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**Protic E.,
ESOL-teacher, Step2Skills,
Hertfordshire County Council, UK**

**MEDIA LITERACY AND CRITICAL THINKING IN ESOL:
LEARNING THROUGH REAL EVENTS AND NEWS CONTENT**

In the modern information society, adult migrants studying in ESOL courses in the United Kingdom face a double challenge: mastering the language of the host country and learning to interact safely and critically with media content. Media literacy is regarded as a key component of functional English, providing access to public services, employment, protection from misinformation and participation in civic life [1]. Learning English through the analysis of current events makes it possible to link language competence with the real social context in which ESOL learners find themselves and promotes their ability to navigate the information environment of a new country.

The use of authentic news materials includes work with multimodal resources: television and radio news, podcasts, online news articles, government information messages, as well as content from social media, which is the main source of information for many migrants. This approach helps develop listening, reading, speaking and writing skills simultaneously. News-based learning supports the development of critical thinking, skills of factual interpretation, recognition of manipulation and hidden evaluative language [3]. Through discussions, debates, work with headlines, fake-news detection and visual rhetoric analysis, learners develop the ability to question information and justify their own viewpoints.

The methodological toolkit involves scaffolding, i.e. gradual task complexity increase, which makes working with news possible for learners with different language levels and educational backgrounds. Adapted materials, infographics and key-vocabulary tasks are used for beginners; advanced students work with analytical reports, political interviews and content marked by different stylistic and ideological features. It is also important to teach students how to verify sources and to familiarize them with the UK media landscape, its regulatory principles and ethical standards, which facilitates better understanding of local information culture [2].

Practical experience of implementing media-education elements in ESOL classes demonstrates the expansion of learners' vocabulary (particularly in civic and socio-political domains), improvement of argumentative skills and greater confidence in public expression. Students become more active in discussions, willingly participate in role-plays, interview simulations and debates. News analysis also contributes to cultural integration: by clarifying traditions, local contexts, social phenomena and values of British society, it helps overcome intercultural barriers and fosters a sense of belonging and understanding of how institutions operate in the host country.

Challenges in teaching media literacy within ESOL contexts primarily relate to learners' diverse media experiences, varying levels of trust in information sources, and potential exposure to trauma among refugee students, particularly when discussing sensitive topics such as conflict, political instability, or natural disasters. These pedagogical considerations necessitate a careful and supportive approach to content selection, classroom interaction, and emotional well-being. Evidence indicates that project-based learning, involving the creation of learner-generated informational products such as mini-reports, podcasts, or multimedia presentations, effectively strengthens autonomy, enhances language development, and promotes both digital and civic competences, thereby contributing to learners' broader social integration.

Thus, integrating media literacy into ESOL education is an effective tool for the comprehensive development of adult migrants: it simultaneously supports linguistic progress, strengthens social adaptation and fosters the ability to interact responsibly and confidently with the information space of the United Kingdom. The use of current news and real media texts expands instructional opportunities and makes learning more meaningful, applicable to real life and motivating. Further development of media-education approaches in ESOL has great potential to enhance learner autonomy, civic engagement and the implementation of innovative teaching practices, which

will ensure even higher educational effectiveness and support learners' harmonious integration into a multicultural society.

References

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