

UDC 070

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The journalism education in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's primary location for journalism faculty is found at the Kazakh National University, the country's largest post-secondary institution. As such the faculty there are developing new state standards for the nation's academic journalism programmes.

Keywords: journalism education, new standardars, academic journalism programmes.

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Қазақстандағы журналистік білім беру

Мақала Қазақстандағы журналистік білім берудің мәселелері мен перспективаларына арналады. Қазіргі кездегі журналистік білім берудің кәсіби біліктілігін көтеру жайлы ұсыныстар айтылады.

Түйін сөздер: журналистік білім беру, жаңа стандарттар, академиялық бағдарлама.

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Журналистское образование в Казахстане

Статья посвящена проблемам и перспективам журналистского образования в Казахстане. Автор дает рекомендации для улучшения качества журналистского образования в стране.

Ключевые слова: журналистское образование, новые стандарты, академические программы.

The power of Journalism to mobilize societies towards action has been recognized for many centuries. It is reflected by Napoleon Bonaparte's famous words uttered in 1810: "A journalist is a grumbler, a securer, a giver of advice, a regent of sovereigns, a tutor of nations. Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than thousand bayonets".

Kazakhstan's primary location for journalism faculty is found in 1934, at the Kazakh National University, the country's largest post-secondary institution. As such the faculty there are developing new state standards for the nation's academic journalism programmes. In Soviet times, media workers produced only one university in Kazakhstan – KazNU. Back then there was a clear system of practical training for students in preparation for employment at newspapers and on television stations, which allowed reinforced the practice of journalism. In some universities, such rules still exist, but media outlets are not always interested in hiring these students.

According to the new experimental educational

programme, an institute's to undergraduate program must include a laboratory practicum of practical work in the fundamental disciplines, or modules. It helped to shape the student's knowledge and skills in the area of journalistic working technologies, learning languages, content analysis, computer technologies, and disciplines or modules, of the elective portion, whose programs call for shaping the appropriate knowledge and skills among students. It contrasts to the second generation of country, the new experimental programme at KazNU is completely oriented toward the credit rating system. Academic standards have improved with the introduction of the Unified National Test. Under the Bologna Process, Kazakhstan has transitioned to the three-tier system of higher education with bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. degrees and the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) has improved student mobility (Mould, 2012). As the result of the democratic changes over the last 20 years, the development of the media in the Kazakhstan has acquired

new features that are not characteristic of command administration and direct government but of legal regulation that incorporates appropriate world experience. During the same period, Kazakhstan's media sector has expanded, fuelled by a growing economy and a middle class with more disposable income. Although some print media, faced with declining advertising revenue and government subsidies, are struggling, the television market has expanded, with the launching of new networks and regional stations. A shake-up in the sector is expected over the next three years as Kazakhstan prepares for the switchover to digital TV by 2015. Meanwhile, online and mobile media are growing and several media companies offer news on multiple platforms (Mould, 2012).

Historically, journalism in the Soviet Union was a subfield of literature and journalism education was conducted in faculties of philology (language and literature). Many journalism teachers have degrees in philology but little academic or professional experience in media. As in other countries, there's a basic conflict between academic and industry priorities. Universities and the Ministry of Education and Science want teachers with doctoral degrees and an active research agenda; the industry wants students to be taught practical skills in journalistic research, reporting, writing, and multimedia production (Mould, 2012).

Over the past period, Kazakhstan has made substantial investments in higher education under a multi-year program (now extended to 2020) to improve education. Many universities are stronger and healthier than in the 1990s, with higher salaries, funding for research, and opportunities for teachers and post-graduate students to study abroad. Academic standards have improved with the introduction of the Unified National Test. Under the Bologna Process, Kazakhstan has transitioned to the three-tier system of higher education with bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. degrees and the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) has improved student mobility. The Ministry of Education and Science has closed some underperforming universities and branch campuses, and instituted a more rigorous system of program and disciplinary accreditation. The private sector in higher education has expanded, but several institutions that did not meet standards have closed (Mould, 2012).

History has shown that the media acquire special importance the moment the paradigm of a

society's development changes and there is a change of ideology and the shaping of a new public opinion. During the same period, Kazakhstan's media sector has expanded, fuelled by a growing economy and a middle class with more disposable income (Mould, 2012). The importance of this theme is indisputable (Zhalilov, 2009) and well known to all whose line of work is associated with such an important aspect of international cooperation as working together in the sphere of media. Journalism education is essentially a service component of the market that determines the structure of the demand for the product of media education of highly skilled professionals. Today in Kazakhstan, there are two forms of journalistic education; higher educational institutions which depend on the Ministry of Education; and another focused on providing professional training sessions or courses which issue licenses and approve their academic programs.

The media industry needs to bear some responsibility for lack of professional skills. Few media organizations in Kazakhstan have invested resources in universities or training for their staff—either in-house or through professional media associations. Journalism students gain some experience through practical work and internships in media, mostly during the summer break. However, the criteria for placement, the work assigned to students and the level of faculty supervision and involvement vary widely. The challenge of finding quality personnel for the media industry is important not only for the Kazakh media market. Students from the first course must learn to treat information not as an instrument for his work, but as a way of life. This is especially true in the era of the so-called information society, where information becomes the basis, the leading factor of journalism education. For four years, students must learn to recognize the "world as text" and the "impossibility of the world outside the text."

Skepticism about the need for changes in the academic approach to preparing journalists is one of the biggest stumbling blocks to reform. Another is the bureaucratic nature of the university education system. It is obvious that without structural changes in higher education, journalism will continue to be in a state of crisis.

The effect of high-quality journalism education will be limited in the absence of the parallel development of independent media. Thus, they urged their governments to refrain from over-regulating profession. The problems of the profession and education

see many media executives and professionals. A poll conducted in the regional editions of Kazakhstan in 2009 (OCSE), showed that 71 percent of newspapers lacked professionally trained journalists, 55 percent of regional newspapers and 49 percent city newspapers. The survey called “professionally trained” journalists of regional media, conducted in 2009 revealed weaknesses in three areas:

- training in the social sciences (economics, law, sociology, etc.);
- practical professional knowledge (information retrieval techniques, knowledge genres and styles, etc.);
- Knowledge of computer programs.

According the survey improvements in the training of journalists are clearly needed, in order to develop a more fact-oriented, investigative style of reporting that would represent an advancement over the more commonly used Soviet style of journalistic practice emphasizing “analytic” writing. As IREX’s 2001 report noted, “The need for reform in journalism education is long overdue. But lack of resources, qualified staff, donor interest, and investment, together with authoritarian rule and the practice of journalism to promote interests rather than present objective news and events to the public, still plague this unre-formed society.”

International donor organizations such as the U.S. Information Agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the UN Development Program, UNESCO, the Soros Foundation, the Eurasia Foundation, and the British Council organized some short-term and international training for practice journalists. According IREX notes better opportunities for training journalists in the areas of reporting, legal issues, marketing, and media management would be beneficial, based on the comments of the panelists.

Instead, discussions focus on journalism as about business as an instrument of propaganda, as a medium of advertising, as a means of informing the public as a way to distract the message. While there is no understanding of the place and role of journalism as the cornerstone of democracy until the understanding of the place and role of the journalist as a person performing an important public duty, while journalism and journalists in the mass does not come close to this ideal, it is difficult to speak and rely on the overall meaning and the essence of journalism education. It is now that the media companies are going to cooperate with universities and develop a

dialogue is the best thing that can give the media theorists and practitioners. The system of journalism education occupies an important place in the legal framework of journalism coursework. Here, however, also possible to resort to a utilitarian craft approach and teach students only how to avoid liability for copyright infringement, for the disclosure of sources of information, defamation and insult, as to prevent his dismissal from his job as a lie and not be punished. Knowledge of the law, its implementation in journalism, its features, procedures, trends, finally, their rights and responsibilities facilitates the professional activities of the media, and prevents violations of the law that are detrimental not only to journalists and editors, the subjects of articles and reports, and thousands readers and viewers.

Effective implementation of journalism is possible while creating a favorable legal environment for its development, that is, the rule of democratic law in the relationship of journalists and editors with public authorities, civil society and individual citizens. Establishing the rule of law, along with creating a supportive, transparent, predictable policy and regulatory framework reflecting national realities is necessary to create a people-centered information society.

Today in Kazakhstan, the core educational model is the university bachelor’s degree in journalism. This model is used in the United States and other countries. Today, regardless of education and skills, journalists can find suitable employment. This is a far contrast from other professions. It also accounts for greta inconsistency between the media industry and universities on what is necessary knowledge.

The development of the Internet has even more democratized the field of journalism. In some developing countries, the role of journalists are limited to principles of social responsibility theory, while remaining independent of government and business journalists should respect and promote the national history, literature and culture, writing in the national language and support the positive development of society.

So, we can establish some general expectations that all journalists operate within the framework of political, economic and cultural boundaries. Universities have begun to change the duration of training programs and implement the European system of assessments and credits. But the most important thing. That is why the Bologna process draws attention not on the credits or years of training, but the results and

outcomes. And although journalism as a discipline has not yet been determined, most observers agree that a model should use international standards requirements, such as those recommended by EJTA or UNESCO.

The best journalists are the most educated journalists, who use research skills, academic accuracy and high ethical standards period. They need knowledge that underlies the traditional liberal arts and can be found in subjects related to history, culture, politics and science. The journalist who speaks only in technical skills or only a theoretical knowledge can not properly define "news" and its importance, much less teach it with precision and grace. Historically, journalism in the Soviet Union was a sub-unit of literature, so it was logical to pursue journalism education in the faculties philology. And while we can agree that reporters should be able to write in their national language and clearly, in compliance with the spelling and punctuation, there is a dispute as to the value of literature for journalism education. Professor David Mould from University of Ohio noted that enrollment in Kazakh-language journalism tracks (most universities offer two tracks, in Russian and Kazakh) is increasing. Even Kazakh academics admit that the educational and professional standards of Kazakh-language journalism teachers are often lower than their Russian-language counterparts, and so departments face a difficult dilemma: Russian-language teaching capacity may be adequate, but there are fewer students to teach; more students want to work in Kazakh-language journalism, but there are not enough qualified teachers".

Professor David Mould in his research about Kazakhstan journalism education system showed that he ministry requires faculties and departments to have a specified number of teachers with graduate degrees; those that do not will lose their state accreditation. Most working journalists have only a bachelor's degree, so the rule often prevents departments from hiring them. Even without it, attracting practitioners is a financial challenge; journalism in Central Asia is not a well-paid profession, but teachers' pay is even lower. At many universities, working journalists can do no more than give a few *pro bono* guest presentations, and supervise interns". Traditionally, courses in journalism were divided into specialization such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and, more recently, online media. Although all students learn the skills of general subjects, collecting and transmission of information, it

is assumed that they follow different paths in their careers and need different, specific to the medium, knowledge.

Today's journalists also need the skills to work on all types of media: the ability to take pictures, shoot video as well as adapt a printed article or TV report for online media.

In the Kazakh National University named after al-Faraby, faculty members are in the process of the curriculum of traditional journalism undergraduate majors including newspaper, magazine, air and online. In the class on the basics of reporting and writing, students shoot and edit video and learned building links online stories and links. Despite retaining some specialized courses, such as journal writing and stories, more future courses will include several types of media. Similar reforms or at least discussions are taking place around the world. In the future, specialization of a journalist can not be by medium alone.

Today, the fact remains that the Internet, mobile phones, Twitter and other new media are also sources of news. Most journalists use the Internet to gather information. Moreover, the so-called mainstream media has lost their monopoly on information. Due to the fact that Internet journalists are cheap (enough to write a blog or upload pictures or video from mobile phone), this type of journalism is becoming an important source of news in the developing world where traditional media are struggling to remain viable from a financial point of view. According the information Khabar Agency correspondent Adilya Noruzova: "34 percent of Kazakhstani people use Internet. The WORLD WIDE WEB involves in its networking. This global village, as people named Internet, has different residents, good and bad. The latter are the sites that propagandize terrorism, extremism, violence, drugs and child's pornography". Whether we like it or not, gossip on the Internet, social networking sites, popular journalism and communications on the mobile phone have become part of the media world. Journalists should play a key role in analyzing and directing the flow of this information and verifiable facts to the public. For this function, they should be able to work in various types of mass media.

Journalists working in an extremely complex world with many specialized areas of knowledge – in health, business, science, environment. One of the new trends in journalism education is to prepare students for specialization in the areas they cover,

by means of an interdisciplinary study or double degrees. Today faculty of Journalism at KazNU has more than ten agreement of cooperation of an interdisciplinary study. Major media have always had a topic on which reporters to specialize – in covering politics, business, literature and the arts. But most journalists are reporters on general subjects, with no specialized training.

One of the main problem is the professional development needs teachers. Media organizations need to offer the possibility of short-term (usually – in the summer) for teachers, and not just let them watch, but also to work as journalists, gaining new skills. Such a program also needs media training and development courses. Experienced journalists can help journalism educators to update the content of programs and subjects. Similarly, teachers can advise media organizations in the development of vocational training, including workshops and training sessions.

Over the 20 years of independence, Kazakhstan has seen positive developments in the field of mass media and in the field of journalism education. Journalism remains a popular area of education for many young people, and the media industry has expanded significantly, creating new jobs. Today journalism education prosperous and the government has wisely committed revenue to higher education. But change in journalism area of education comes slowly. Against this background, we must remember that the university has been here a long time, and must take responsibility for educating the next generation of journalists. That means reforming curriculum and improving teaching, in particular the practical courses. At the same time, as resources – financial and human – are still the main obstacle, it is argued here that there is little reason to be hopeful because of the change in the position of journalism teacher and, in some cases, the position of university administrators.

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