually a refutation of news from other media or responses to the anti-fake law and its enforcement. For example, "Kommersant", dated March 4, 2019, publishes the news with a headline The Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Moscow State University, called fake information about the Skripal Readings, which had previously been broadcast on "Echo

Moskvy" radio station. An interesting case study on historical fake is offered by "Medusa" newspaper. Publication of July 23, 2013 I see news that Yeltsin was going to sell Karelia to the Finns. Is it true? Marking this retrospective news, which many Russian publications published following an interview with the Finnish newspaper diplomat Andrei Fedorov, as a fake, the publication essentially offers a media educational mini-project in the analysis of information. Publication issues What did exactly Fedorov say? Does anyone else confirm this post? indicate methods of identifying a fake. In the regional media field, the word fake is not as common as in the federal one and is used primarily to refute the news. For example, on July 15, 2019, the online media VNovgorod.ru publishes the news without reference to a specific source under the heading Elena Pisareva may become a senator, and Sergey Fabrichny – a rector. Despite the fact that in the news the reliability of the event is marked with words with the semantics of uncertainty. Presumably, this can happen, but a specific source is not named, the news is actively discussed in social networks. At the same time, an official reaction follows only two weeks later, when Sergei Fabrichny, a member of the Federation Council from the Novgorod Region, denied this information at a briefing. The official source of regional authority - the newspaper Novgorodskie Vedomosti on July 29, 2019 published the news under the heading Sergei Fabrichny about rumors about the appointment of the rector of NovSU: "This is real nonsense."

Thus, on the one hand, in the framework of media criticism and professional reflection, many media (mainly on a national scale) analyze the problem of fake news, and on the other hand, they themselves periodically publish information that partially or completely contains false information and unverified facts. Media content analysis demonstrates that the largest number of fake news is related to media discourses of politics, show business, history and economics.

6.2. As it turned out through in-depth interviews, journalists are concerned about the problem of reducing confidence in the media, but they are skeptical about the possibilities of legislative solutions to the problem of fake news, since the authorities themselves are not competent enough to recognize them and / or the judicial system may drown in the scale and complexity of the problem. At the same time, the opinions of journalists are consistent with the opinions of academicians both on the need to improve the quality of work with sources in the professional community, and on the activation of the recipient's roles in countering the spread and destructive impact of fake news. Respondents expect a competent and timely official reaction to fake news from the authorities as the addressee of journalistic publications. So, experts proposed various algorithms for checking news, identifying markers of inaccuracy in them, improving public access to information and various formats of media education. In an interview, the authorship aspect of fake news was touched upon: in many respects, according to professional journalists, bloggers and marketing experts are distributing fake news on the Internet. The responsibility for the distribution of fakes among these authors is minimal, but their texts are perceived by the audience as journalistic.

In connection with the fake challenge to modern society, the most important areas of media education today, in our opinion, are, on the one hand, training journalists in information verification technologies and, on the other hand, training the target audiences to recognize fake news as well as to adequately respond to official fakes sources from the authorities and various departments.

Summarizing the scientific and journalistic approaches to combating fake news in media content, one can formulate the following areas of society's efforts in the context of media education: improving the

quality of work of journalists and the audience with information sources and technological innovations in terms of fake recognition; development of self-regulation mechanisms in the journalistic community regarding fake news; creating an education system for various media target audiences.

7. Conclusion

Thus, we can state that:

7.1. Means for detecting fake news are checking for the presence of news in other high-quality Russian and world media, evaluating the source of information for trust in it, verifying the news by means of special robots, and searching for additional data on news objects in scientific sources.

7.2. The directions of media education in terms of counteracting the spread and impact of fake news on society should concern both the "anti-fake" training of journalists and their target audiences. Media education in this context is associated with the awareness and differentiation of identities and roles in society of journalists, bloggers and smm-marketers, with fact checking.

Acknowledgments

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