

## RUSSIAN JOURNALISM OF THE 21ST CENTURY: AXIOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS

### *JORNALISMO RUSSO DO SÉCULO XX: ASPECTOS AXIOLÓGICOS E EDUCACIONAIS*

### *PERIODISMO RUSO DEL SIGLO XX: ASPECTOS AXIOLÓGICOS Y EDUCATIVOS*

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**ABSTRACT:** Taking into consideration the history of the Russian media is invariably associated with close attention to the work of outstanding publicists. The first decades of the twenty-first century, which replaced the nihilistic attitude towards the Soviet period of the 90s of the twentieth century, became a period when the events of the social life of the country actualized interest not only in the facts of the national history of the past century, but also in various sources of education about them. In this regard, the corpus of journalistic works by authors of the twentieth century is of particular value. It seems that the inter-century twentieth anniversary was a period of "liberation" from the influence of ideological attitudes that are traditional for journalism of both the Soviet 70th anniversary and the non-Soviet periods of the twentieth century and even more so for those born in the post-Soviet period.

**KEYWORDS:** Russian mass media. Journalism. Education. Culture. Values. Problem and thematic diversity. Genres.

**RESUMO:** Ponderar sobre a história da mídia russa está invariavelmente associado a uma atenção especial ao trabalho de publicitários de destaque. As primeiras décadas do século XXI, que substituíram a atitude niilista em relação ao período soviético dos anos 90 do século XX, tornaram-se um período em que os acontecimentos da vida social do país atualizaram o interesse não apenas pelos fatos da vida nacional história do século passado, mas também em várias fontes de educação sobre eles. Nesse sentido, o corpus de obras jornalísticas de autores do século XX é de particular valor. Parece que o vigésimo aniversário inter-séculos foi um período de "libertação" da influência de atitudes ideológicas que são tradicionais para o jornalismo tanto do 70º aniversário soviético quanto dos períodos não-soviéticos do século XX e ainda mais para os nascidos no período pós-soviético.

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Mídia de massa russa. Jornalismo. Educação. Cultura. Valores. Problema e diversidade hemática. Gêneros.*

**RESUMEN:** *Ponderar la historia de los medios de comunicación rusos se asocia invariablemente con prestar especial atención a la labor de destacados publicistas. Las primeras décadas del siglo XXI, que han sustituido a la actitud nihilista hacia el periodo soviético de los años noventa del siglo XX, se han convertido en un periodo en el que los acontecimientos de la vida social del país han actualizado el interés no sólo por los hechos de la historia de la vida nacional del siglo pasado, sino también por diversas fuentes de educación sobre ellos. En este sentido, el corpus de obras periodísticas de autores del siglo XX tiene un valor especial. Parece ser que el inter-siglo XX fue un periodo de "liberación" de la influencia de actitudes ideológicas tradicionales para el periodismo tanto soviético como no soviético del siglo XX y aún más para los nacidos en el periodo post-soviético.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Medios de comunicación rusos. Periodismo. Educación. Cultura. Valores. Problemática y diversidad hemática. Géneros.*

## Introduction

An invocation of the history of Russian media is inexorably linked to greater attention being directed towards the creations of outstanding publicists. The early decades of the twenty-first century, which replaced the nihilistic ones in relation to the Soviet period of the 90s of the twentieth century, became a period when events in the country's social life, for example, the celebration of various 100-year and other anniversaries, made interest actual not only in the facts of the national history of the past century, but also in various sources of information about them. In this regard, the corpus of publicistic texts by the authors of the twentieth century does not lose its definite value: it seems that the inter-century two decades has become a period of "freeing" from the influence of ideologies being traditional for journalism of both the Soviet 70th anniversary and other periods of the twentieth century – and for those born in the USSR, let alone those born in the post-Soviet period.

The transformations that took place in previous decades at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries and are inherent in the modern communicative space led to the loss of the media monopoly in the field of information and the aberration of such functions as information and value-orientation (SAVINOVA, 2008; OSHO, 2020; TISDELL; THOMPSON, 2005). In consequence, the "heroes" of publications of general Russian press are increasingly becoming not people of labor or representatives of the intelligentsia, public figures, but characters of show business, "media" persons. It is thus a disturbing trend to observe that the younger generation lose interest in and a holistic view of the everyday life of people in different parts of the vast

country – what is undoubtedly a value that has a “strategic geopolitical character” – the idea of one people, common goals, common cause (POELUYEVA, 2009).

We believe, however, that the journalism of the previous century has such a potential that, owing to various circumstances (for example, regarding the existing interest in Russian history, literature, culture in general; surviving family stories, communication between generations, etc.), can be in demand and perceived by today’s reader-viewer-listener generation in an adequate manner.

The subject of the publication is educative, axiological and media-educational aspects of the texts of Russian journalism of the twentieth century.

The empirical data are the publications of different genres by Russian authors which made up a reader for the subject “Russian Journalism of the XX Century” for bachelor’s degree students who get training on journalistic specialty – about 70 texts, divided into nine topics (by periods).

The relevance of the stated problems is conditioned, in our opinion, on the one hand, by the fact that, despite competition in which are the other actively developing sources of information (news agencies, new generation Internet resources, etc.) with the traditional print media (ALLAN, 2006; PAVLIK, 2009), there is continuing interest in archival materials (magazine, newspaper publications on topical issues of Russian history), as well as concentration on the “cultural and historical context of their functioning and on the social effects they produce” (POLONSKY; GLUSHKOVA 2020, p. 120). On the other hand, the experience of working with text of Russian journalism of the twentieth century in the student audience enables adjustments of the algorithm of such work: in the process of internalizing, interpreting the text, reflecting on its content, problems, writerly style, young readers learn to see and read between the lines, fill their knowledge gaps in the country’s history, connect topical issues of the past and the present, and consider these issues in effective and efficient way.

Russian journalism of the twentieth century has been attracting the attention of scholars from various branches of humanitarian knowledge. So, representatives of historical and journalistic studies pay attention to the characteristics of the periods of development of Russian journalism of the century: such reviews can be found in various textbooks (KUZNITSOV, 2002; OVSEPIAN, 2005; STROVSKY, 2011). In recounting the history of individual publications of the early twentieth century, S. Y. Makhonina has attached importance to the work of some authors and their landmark publications. For example, devoting her attention to *Vesy* magazine (1904-1909), the author dwells on the participation of V. Y. Bryusov in the

magazine and his most important works of the period, in particular, on the article *Freedom of Speech* (1905) (MACHONINA; 2014). R. P. Ovsepiyan writes about party discussion of the late 1920s and the authors of publications of the period (OVSEPIAN, 2007). The preface to the anthology which contains eloquent presentations of the authors of this period deals with the social commentary on “perestroika” (OVSEPIAN, 2009). A number of works by Russian scholars highlight the creative endeavors of publicists of the 20th century. For example, in one of his essays B. I. Esin considers and evaluates the social and creative activity of V. G. Korolenko (ESIN, 2007). Important remarks and assessments of the work of individual authors of the second half of the twentieth century (A. Agranovsky, Y. Chernichenko, A. Solzhenitsyn, I. Kon, etc.) are contained in the project of journalists and sociologists (PRESS IN SOCIETY, 2000). Numerous publications of modern national researchers are devoted to the personalities of the history of Russian journalism of the twentieth century, for example, the works by A. V. Bakuntsev about I. A. Bunin (BAKUNTSEV, 2013; 2016), P. P. Kaminsky – about S. P. Zalygin’s works (KAMINSKY, 2009; 2010) and others.

A special corpus of works by modern researchers of Russian journalism of the twentieth century deals with the study of its genre range and stylistic and linguistic resources (ZHILAKOV, 2019; KONKOV, 2010; CHIULIKINA, 2012; JUZIFOVICH, 2012, and others).

The study aims to present, on the basis of description of the experience of working with the texts of Russian journalism of the twentieth century with bachelor’s degree students, the possibilities of using its educative, axiological and media educational aspects not only for a professionally oriented audience, but also for a wide range of modern readers.

The tasks of the study have been solved by means of general scientific and special methods, including various analytical approaches with the use of principle of historicism – qualitative content analysis, problem-thematic and interpretive analysis, as well as an audience survey: more than 50 people have given the answers concerning the importance of learning the course – graduate students studying full-time and part-time at the Faculty of Journalism of ISSandMC of NRU “BelSU”, as well as young journalists, recent graduates of the university.

## Results and Discussion

The specificity of a journalistic text, as is well known, involves not only writing a modern history, but also a fairly strong emotional impact on the reader (EDWARDS; WOOD, 1999; TAN; WEAVER, 2007; ZININ, 2019). An analysis of the selected corpus of texts of Russian journalism of the twentieth century makes it possible to see an appeal to multifarious

feelings, both positive and negative. So, according to the responses of bachelor's degree students involved, through acquaintance with the texts of different periods and different authors of the twentieth century, an informal addressing the facts of national history occurs, "It proved to be very useful for me to discover new things about my country, about life in it during the Soviet era", - students have noticed their growing interest in different stages of the country's history, its culture, the creative activity of many previously unknown publicists. Indeed, a significant part of the studied texts provides an opportunity for the reader to reflect on topical problems of different periods of the country's history of the twentieth century (the works by N. A. Berdyaev, V. I. Lenin, G. V. Plekhanov, M. Gorky, A. T. Averchenko, E. D. Kuskova, A. V. Amfiteatrov, B. A. Galin, V. V. Ovechkin, I. A. Ryabov, T. Tess, B. Polevoy, Authors Of The Period Of "Perestroika", L. M. Leonov and others).

One of the most important thematic areas of journalism in the twentieth century is patriotic. The texts of journalism during the Great Patriotic War (A. Tolstoy, B. Gorbатов, K. Simonov, M. Sholokhov, I. Ehrenburg etc.), the last decade of the century (L. M. Leonov, V. E. Maksimov and others) give us the reason to talk with students about the "sense of homeland" (A. Tolstoy), which is key in discussing the topic. An insight into the texts of the mentioned and other authors, discussion of the reasons for specific publications, their positions provoke, in our judgment, many young readers' thinking about their own feelings, about their personal attitude to the phenomena of "Motherland, Fatherland": "Publicism of the Great Patriotic War ... more "heart-stirring"; Simonov's texts, Tolstoy's *Motherland* stand out in particular.

This topic is also associated with reflection on the meaning of "small homeland" in man's fate (V. M. Peskov *The River of My Childhood*, E. I. Nosov *Small Homeland*), on the phenomenon of "place of historical memory" – in connection with G. Kublitsky's text *Belgorod, Stary Oskol, Gubkin ....* The essay by I. P. Lakhno *More Than Neighbors* (1983) about "fraternal" relations and cooperation between neighboring regions of the Russian SFSR (Belgorod region) and the Ukrainian SSR allows us to look into the topic of national policy in the USSR being often difficult not only for modern students, but specifically – on the territory of today's border region.

Another thematic direction in the publications studied by students is associated with texts about working-class people: the authors' respect for their "heroes", for people who put much of themselves into their work, becomes a conversation starter about the scale of values inherent in generations of ancestors – grandfathers and grandmothers of modern youth (B. Galin - *The Song of Makar Mazay*, T. Tess - *Spring in Donbass*, B. Polevoy - *The Power of Joy*, E. Bogat - *Shakespeare in a Changing World*, etc.). The topic of labor also develops during the

discussion of a number of texts which put emphasis on the characters' citizenship, their creative, responsible, professional, national attitude to the cause (L. Sosnovsky *Smagin*, V. V. Ovechkin - *At the Cutting Edge*, A. A. Agranovsky - *Reconstruction*, etc.).

Young readers, according to our observations, are of much interest to the texts the discussion of which expose "heroes" or facts that correspond to a critical view of the realities of the twentieth century. Many opportunities for observation, often to the students' astonishment, are provided by the texts of journalism of the 1920s and 1930s, but not only. In defining the problem (a question that requires an answer-solution), young researchers arrive at the conclusion that the objects of criticism are sabotage, bureaucracy and irresponsibility (A. Serafimovich - *In the Heated Shelter*, L. Sosnovsky - *Heavy Days of Volkhovstroy*), lack of critical thinking (M. Koltsov - *More on Stupidity*), consumer's attitude to nature (V. M. Peskom - *The River of My Childhood*, S. P. Zalygin - *The Turn: Lessons from a Discussion*).

Discussion of the problematic and thematic diversity of the texts of Russian journalism of the twentieth century, of course, is connected with an appeal to the axiological aspect of this material. Such an opportunity is becoming especially relevant today, since, "according to media analysts and the general public, the media content produced by the media fosters completely different values: **success at any sacrifice, consumption, life is like a game and an adventure** (so in original – author's)" (DZIALOSHINSKY, 2012, p. 420). According to G. V. Lazutina, "a circular, relatively steady *core* is discerned at different stages of social development in axiological field (so in original – author's). It sums up absolute "enduring" values, the significance of which for a person and society is predetermined by the vital role of the realities they reflect" (LAZUTINA, 2013, p. 61). It is noteworthy: according to our observations, modern students determine not only "core" values but also anti-values with comparative ease.

Thus, for journalist students, freedom of expression and creative freedom are of prior importance. Starting for consideration are the texts related to the discussion of the beginning of the century (D. S. Merezhkovsky - *On freedom of Speech* (1904), V. I. Lenin - *Party Organization and Party Literature* (1905), V. Y. Bryusov - *Freedom of Speech* (1905)), and further *Letters from Poltava (I, II)* by V. G. Korolenko (1919) and the feuilleton by I. Ilf and E. Petrov - *How Robinson Was Created* (1932).

Values such as spirituality and morality are not lost either: an appeal to them is connected to acquaintance with the texts of N. A. Berdyaev (*The Struggle for Idealism*, 1901), I. A. Bunin (*The Mission of the Russian Emigration*, 1924). In connection with the discussion of publicistic works of the period of the Great Patriotic War, there is a conversation about the

value of human dignity (M. Sholokhov - *The Science of Hatred*, B. Gorbатов - *Letters to a Comrade (About Life and Death)*).

Of particular interest to students are the publications by D. S. Likhachev (*Letters about the Good and the Beautiful*, 1987, Letter 12. *A Person Must Be Intelligent*, Letter 27. *The Fourth Dimension*): the famous scientist and publicist, appealing to the younger generation, insists on the value of intelligence and reading culture. Here's what the students say, "Likhachev's letters are my favorite (so in original – author's) (M. Zuboreva)", "...Likhachev's texts (*A Person Must Be Intelligent*) were close to me. I like it when notions of common knowledge are as if unveiled, but in fact they are not new at all ... You have not just thought about it (S. Durneva)"

Other values that invite young readers' attention are equality of people, including ethnicity. The conversation about this, of course, started with the "History of Russian Journalism" course, in connection with the text by V. G. Korolenko *The Multan Sacrifice* (1895) and continued in connection with his *Letters from Poltava* (1919), which allowed students to conclude that the author remained faithful to his ideals.

Students point to implicit topicality when discussing L. M. Leonov's article *Our Cause is Just* (1995). The conclusion the young people arrive at is associated with the enduring value of the victory over fascism in the Great Patriotic War. It is natural that referring to this text, as a rule, draws out a conversation about modern realities in the audience.

Among the anti-values that the students discover when analyzing the corpus of texts under study are "Soviet" philistinism (A. Zorich "Mutual Acquaintance"), indifference as a result of urbanization (I. Ilf and E. Petrov "Indifference"), amateurism (A. Kolosov "Blue Bull", M. Lvov "Cereals and People"), shifting responsibility (N. Pogodin "Rodents", A. Latsis "Decide for Yourself").

A fundamental outcome of studying the corpus of texts of Russian journalism of the twentieth century do the students consider the opportunity to "learn from masters, professionals", "develop analytical thinking", "do the rethinking about journalism in general and specific authors", "enhance their insight into the socio-cultural context of the century", especially the requirement "to have a word" – "to take an unerring aim", when in formulating problems, defining stylistic and linguistic means, it took longer to manage and not by everyone.

The discussion of a professionally oriented context is of particular interest to students, especially since the texts, in one way or another related to this problematic of journalistic and literary creativity, are encountered in different periods of the century. These are the feuilletons by A. Averchenko *My Self-Determination* (1917), I. Ilf and E. Petrov *How Robinson Was*

Created (1932), M. Lansky *Meeting with the "Hero"* (1958), a review of V. E. Maksimov's newspaper articles *On the Eve of Our Tomorrow* (1992) and, of course, the essay by D. Bykov "Novaya Gazeta" as "Tomorrow" of Our Today. In this regard, it is hard to disagree with the researcher, "Awareness of one's involvement in the history and culture of the professional community, and through it, in national (state) and human existence is not only the basis of responsible creative work, dialogue, but also humanistic value" (MARCHENKO, 2015, p. 299). Moreover, the graduates of Bachelor Degree themselves write about this, "I have already known and admired some authors for a long time; known someone as a writer, but rediscovered as a publicist (A. Samokish)"; "... The material per se is interesting; we have learnt from it what they wrote about, thought about what problems the authors raised, what values they stood for, how they lived. (I read the texts and delved into them, so did the others, I think) (A. Skibina)"; "Honestly, after getting acquainted with these materials, I wanted to go deeper into the study of the history of the Great Patriotic War. The knowledge gained helped me in the preparation of programs related to the war. ... One should not simply read publicistic texts but scan them closely. After all, it is important to be able to grasp the meaning of the author's thought, to see the details (especially in our profession) (P. Bykova)"; "... Almost a year has already passed, but I have a lot of things left in my memory from the courses of national publicism and journalism. I made good use of it in work and in everyday life. It happens, all that we have learned comes back just at exactly right and convenient moment (A. Kharina)"; "... Oh, it took time for us to fumble the right words, phrases to accurately describe the problem, thought, to pursue the right device. How we played in "guess a word" in class – that's what I definitely won't forget (S. Durneva)"; "... And the fact that on answering, you should provide examples, quote – it is very important, otherwise the answer can be "fudged up" in vague generalities. Some students think that they can just talk their head off, speak with vacuities, without having read thoroughly and given an answer to the point. ... It just doesn't work that way on this subject (E. Tikhonova)"; "... The results of analytical work with the texts of "thought leaders" of the twentieth century are easily extrapolated to date, it really proves useful in the work – familiar links and patterns are found (T. Narozhny)", etc.



## Conclusion

Thus, the study has shown that the corpus of Russian journalism of the twentieth century (in particular, its published materials) has a strong potential of an educative, axiological and media educational nature, moreover, we assume that the choice of texts for reading may have an optional character, providing that one is familiar with iconic works, though, many of which seem to have taken into our consideration.

As recipients, in our case, were graduates and bachelor's degree students in journalism, however, being representatives of the younger generation, they demonstrated sufficient sensitivity to the studied texts – to their problem-related, value-based charging and media educational potential. The implication is that the materials of Russian journalism of the twentieth century are content adequate for “alternative publications and channels that would meet the task of the social mission of the press” (SAVINOVA, 2008, p. 70), which would, among other things, envision a possible way out of the conventional intergenerational conflict, retrieve the cultural and educational paradigm of the Russian media and the high spiritual and moral status of Russian journalism.

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