

Olena Tupakhina

Ph. D. (Philological), Associate Professor, Zaporizhzhya National University, Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine,
tupakhina@znu.edu.ua
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2920-1167>

COMMUNICATING EUROPEAN VALUES THROUGH CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY: CASE OF ERASMUS+ JEAN MONNET MODULE «EUROPEAN VALUES IN LITERARY ARTS»

Abstract. *The article is prepared based on the results of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module «European Values in Literary Arts» (599918-EPP-1-2018-1-UA-EPPJMO-MODULE EUVOLIA). The study explores the impact of the course «European Values in Literary Arts» (EUVOLIA) on its target audience (Bachelor and Master students majoring in Humanities, Natural and Exact sciences) in terms of raising awareness of European values. The relevance of the study is determined, on the one hand, by the necessity to articulate correctly the European values dimension in the HEI curricula, and, on the other hand, by the lack of a methodological basis for a value-based approach in the teaching of the Humanities. While Ukrainian students' perception of European values is fragmented due to controversial social and political contexts (i.e., conflicting attitudes to Ukraine's European integration and growing disillusionment in EU institutions' functionality), a critical media literacy toolkit developed by EUVOLIA can significantly increase their sensitivity to values-related issues and deepen their understanding of European values as an integral axiological construct. The impact of the EUVOLIA course, which was presented in Zaporizhzhya National University during 2018–2020 for five mixed groups of students (126 students in total), was measured with the help of formalized questionnaires and surveys. The target audience's portrait of values was created according to the Schwartz Value Survey on the research of value orientations. The results showed that the methodological toolkit used in the EUVOLIA project not only increases students' awareness of European values but also contributed to the development of critical perceptions of cultural products and materials of mass media, overcoming the phenomenon of «double-think» and strengthening the sense of belonging to the European cultural paradigm.*

Keywords: *European values, Schwartz Values Survey, axiology, critical media literacy.*

JEL classification: I21, M37.

DOI: 10.32987/2617-8532-2021-1-117-124.

As all the main contemporary researches (Gorshenin Institute's «Ukrainian Society and European Values» survey, 2018; «Third Pan-Ukrainian Municipal Survey» commissioned by International Republican Institute, 2017; *European Social Survey*, 2004–2012; *World Values Survey*, 2015, etc.) demonstrate, Ukrainian society's devotion to the set of traditional/

survivor values formed under authoritarian regime remains one of the key challenges of the transition period, which Ukraine is now facing on its way towards European integration. Since the European future of Ukraine is at stake, the national educational reform positions educational institutions as powerful agents and facilitators of changes in terms of upholding the values

© Тупахіна О. В., 2021

of a free democratic society through the New Ukrainian School (NUS) and Higher Education Institution (HEI) curricula (*New Ukrainian School Values*, 2019; *Human Capital Development: Education and Science Reform*, 2018), thus determining the relevance of this study.

However, the lack of an effective and balanced methodological approach remains one of the most visible performance gaps in terms of individual axiological initiation through education. Though over 40 % of Ukrainians reached school age after 1991 (approximately 28 % of the current population was born after 1991) [1], the survivalism is still strong among the post-Soviet generations. As Gorshenin Institute's survey claims, the citizens tend to fragment European values rather than accept them as an integral axiological construct: «a considerable number of citizens is focused predominantly on personal well-being values and prosperity and thus tends to prioritize the values they find personally profitable at the moment» [2, p. 28], with the values of tolerance, equality or human rights protection tossed away as less significant.

Another important trait that considerably influences the acceptance and understanding of European value is the growing disappointment in European democracy mostly resulting from a communication gap. Strong lack of confidence in Ukraine's ability to create democratic institutes capable of fighting corruption, injustice and nepotism that led to the positioning of Europe and its values as «an unattainable object of desire» way before the Revolution of Dignity [3] seems to have boosted isolationist moods: the proportion of respondents

supporting neither European (EU) nor Eurasian (the Customs Union) integration increased from 7,2 % in 2014 to 24,4 % in 2017 [2, p. 28]. New Europe Center's survey «Ukrainian "Generation Z": Attitudes and Values» (2017) focused on Ukrainian youth, points out that the percentage of those trusting the EU institutions and those doubting their functionality is roughly the same among people aged 14–30 (29 % to 28 %) [4].

This study hypothesizes that Ukrainian students' initial understanding of European values, shaped by the above-mentioned tendencies and the axiological paradigm of the national survivalist, may be significantly influenced by means of formal training in critical media literacy (CML). As Kellner & Share argue in their seminal paper on the subject, CML «is an educational response that expands the notion of literacy to include different forms of mass communication, popular culture, and new technologies. It deepens the potential of literacy education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences, information, and power. Along with this mainstream analysis, alternative media production empowers students to create their own messages that can challenge media texts and narratives» [5]. CML's ability to address popular culture to raise issues of race, class, gender and sexuality [6; 7] defined the concept of Jean Monnet's Module «*European Values in Literary Arts*» (*EUVOLIA*) focused on explaining the essence of European values through fiction and other products of popular culture (movies, music videos, TV series, etc.). The course combines in-depth theoretical training with practical analysis of popular culture products to

reveal the messages concerning the role of the state and the vision of an ideal statesman («*Servant of the People*» TV series, 2015–2018), racial biases in the representation of the other («*Crazy Wedding*», 2018), the concept of perfect womanhood («*Superwoman*» TET TV show, 2019 – present), deconstruction of family values («*The In-Laws*» TV series), tolerance and human dignity issues («*The First Portents*» TV series, 2019), etc.

Taking EUVOLIA as a pilot case for communicating European values awareness through the CML course, the study focuses on two research issues: 1) what is the target audience's (TA) initial vision of the European values? 2) to what extent could formal training provided by EUVOLIA influence this vision and stimulate critical reflection over the values?

The methods of the study comprise Schwartz values survey [8] to map the TA's values set as compared to the national average [9] and European average [10]; a questionnaire to define the TA's level of European values understanding; a survey to monitor EUVOLIA course's impact on the TA's understanding of European values.

The questionnaire (submitted online before the course starts) consists of 5 basic questions: 1) Have you ever heard of European values? 2) How do you understand the concept of European values? 3) Name the three most important European values as you define them (select from the list/write your own answers) 4) To what extent has Ukrainian society embrace the European Values? 5) How would you define your own set of values?

The survey (conducted online as the course ends) monitors EUVOLIA's

impact on the TA's understanding of European values by encouraging students to share their greatest discovery, the greatest surprise and disappointment concerning the European values, based on what they have learned from the course.

The sample of the study comprises 126 Bachelor students (78 females, 48 males), aged between 18 and 26 (mean age 22), specializing in Humanities, Natural and Exact Sciences at Zaporizhzhya National University and enrolled for EUVOLIA course as a part of their qualification training during 2018–2020.

One of the main results of the study is that the axiological set of Ukrainian students (as defined in the Schwartz Values Survey) is closer to that of an average European in terms of universalism, achievement, and self-direction values. The younger generation is more open to innovations and changes and is less concerned with material income and social status (Table 1).

However, the TA's initial awareness of the European values (as defined by the questionnaire) proves to be considerably low. Although all the students claim to have heard of the European Values, only 21,1 % of them receive this information regularly – from topical media products, Internet communities, relevant publications, and university subjects. Most of the respondents (64,5 %) come in touch with the subject occasionally and non-systematically, while the rest of the interviewees admit the presence of European values in their informational space is even lower.

No wonder only 3,9 % of students claim to have a deep and profound understanding of the concept of

Table 1

The values of the target audience revealed by the Schwarz survey compared to the national average (SOCIS, 2015) and European average (Atlas of European Values 2017)

Priorities	TA values	National average	European average
Priority 1	Personal and national safety	Personal and national safety	Harmonious coexistence (tolerance, equality)
Priority 2	Love/friendship	Income	Rule of law
Priority 3	Leadership	Power over people and resources	Ecological safety
Priority 4	Rule of law	Social justice	Personal freedom
Priority 5	Social justice	Love/friendship	Social justice

Compiled by the author, based on research results.

European values; 40,8 % rate their awareness as «general», while 47,4 % define it as «basic» and «non-sufficient». The rest of the respondents (7,9 %) claim to have no idea of the concept of European values at all. At the same time 57,9 % of the respondents define their personal set of values as «predominantly European» and 32,9 % – as «partly European», while only 3,9 % consider their values to be «non-European».

Another important outcome derived from the questionnaire’s results is that TA, in line with the national trend, continues to position European values as an «unattainable object of desire». Only 14,3 % of students think that Ukrainians share European values to a considerable extent. 75,3 % of the respondents are sure that we have embraced the idea of the European values but superficially and would grasp the essence of this concept within the lifespan of the next two or three generations. 7,8 % are even more pessimistic in their predictions, arguing that Ukraine’s turn to European values is out of the question soon.

Students seem to have learned, at least verbally, the key European values as defined by the Treaty of Lisbon (2009). When asked to name the core European values, they mention

Tolerance (75,3 %), Democracy (72,7 %) and converging notions of Personal Freedom (75,3 %), Individualism (58,4 %), and Independence (66,2 %). Gender Equality is another popular choice (66,2 %), while the ideas of Equality in general and the Rule of Law occupy a modest 21,2 % and 27,3 % respectively – less than Globalism (26 %) and Rationalism (35,1 %). Among the most curious options proposed by the students, one can name Capitalism (16,9 %), Religion (20,8 %), and Traditional Thinking (19,5 %). Such variants as «Every Man for Himself» and «Rational Egoism», although suggested by students, were unpopular.

However, when asked to identify the values they consider most important for themselves, the students followed the national trend spotted by Gorshenin Institute’s survey: their vision of European values proved to be rather fragmented and tended to prioritize the values directly referring to their personal experience rather than addressing the overarching notions. Personal Freedom (82 %), Gender Equality (76 %, marked exclusively by female participants), and Independence (63 %) topped the list, while the paradigm-setting values of Democracy (20 %) and Rule of Law

(12 %) were clearly marginalized, and the Tolerance value was noted by only 6 % of respondents (Table 2).

One of the possible explanations for such discrepancy could be found in Gorshenin Institute’s analytical report upon the results of the «*Ukrainian Society and European Values Survey*» (2017). It is argued that the concept of tolerance itself bears a particularly contradictory connotation for Ukrainians since almost 50 % of Ukrainian citizens consider it to be contrary to traditional Ukrainian values and therefore inadmissible to Ukrainian society. Tolerance and respect for other cultures (understood very narrowly, mainly as acceptance of sexual minorities, other nationalities, and religions) are rated as the least important amongst the European values for Ukrainians (5,4 % and 9 % respectively) [2, p. 19].

Another possible explanation concerns the so-called «double-think» phenomenon inherited from a hyper-ideologized approach to the Humanities as a part of the school curriculum in a Soviet and mostly post-Soviet educational tradition. This tradition comprises hollowing out the complex concepts, such as democracy or human rights, turning them into purely verbal signs bearing no connections to actual (often missing) referents [11]. The rejection of these concepts by students

when they redefine values from a personal point of view signifies not only a fragmented vision of European values as an axiological construct, but also the lack of critical understanding and practical application of the values under consideration in the TA’s relevant experience.

However, formal training in critical media literacy acquired throughout the EUVOLIA course could significantly deepen the TA’s understanding of the integrity of European values. As the outgoing survey demonstrates, one of the most important ideas taken from the course is that of the genesis of European values (41 %), their transitional nature (26 %) and the hidden links between the mass media products and the current political agenda (17,7 %).

The less obvious but influential relations between art, state and ideology was the biggest surprise to 36 % of students: many of them admit that they did not think about the important role of art in shaping values. 31 % of respondents were amazed by statistics reflecting axiological climate in Ukraine, thereby acknowledging the discrepancy between the portrait of a compatriot that they build from their personal contacts and a large-scale picture. 24 % reflect on their own values, tracing their roots to the influence of family and school,

Table 2

European Values as priorities for the target audience – respondent response distribution

Priorities	Most important European values	Values I consider important
Priority 1	Tolerance, 75,3 %	Personal freedom, 82 %
Priority 2	Personal freedom, 75,3 %	Gender Equality, 76 %
Priority 3	Democracy, 72,7 %	Independence, 63 %
Priority 4	Independence, 66,2 %	Individualism, 41 %

Compiled by the author, based on research results.

information bubbles, consumed media products, etc.

The low quality of national media products, namely in terms of axiological messages, is the most disappointing for 78 % of students, who claim to have become more attentive to the details they ignored before taking the course, i.e., to the manifestations of sexism or to the fact that the modern Ukrainian movies' failure to pass the Bechdel test.

Thus, by applying the critical media literacy framework, the EUVOLIA course encourages its key beneficiaries to critically rethink their own sets of values and to move from a formal and fragmented view of European values

towards a more holistic and integral one. By stimulating the critical thinking skills of the target audience, the course turns students into conscious media consumers capable of understanding and explaining the impact of dominant ideological patterns cast upon cultural products. By allowing students to apply their relevant personal experience to the popular culture products analyzed in the classroom, the course further reassures the value of this experience, contributes to overcoming double-think, and stresses interconnections between axiological transformations in Ukraine and global values-setting processes.

The article was prepared within the frames of Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module «European Values in Literary Arts» (599918-EPP-1-2018-1-UA-EPPJMO-MODULE EUVOLIA) co-funded by the European Commission. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

References

1. State Statistic Service of Ukraine. (2020). *Ukrainian Population's Structure in Terms of Age and Gender*. Retrieved from http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/MULT/Dialog/statfile_c.asp (in Ukrainian).
2. Gorshenin Institute; Friedrich Egbert Foundation in Belarus and Ukraine. (2018). *Ukrainian Society and European Values: Report on Social Survey Results*. Retrieved from <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ukraine/13570.pdf> (in Ukrainian).
3. Yavorska, G., Bolomolov, O. (2010). *Europe: Unattainable Object of Desire*. Kyiv: Dmytro Burago Publishing House (in Ukrainian).
4. Ukraine's Generation Z Values and Priorities: National Poll Results. (2017). *neweurope.org.ua*. Retrieved from http://neweurope.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Ukr_Generation_ukr_inet-2.pdf (in Ukrainian).
5. Kellner, D., Share, J. (2005). Toward critical media literacy: Core concepts, debates, organizations, and policy. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 26(3), 369–386.
6. Joanou, J., Griffin, E. (2010). From Emmett Till to the Rose Petal Cottage: Critical pedagogy and popular culture in pre-service teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly, Special Online Edition*, 310–341.
7. McGaha, J. (2015). Popular Culture & Globalization. *Multicultural Education*, 23, 32–37.

8. Schwartz, S. (1992). Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 25, 1–65.

9. SOCIS Centre of Social and Marketing Research. (2015). *Values of Ukrainians: Pro et Contra of Reforms in Ukraine*. Retrieved from <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-other-news/1850963-78799c8650906a9dd662cee6db323ee1.html> (in Ukrainian).

10. Halman, L., Sieben, I., Zundert, M. (2011). *Atlas of European Values: Trends and Traditions at the Turn of the Century*. Amsterdam: Drukkerij Wilco.

11. Kahanov, Yu. (2019). *Homo Sovieticus Identity Construction (1953–1991): Case of Ukraine*. Zaporizhzhya: Inter-M (in Ukrainian).

Тупахіна О. В.

кандидат філологічних наук, доцент, доцент кафедри німецької філології і перекладу Запорізького національного університету, Запоріжжя, Україна, tupakhina@znu.edu.ua
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2920-1167>

ФОРМУВАННЯ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИХ ЦІННОСТЕЙ ЧЕРЕЗ МЕДІАГРАМОТНІСТЬ: РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ ПРОЄКТУ ERASMUS+ JEAN MONNET MODULE «ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКІ ЦІННОСТІ У ХУДОЖНІХ ТЕКСТАХ»

Анотація. Стаття підготовлена за результатами реалізації проєкту Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module «European Values in Literary Arts» (599918-EPP-1-2018-1-UA-EPPJMO-MODULE EUVOLIA) та висвітлює вплив навчального курсу «Європейські цінності у художніх текстах» на формування уявлень цільової аудиторії (студентів бакалаврату соціогуманітарних і природничо-технічних напрямів підготовки) про аксіологічний комплекс європейських цінностей. Хоча, з огляду на суперечливий соціально-політичний контекст, розуміння українськими студентами європейських цінностей є фрагментарним, воно може бути істотно поглиблене та гомогенізоване завдяки застосуванню інструментарію медіаграмотності й навчання через досвід. Вплив навчального курсу «Європейські цінності у художніх текстах», що викладався в Запорізькому національному університеті впродовж 2018–2020 рр. п'яти змішаним групам студентів (загалом 126 осіб), вимірювався за допомогою формалізованих анкет і опитувань. Ціннісний портрет цільової аудиторії створювався за методикою Ш. Шварца з дослідження ціннісних орієнтацій. Результати показали, що використаний у рамках проєкту методичний інструментарій не лише підвищує рівень обізнаності студентів щодо європейських цінностей, а й сприяє розвитку критичного сприйняття культурних продуктів і матеріалів ЗМІ, подоланню феномену «двоєдумства» та посиленню відчуття приналежності до європейської культурної парадигми.

Ключові слова: європейські цінності, аксіологія, медіаграмотність, «навчання через досвід».

Список використаних джерел

1. Статтєво-віковий склад населення України. 2020. *Державна служба статистики України* : вебсайт. URL: http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/MULT/Dialog/statfile_c.asp.
2. Українське суспільство та європейські цінності: звіт за результатами соціологічного дослідження / Фонд ім. Фрідріха Еберта; Інститут Горшеніна. 2018. URL: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ukraine/13570.pdf>.
3. Яворська Г., Богомоллов О. Непевний об'єкт бажання: Європа в українському політичному дискурсі. Київ: Видавництво Дмитра Бураго, 2010. 132 с.
4. Українське покоління Z: цінності та орієнтири. Результати загальнонаціонального опитування / Фонд ім. Фрідріха Еберта. 2017. URL: http://neweurope.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Ukr_Generation_ukr_inet-2.pdf.
5. Kellner D., Share J. Toward critical media literacy: Core concepts, debates, organizations, and policy. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 2005, 26(3), 369–386.
6. Joanou J., Griffin E. From Emmett Till to the Rose Petal Cottage: Critical pedagogy and popular culture in pre-service teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Special Online Edition, 2010, 310–341.
7. McGaha J. Popular Culture & Globalization. *Multicultural Education*, 2015, Vol. 23, 32–37.
8. Schwartz S. Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 1992, Vol. 25. P. 1–65.
9. Цінності українців pro et contra реформ в Україні. *Укрінформ* : вебсайт. URL: https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-other_news/1850963-78799c8650906a9dd662cee6db323ee1.html.
10. Halman L., Sieben I., Zundert M. Atlas of European Values: Trends and Traditions at the Turn of the Century. Amsterdam : Drukkerij Wilco, 2011. 141 p.
11. Каганов Ю. Конструювання «радянської людини» (1953–1991): українська версія. Запоріжжя : Інтер-М, 2019. 432 с.

Стаття підготовлена за результатами реалізації проекту Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module «European Values in Literary Arts» (599918-EPP-1-2018-1-UA-EPPJMO-MODULE EUVOLIA) за співфінансування Європейської Комісії. Підтримка Європейською Комісією випуску цієї публікації не означає схвалення змісту, яким відображено тільки думку автора. Тому Комісія не може нести відповідальність за будь-яке використання даної інформації.