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Media Education in the Polish System of Mainstream Education

Abstract

The article discusses the role of media education in the Polish system of general education, focusing on primary media literacy aimed at developing critical and conscious media consumption skills among teenagers. The author analyses the current legal and institutional framework of media education in Poland, its development over the years and the challenges it faces. Media education, both in its primary dimension (for children and youth) and secondary dimension (for adults), aims to prepare recipients for critical analyses of media content. The article presents the historical context of the development of media education in Poland, as well as the various stages of its evolution in response to political, cultural and technological changes. Despite numerous calls and attempts to introduce media education as a separate subject, in practice, fragmented approaches to its implementation dominate. The article also emphasises the need to prepare teachers for teaching in this area and to integrate media competences with other subjects. The challenge remains not only to shape media skills but also to protect children from the dangers associated with new media. The author points to the necessity of further developing of media education, including needs related to the changing media landscape.

Keywords: media education, media literacy, Polish education system, critical media consumption.

Edukacja medialna w polskim systemie edukacji powszechnej

Streszczenie

W artykule omówiono rolę edukacji medialnej w polskim systemie edukacji powszechnej, koncentrując się na pierwotnej alfabetyzacji medialnej, która ma na celu kształtowanie kompetencji krytycznego i świadomego odbioru mediów wśród dzieci i młodzieży. Autorka analizuje obecny stan prawny i instytucjonalny edukacji medialnej w Polsce, jej rozwój na przestrzeni lat oraz wyzwania, przed którymi stoi. Edukacja medialna, zarówno w pierwotnym (dla dzieci i młodzieży), jak i wtórnym (dla dorosłych) wymiarze, ma na celu przygotowanie odbiorców do krytycznej analizy treści medialnych. W artykule przedstawiono historyczny kontekst rozwoju edukacji medialnej w Polsce, a także różne etapy jej ewolucji w odpowiedzi na zmiany polityczne, kulturowe i technologiczne. Obecny stan edukacji medialnej jest wynikiem długotrwałego procesu, w którym kluczową rolę odegrały reformy systemowe, zmiany w polityce medialnej oraz wzrost znaczenia mediów elektronicznych i społecznościowych. Mimo licznych postulatów i prób wprowadzenia edukacji medialnej jako odrębnego przedmiotu, w praktyce dominują rozproszone podejścia do jej realizacji. W artykule podkreślono również potrzebę przygotowania nauczycieli do nauczania w tym zakresie. Wyzwaniem pozostaje nie tylko kształtowanie umiejętności medialnych, lecz

także ochrona dzieci przed zagrożeniami związanymi z nowymi mediami. Autorka wskazuje na konieczność dalszego rozwoju edukacji medialnej, aby skutecznie odpowiadać na wyzwania XXI wieku, w tym na potrzeby związane z cyfryzacją i zmieniającym się krajobrazem mediów.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja medialna, umiejętność krytycznego odbioru mediów, polski system edukacji, dydaktyka medialna, rozwój edukacji medialnej w szkolnictwie.

Introduction and methodology

In the framework of social science methodology, the research subject encompasses all objects, phenomena and related processes with regard to which research questions are formulated¹. Accordingly, it has been assumed that the subject of this research is media education within the Polish education system, with a focus on the preparation of children and adolescents for the responsible use of new media and their navigation of the virtual reality shaped by these technologies.

The research subject determines the research objectives. Intuitively, the objective of any activity, including research, can be understood as the outcome intended by the person undertaking the activity. This article follows Hubert Witczak's definition of the research objective as the "establishment (scientific recognition), assessment, valuation (attribution of scientific significance and value) and attainment of a designated, future, anticipated and desirable state of affairs (scientific development of the subject)"².

The primary research method employed for the purposes of this article has been the analysis of pre-existing documents. According to E. Babbie, this is a non-reactive method that involves analysing the content of pre-existing materials: various classes of documents concerning security policy (reports, expert opinions, forecasts, summaries, documents illustrating decision-making processes, etc.)³. The subjects of analysis as part of this method have been documents available in both traditional and digital formats, relevant to the research. When analysing data, attention is paid to their nature, form, circumstances of creation, internal dynamics, level of objectivity and place of origin⁴.

The research methods presented in the article are crucial for justifying the reliability and credibility of the analysed content. Particularly, in the context of the discussed topic of media education within the Polish educational system, the applied methods allow for systematic and objective collection and interpretation of data, which is essential for a thorough assessment of the current state, development and challenges in this area.

¹ T. Pilch, T. Bauman, *Zasady badań pedagogicznych*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa 2001, p. 23.

² H. Witczak, *Problemy i twierdzenia naukowe* [in:] *Podstawy metodologiczne prac doktorskich*, M. Sławińska, H. Witczak (eds.), Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2012, p. 73.

³ E. Babbie, *Badania społeczne w praktyce*, transl. W. Betkiewicz, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 340 et seq.

⁴ *Analiza danych zastanych. Przewodnik dla studentów*, M. Markowska (ed.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2013, p. 12.

First and foremost, the primary research method was the analysis of existing documents (desk research). This method involves a detailed examination of available written and digital sources. The document analysis enabled the reconstruction of historical chronology and contexts, identification of key legal acts and regulations, examination of official reports, positions and recommendations, as well as understanding changes in educational and media policies over the years.

The justification for using other methods, such as content analysis (of curricula, didactic materials and institutional documents) stems for the need to evaluate how well the content and assumptions contained within these materials correspond to media education. This analysis allows for assessing the quality, coherence and adequacy of the materials, as well as identifying gaps and barriers in the implementation of educational goals. Thanks to the applied research methods, it is possible to formulate reliable conclusions, recommendations and forecasts regarding the development of this area within the social, legal and educational contexts.

The aim and scope of the study

This article aims to explore the role of media education in the Polish mainstream education system. In doing so, it will analyse the current legal and institutional framework, provide an overview of previous research and examine the changes that have occurred in this area over time. The author focuses on primary media literacy, specifically media education in schools, and highlights the significance of fostering critical and informed media consumption skills among children and adolescents. The article also discusses the historical context of how media education has developed in Poland and how it has evolved in response to political, cultural and technological shifts. In this context, it pays attention to the challenges associated with the implementation of media education in school practice. The author aims to identify the key factors influencing the development of critical and conscious media literacy among children and adolescents, as well as to assess the effectiveness of existing institutional and programmatic solutions. Furthermore, the article seeks to examine the challenges and barriers that hinder the full implementation of media education as a separate, compulsory subject within the school curriculum. In the context of the rapidly changing media and technological landscape, the author endeavours to formulate recommendations for the further development of media education that will meet the needs of modern information and digital society. The article is of a review nature. The desk research is the main method used in this article.

Research questions and Hypotheses

/Q1/ What is the current legal and institutional status of media education within the Polish compulsory education system?

/Q2/ What have been the main stages in the development of media education in Poland, and what political, cultural and technological factors have influenced on them?

/Q3/ To what extent do current curricula and organizational solutions promote the effective development of students' critical media literacy?

/Q4/ What are the main challenges and barriers hindering the full implementation of media education as a separate, mandatory subject in primary schools?

/Q5/ What proposal and recommendations exist for the systemic and practical development of media education models in Poland, addressing current and future social and technological challenges?

/H1/ Media education in the Polish compulsory education system, despite numerous initiatives and legal regulations, remains inadequately organised and coherent, which limits the development of critical media literacy skills among youth.

/H2/ The introduction of a separate, systematic and comprehensive media education model, with appropriate teacher training and integration of activities at the curricular and institutional levels, would significantly improve students' media skills and effectively prepare them for the challenges of the digital age.

The historical context of the development of media education in Poland

The current legal and institutional framework for media education within the Polish mainstream education system has been shaped by a prolonged transformation process. This evolution has been influenced by political factors, cultural factors (the rationale for integrating media education into the mainstream education system) and technological factors (the evolution of the media, particularly the rise of electronic media and social media). Several stages can be identified in this process. For the purposes of this article, the following stages are distinguished:

1. **The 1990s** – a period marked by political transformation and the introduction of media pluralism, which eliminated political control over media issues; this era also saw the rapid development of advanced ICT technologies, triggering a gradual shift away from traditional mass media (printed and audio-visual) towards electronic media.
2. **1998–2003**. Unsuccessful attempt to introduce media education into mainstream schools, coinciding with a major reform of the education system.
3. **2003–2008**. During that time, the institutional emphasis in the field of mainstream education shifted towards the Polish National Broadcasting Council (Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji), supported by leading media scholars and non-governmental organisations. This period also witnessed significant development in media studies. Furthermore, the influence of EU regulations concerning media policy became increasingly evident, serving as a source of inspiration.

4. **2008–2017.** A period of stagnation accompanied by increasing grassroots pressure for the integration of media education into mainstream schooling. The period saw the emergence of a model of distributed media education that is still in use today, as reflected in the new core curriculum for general education (2017).
5. **Post-2017 developments.** The distributed media education model has remained in place despite qualitative changes in its broader context, driven by the expansion of electronic media and social media, along with the associated risks. The challenge at this stage is not only to develop media competencies, but also to safeguard children and adolescents from these threats⁵.

1. Political transformation of the 1990s

The political transformation of 1989 triggered a fundamental shift, replacing the state-controlled media monopoly with a competitive media market. In response, calls emerged for the introduction of a new school subject, referred to variously as “media didactics”, “education through media,” “learning about the media” or “media education,” designed to provide students with knowledge about media while fostering a critical approach to media content. By the late 1990s, one of the first textbooks for teachers in this field was published: *Pedagogika mass mediów (Mass Media Pedagogy)*⁶. The publication came as an attempt to respond in that context to the “call for pedagogy, first and foremost, to serve as the cornerstone for preparing children, adolescents and adults to engage with the media and creatively participate in mass culture”⁷. Several scholars emerged as key figures in media education research, including Wacław Strykowski⁸, Bronisław Siemieniecki⁹ and Janusz Gajda¹⁰. Grzegorz Ptaszek notes that he was among the first researchers in Poland to emphasise in the early 21

⁵ Cf. M. Jaakkola, *Media re-education and the need to be constantly updated. Interview with Grzegorz Ptaszek*, “Central European Journal of Communication” 2020, No. 2, p. 290.

⁶ A. Lepa, *Pedagogika mass mediów*, Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Łódzkiej, Łódź 1998.

⁷ P. Kowolik, „*Pedagogika mass mediów*”, Adam Lepa, Łódź 1998: [review], „Nauczyciel i Szkoła” 2000, No. 1, p. 193.

⁸ Cf., inter alia, *Media a edukacja: międzynarodowa konferencja naukowa, Poznań, 7–9 kwietnia 1997 r.: program i tezy*, W. Strykowski (ed.), Wydawnictwo eMPI² Mariana Pietraszewskiego, Poznań 1997; *Media a edukacja: II Międzynarodowa Konferencja, Poznań, 18–21 kwietnia 1998: program i tezy*, W. Strykowski (ed.), Wydawnictwo eMPI², Poznań 1998; *Media a edukacja: III międzynarodowa konferencja, Poznań 8–11 kwietnia 2000 r.*, W. Strykowski (ed.), Wydawnictwo eMPI², Poznań 1998.

⁹ Cf. B. Siemieniecki, *Perspektywy edukacji z komputerem*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń–Płock 1995; B. Siemieniecki, *Edukacja informatyczna i edukacja medialna jako jeden przedmiot kształcenia w szkole podstawowej i gimnazjum*, „Chowanna” 2003, No. 1, pp. 123–131; J. Gajda, S. Juszczyk, B. Siemieniecki, K. Wenta, *Edukacja medialna*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2000; *Współczesna technologia informacyjna i edukacja medialna*, B. Siemieniecki, T. Lewowicki (red.), Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2005.

¹⁰ J. Gajda, S. Juszczyk, B. Siemieniecki, K. Wenta, *Edukacja medialna...*

century that critical understanding of media is far more important than mere media usage of technical skills¹¹.

Research on media education was conducted simultaneously in numerous academic centres, including those in Toruń, Katowice, Rzeszów, Gdańsk, Szczecin, Zielona Góra, Lublin and Warsaw. One centre that was particularly active was in Poznań, where the Polish Society for Educational Technology and Media was established in 1996 within the Department of Learning Technology at the Adam Mickiewicz University. A key figure in this initiative was the previously mentioned Waław Strykowski. The society organised “Media and Education” conferences between 1998 and 2000. Since 2003, it has published the “Edukacja Medialna” quarterly¹².

2. 1998–2003 The evolution of media literacy in Polish education: key developments and challenges

It is legitimate to assert that a turning point in primary media literacy came with the introduction of a cross-curricular reading and media education path as part of the fundamental education reform in 1998¹³. Mandatory starting from the second stage of education, the path had the following objectives: 1) teaching students to retrieve necessary information on their own, 2) preparing students for engagement with media content; 3) preparing students for the informed and responsible use of mass media (television, computers, press, etc.).

As part of the major educational reform, the general education curriculum was expanded to include computer science, a subject that shares a number of commonalities with media education. Experts expressed concerns that separating media education

¹¹ M. Jaakkola, *Media re-education...*, p. 290.

¹² P. Drzewiecki, , *Media aktywni. Dlaczego i jak uczyć edukacji medialnej?*, presscafe.eu, Otwock–Warszawa 2010, pp. 36–37.

¹³ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 15 February 1999 on the core curriculum for general education, “Journal of Laws” 1999, No. 14, item 129, Annex 1 (hereinafter referred to as the “1999 Core Curriculum”). This curriculum was amended multiple times. In 2009, a new regulation took effect (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on the core curriculum for general education, “Journal of Laws” of 2008, No. 4, item 17, as amended) (hereinafter referred to as the “2009 Core Curriculum”). In 2012, today’s version came into law (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 27 August 2012 on the core curriculum for pre-school education and general education in various types of schools, “Journal of Laws” of 2012, item 977, as amended) (hereinafter referred to as the “2012 Core Curriculum 2012”). As a result, media education was removed as cross-curricular path from the mainstream education system. Despite calls from specialists and social organisations, media education was not introduced as a standalone subject. Today, the core curriculum for mainstream schools is governed by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum for pre-school education and the core curriculum for general education in primary schools, including for students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities, general education for first-degree vocational schools, general education for special schools preparing for employments and general education for post-secondary schools, “Journal of Laws” of 2017, item 356, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the “2017 Core Curriculum”, with the latest amendment in “Journal of Laws” 2024, item 996).

from strictly computer science topics might shift the focus of teaching and upbringing in the area of media education towards a more technocratic mindset¹⁴. This issue remains relevant to this day. Media education itself should inspire to “make students cautious towards the media”¹⁵.

The introduction of media and reading education into the core curriculum of Polish schools generated considerable interest among teachers, offering them the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues teaching other subjects to achieve the goals of media and reading education. This development also acted as a catalyst for creating methodological resources¹⁶. The responsibility for implementing the objectives of media and reading education was entrusted to Polish language teachers and librarians¹⁷. This provided a new, strong impulse for the development of research into media education¹⁸. Bronisław Siemieniecki emphasised that the success of media education in schools depends on the fulfilment of certain conditions, including the following: 1) making systemic changes in the core curriculum, specifically combining media education with computer science education; 2) integrating primary media literacy with secondary literacy in practice; 3) developing research on the risks posed by advances in information technology and new media (electronic media); 4) training competent teaching staff capable of combining media education and computer science education, with an emphasis on humanistic values¹⁹.

Challenges and failures in media education implementation in Polish schools

As outlined above, media education in schools failed to deliver the expected results. The key factors contributing to this failure included the absence of a comprehensive media education concept and the “dispersal of responsibility” for its implementation, caused by the involvement of multiple ministries: education, culture and digital administration²⁰. In practice, the objectives of the cross-curricular media and reading education path, as laid down in the core curriculum, were not implemented. Little attention was paid to the path at the integrated education stage (grades 1–3), where it was essentially

¹⁴ B. Siemieniecki, *Edukacja informatyczna...*, p. 129.

¹⁵ N.M. Ruman, *Media in 21st Century Education – in the Teacher's Practical Thought* [in:] E. Smyrnowa-Trybulska, *Effective Development of Teachers' Skills in the Area of ICT and E-learning*, Studio Noa for University of Silesia, Katowice–Cieszyn 2017, p. 219.

¹⁶ P. Drzewiecki, *Media Aktywni...*, pp. 36–37.

¹⁷ A. Ogonowska, *Współczesna edukacja medialna: teoria i rzeczywistość*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, Kraków 2013, p. 214.

¹⁸ P. Drzewiecki, *Media Aktywni...*, pp. 36–37.

¹⁹ B. Siemieniecki, *Edukacja informatyczna i edukacja medialna...*, p. 129.

²⁰ A. Ogonowska, *Współczesna edukacja medialna...*, p. 214.

limited to the use of media as multimedia teaching tools, although some proposals for the curriculum did emerge in this area²¹.

3. 2003–2008 The role of the National Broadcasting Council in promoting media education in Poland

While the concept of school-based media education was by no means abandoned, it reached an impasse following the failure of the cross-curricular approach to media and reading education. The institutional responsibility for its implementation shifted towards the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiTV). In 2000, a team led by Wiesław Godzic published a report on the state of media education (*Raport o stanie edukacji medialnej*)²². The report recommended a shift in approach to media education, emphasising that media education should be understood, as A. Ogonowska put it, a lifelong process of “developing and disseminating the skills necessary for the informed and critical use of mass media across all social and age groups”²³. The rationale for adopting this perspective on media education stemmed from the assumption that the media have a lifelong impact on people. As part of its commitment to promoting media education and fostering research in the field, the National Broadcasting Council organised two academic conferences: “Pedagogy of the Media” (Kielce, 18 April 2000) and “Media Education: A Necessity and a Challenge for the Future” (Warsaw, 18 October 2000). Furthermore, a panel of experts on media education was established under the auspices of the National Broadcasting Council²⁴.

As the role of media education within the school system was diminishing²⁵, the National Broadcasting Council of Poland assumed a key role as its principal advocate and promoter. In 2008, five meetings were held under its auspices, as part of the Media Education Forum, with the overarching objective of establishing media education as a distinct and compulsory school subject. In response to signals from the European Union, the National Broadcasting Council launched the Media Education Forum, which convened seven times between 2008 and 2010 (until the conclusion of its term on 4 August 2010) at the Council’s headquarters. The meetings were chaired

²¹ Cf., inter alia, B. Ślpek, *Edukacja medialna w nauczaniu zintegrowanym. Modyfikacja Programu “Z Ekoludkiem w szkole”* by H. Kitlińska-Pięta, DKW-4014-166/99, <https://www.sportosporto.pl/obrazy/naucza/49.pdf> (accessed on: 5.02.2025).

²² P. Drzewiecki, *Edukacja medialna w Polsce w latach 2008–2011. Najważniejsze inicjatywy, główne problemy, perspektywa rozwoju*, “Biuletyn Edukacji Medialnej” 2011, No. 1, p. 64; J. Juszczak-Rygałło, *O potrzebie rewitalizacji edukacji medialnej*, “Prace Naukowe Akademii i im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie” – “Pedagogika” 2016, Vol. XXV, No. 2, p. 135.

²³ A. Ogonowska, *Współczesna edukacja medialna...*, p. 215. Cf. also: P. Drzewiecki, *Edukacja medialna...*, p. 64; J. Juszczak-Rygałło, *O potrzebie rewitalizacji...*, p. 135.

²⁴ P. Drzewiecki, *Edukacja medialna w Polsce w latach 2008–2011...*, p. 64; J. Juszczak-Rygałło, *O potrzebie rewitalizacji...*, p. 135.

²⁵ Between 2003 and 2008, so Piotr Drzewiecki notes, media education in Poland had evolved into “more of a social movement.” P. Drzewiecki, *Edukacja medialna w Polsce w latach 2008–2011...*, p. 65.

by Piotr Boroń, then a member of the Council. Participants included representatives from the ministries of culture, education, labour and science, as well as academics, representatives of institutions, members of associations, experts, and delegates from different Council departments²⁶. Piotr Boroń came forward with the initiative to establish the National Programme for Media Education (NPME), which aligned with the Ministry of National Education's efforts to develop a new curriculum reform in 2008. The central mission of the National Programme for Media Education was to introduce media education into Polish schools as a distinct and compulsory subject²⁷.

4. 2008–2017 Development and challenges of media education in Polish schools

In the work undertaken by the Ministry of National Education of Poland in 2008 to develop a new core curriculum, the issue of introducing media education as a distinct and compulsory subject in Polish schools resurfaced, in line with the recommendations formulated by the National Programme for Media Education. As part of the ensuing discussion, one of the key topics that gained attention, alongside the aforementioned issues, was the preparation of teaching staff capable of achieving the following goals: 1) fostering critical engagement with media content among students; 2) equipping them with the skills to effectively use media in cognitive activities and creative endeavours²⁸.

Once again, the key proposals from media studies communities were not implemented. Introduced on 23 December 2008, the new general education curriculum did not incorporate media education as a cross-curricular path. Instead, its creators provided a vague directive stating that “since mass media play an increasingly significant role in both social and individual life, every teacher should devote considerable attention to media education, which involves educating students to engage with and use the media in an appropriate way²⁹”. This approach effectively established the model of distributed media education, which is still in use today³⁰.

Despite this, after 2009, a number of social organisations persisted in advocating for the introduction of media education as a distinct and compulsory subject in mainstream

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 60.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

²⁸ E. Nowicka, *Nauczyciel edukacji...*, p. 187. Cf. also W. Strykowski, W. Kąkolewicz, M. Ubermanowicz, *Kompetencje nauczyciela edukacji medialnej*, “Neodidagmata” 2008, No. 29/30, pp. 55–75.

²⁹ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on the core curriculum for general education, “Journal of Laws” of 2009, No. 4, item 17, Appendix 4, p. 207. For a broader discussion, see: M.E. Frania, *Wybrane dylematy współczesnej edukacji w kontekście „zmediatyzowanej” rzeczywistości*, “Colloquium” 2012, No. 3, p. 83; K. Biedrzycki, *Elementy edukacji medialnej w podstawie programowej kształcenia ogólnego obowiązującej w polskiej szkole od 2009 roku. Jak w świetle zapisów podstawy programowej mogą i powinny być kształtowane kompetencje medialne ucznia?* [in:] *O potrzebie edukacji medialnej w Polsce*, M. Federowicz, S. Ratajski (eds.), Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji, Warszawa 2015, pp. 241–266.

³⁰ P. Drzewiecki, *Edukacja medialna w Polsce w latach 2008–2011...*, p. 71.

schools³¹. To support the efforts of those organisation and schoolteachers aimed at achieving the goals and tasks of media education, a methodological guidebook titled *Media audiowizualne na rozdrożu*³² (*Audiovisual Media at a Crossroads*) was prepared by a team under the direction of W. Godzic. At the turn of the second decade of this century, a new generation of researchers specialising in media education also emerged, including Agnieszka Ogonowska³³, Grzegorz Stunża³⁴ and Mirosław Filiciak³⁵, who began collaborating on a systematic basis with non-governmental organisations promoting and implementing media education in schools³⁶.

The 2012 Core Curriculum reinforced the aforementioned model of distributed media education. One of the key tasks of the school, as envisaged by the authors of the curriculum, was to “prepare students for life in an information society”³⁷. The core curriculum required all teachers to attach considerable importance to preparing students for proper engagement with and use of media content. At the same time, however, the “media and information literacy” (MIL) programme was strongly

³¹ For instance, it is worth mentioning the following organisations: The John Paul II Polish Association for Media and Journalism Education, the New Media Foundation (organiser of competitions in the field of the media for students and provider of tools for creating online magazines such as “Mam Media”), the ABC XXI Foundation (initiator of the “The Whole Poland Reads to Children” campaign), and the Good Media Foundation – Media Without Violence (initiator of the law prohibiting violence in the media). Cf. P. Drzewiecki, *Media Aktywni...*, p. 39; P. Drzewiecki, *Edukacja medialna w Polsce w latach 2008–2011...*, p. 66.

³² P. Drzewiecki, *Edukacja medialna w Polsce w latach 2008–2011...*, pp. 65–66.

³³ Inter alia, A. Ogonowska, *Szkolny słownik mediów elektronicznych*, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne, Kraków 2006; A. Ogonowska, *Telewizja w edukacji medialnej*, Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, Kraków 2009; A. Ogonowska, *Współczesna edukacja medialna...*, passim.

³⁴ M.in. G. Stunża, *Pedagogiczna luka uczestnictwa. Edukacja medialna studentów na przykładzie serwisu www.edukatormedialny.pl*, „Kultura i Historia” 2011, No. 20; A.J. Dąbrowska, P. Drzewiecki, J. Jasiewicz, J. Lipszyc, *Kształtowanie kompetencji medialnych i informacyjnych w podstawach programowych* (with:) [in:] *Cyfrowa przyszłość: edukacja medialna i informacyjna w Polsce: raport otwarcia*, J. Lipszyc (ed.), Fundacja Nowoczesna Polska, Warszawa 2012, pp. 192–201; G. Stunża, *Edukacja zaangażowana: (nowe) media w projektach kulturalnych* [in:] A. Stańczuk, I. Żerek, M. Adamiec Maria et al., *Nowe media + animacja kultury*, Narodowe Centrum Kultury, Warszawa 2012, pp. 10–16.

³⁵ M. Filiciak, A. Tarkowski, J. Hofmokl, *Obiegi kultury. Społeczna cyrkulacja treści. Raport z badań*, Centrum Cyfrowe: Projekt Polska, Warszawa 2012; M. Filiciak, *Media, wersja beta. Film i telewizja w czasach gier komputerowych i Internetu*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Katedra, Gdańsk 2013; M. Filiciak, P. Mazurek, K. Growiec, *Korzystanie z mediów a podziały społeczne. Kompetencje medialne Polaków w ujęciu relacyjnym*, Centrum Cyfrowe: Projekt Polska, Warszawa 2013.

³⁶ For a review of more recent studies on the transformations in media education in Poland during the period under discussion, see: *Model Edukacji Medialnej, Informacyjnej i Cyfrowej (MEMIC)*, A. Pacewicz, G. Ptaszek (eds.), Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej, FilMOTEKA Narodowa – Instytut Audiowizualny, Fundacja Nowoczesna Polska, Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą, Polski Komitet do spraw UNESCO, Polskie Towarzystwo Edukacji Medialnej, Stowarzyszenie Cyfrowy Dialog, Kraków–Warszawa 2019, pp. 22–26.

³⁷ For a broader discussion on the origin and further interpretation of this concept, see: M. Ski-bińska, *Ocena kompetencji informacyjnych uczniów liceum – przykład toruński*, „e-mentor” 2024, No. 1, p. 64 et seq.

advocated. This initiative was adopted in several countries, where it was vigorously championed by national UNESCO committees³⁸.

Polish media education initiatives and international declarations (2011–2012): UNESCO, Belgian Declaration and the Moscow Declaration

During this period, the ongoing discourse on media education in schools incorporated, alongside EU recommendations, the contributions of UNESCO. During meetings held on 9 February and 8 June 2011, the Polish IFAP UNESCO Committee announced that a document would be prepared under the direction of B. Siemieniecki. Based on the so-called Belgian Declaration, the document would include a definition of media education and justify the need to introduce it into Polish schools as a compulsory subject. The Committee planned to present this document to Polish educational authorities by the end of 2011³⁹. Furthermore, the Polish debate on media education was enriched by the 2012 Moscow Declaration⁴⁰. Signed by representatives of 40 countries at a conference dedicated to this issue, this document called, inter alia, for the inclusion of media and information literacy in schools at all educational levels, including life-long education⁴¹.

5. Post-2017 developments

Evolving perspectives on media education in schools

The requirements for media education in schools were retained, as mentioned above, with some modifications in the new 2017 Core Curriculum. Although, according to experts, the core curriculum defined the objectives of media education in an accurate and extensive manner, it simultaneously maintained the requirement that all teachers pursue these objectives within their respective subjects⁴².

By no means does this signify that the debate about the objectives and tasks of media education has come to a close. The rapid development of electronic media and social media, accompanied by the simultaneous decline of traditional media, has rendered

³⁸ M. Jaakkola, *Media re-education...*, p. 285.

³⁹ P. Drzewiecki, *Edukacja medialna w Polsce w latach 2008–2011...*, p. 66.

⁴⁰ *Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy*, Moscow, 28 June 2012, https://old.sbp.pl/repository/SBP/sekcje_komisje/komisja_ds_educacji_informacyjnej/Deklaracja_Moskiewska.pdf (accessed: 5.02.2025).

⁴¹ Cf. M.E. Frania, *Wybrane dylematy współczesnej edukacji...*, p. 85.

⁴² Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum for pre-school education and the core curriculum for general education in primary schools, including for students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities, general education for first-degree vocational schools, general education for special schools preparing for employments and general education for post-secondary schools, "Journal of Laws" of 2017, item 356, as amended, with the last amendment on 28 June 2024 ("Journal of Laws" of 2024, item 996).

the call for the introduction of media education into schools more pertinent than ever. These phenomena have heightened concerns about the risks associated with deficiencies in media literacy among children and adolescents, particularly in their use of electronic media⁴³. They should acquire the competencies from adults, preferably in a structured and institutionalised form: namely, at school⁴⁴. Consequently, a new paradigm in media education has emerged, rooted in the widely acknowledged fact that “our entire culture is dominated by audiovisual messages; that these messages wield power and authority; that it is a responsibility (or even a civic duty) for all age groups to engage with the critical analysis of these messages”⁴⁵. The debates on media education in this kind of environment encompass a wide array of issues, being embedded in multiple contexts, both national and international⁴⁶. Particular attention should be paid to the issue of adequate teacher training, which should take place, as in most countries, as part of a dedicated course of study⁴⁷. The quality of teacher training is fundamental not only to improving students’ media literacy but also to mitigating the risks associated with the improper use and uncritical consumption of the omnipresent digital media.

Other key topics in the debate on the proposed model of media education in schools include the following: 1) the need to develop digital literacy (integration of media, information and digital literacy); 2) the inclusion of media education in the core curriculum of general education and its prioritisation; 3) the incorporation of the EU

⁴³ For a broader discussion, see: A. Adamski, M. Gosek, B. Przywara, *Kompetencje medialne uczniów i nauczycieli kluczem do edukacji w społeczeństwie zmediatyzowanym – prezentacja rezultatów projektu*, “Roczniki Kulturoznawcze” 2024, No. 2, 12146.

⁴⁴ I. Bondar, *Co dalej z mediami...*, p. 54; E. Nowicka, *Edukacja medialna w zmieniającym się społeczeństwie informacyjnym*, “Rocznik Lubuski” 2022, Vol. 48, part 2, pp. 185–194.

⁴⁵ W. Godzic (in cooperation with L. Rudzińska, M. Kowalewska, *Świat, który potrzebuje edukacji medialnej. Poznanie, terapia i wyzwanie* [in:] M. Federowicz, S. Ratajski (eds.), *O potrzebie edukacji medialnej...*, pp. 31–32. For a broader discussion of the need for media education in the face of the risks posed by the rapid development of electronic media, see also: S. Ratajski, [Introduction to:], M. Federowicz, S. Ratajski (eds.), *O potrzebie edukacji medialnej...*, pp. 14–16. E. Nowicka, *Edukacja medialna w rodzinie a zapobieganie zagrożeniom medialnym*, „Dyskursy Młodych Andragogów” 2019, No. 20, pp. 317–327; M. Bereźnicka, *Media – szanse, wyzwania i zagrożenia a potrzeba edukacji medialnej*, “Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis” – “Studia ad Bibliothecarum Scientiam Pertinentia” 2022, No. 20, pp. 641–660; I. Bondar, *Co dalej z mediami...*, pp. 52–55; E. Nowicka, *Edukacja medialna wobec zagrożeń w cyfrowym świecie dziecka*, “Wychowanie w Rodzinie” 2023, No. 4, pp. 197–208. As artificial intelligence (AI) technology continues to evolve, ever more attention is being paid to the risks it poses. This is accompanied by calls for incorporating this issue in the framework of media education. Cf. M. Maziarski, *Edukacja medialna X.0 – kształtowanie myślącego człowieka* [in:] J. Pyżalski, A. Łuczyńska, *Sztuczna inteligencja. Prawdziwe zmiany w edukacji?*, Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą, Warszawa 2024, pp. 14–23; M. Przybysz, *Edukacja medialna i kompetencje cyfrowe młodzieży* [w:] *Edukacja medialna – zasady funkcjonowania w świecie nowych mediów*, K. Cymanow-Sosin (ed.), Wydawnictwo Homini, Kraków 2023, p. 59.

⁴⁶ For a broader discussion, see: E. Murawska-Najmiec, *Edukacja medialna w Polsce: krajowe podejście instytucjonalne w kontekście polityki europejskiej oraz dorobku społeczności i organizacji międzynarodowych* [in:] *O potrzebie edukacji medialnej...*, pp. 415–448.

⁴⁷ W. Strykowski, J. Strykowska-Nowakowska, *Kompetencje medialno-informatyczne...*, p. 47.

perspective in the implementation of this task, as reflected in, inter alia, national documents, such as the *2030 Integrated Skills Strategy*⁴⁸, which emphasises that skills, including digital skills, are essential for individuals to be able to face the challenges of the modern world⁴⁹. Therefore, there is no way back to the original concepts of media education. It is necessary to develop new ones that reflect the contemporary nature of the media and the power of their social influence, including their destructive effect on contemporary consciousness, especially among the younger generation.

Summary

Media education plays a crucial role in shaping critical thinking skills among young people. In the Polish system of Mainstream education, its importance is growing as the influence of media on students' daily lives increases. In the face of rapid technological changes and the development of new media, significant challenges have emerged that require proper preparation of the younger generation. In particular, issues such as cyberbullying, disinformation, fake news, hate speech, and the growing role of artificial intelligence are becoming increasingly important.

Cyberbullying, as a form of aggression and abuse in the digital environment, poses a serious threat to the mental health and safety of children and adolescents. Fake news and disinformation, on the other hand, undermine trust in credible sources of information, influence social attitudes and can lead to social polarization. The development of artificial intelligence (AI) also opens new possibilities but at the same time raises questions about ethics, content manipulation and responsibility for the generated information.

Beyond these aforementioned problems and threats, it is also worth addressing the issue of the filter bubble. This term should be understood as „the process of selecting information and displaying only the pieces that align with our previous activity”⁵⁰. What impact can this have on youth? Primarily, it limits the diversity of viewpoints, deepens social divisions and increases susceptibility to disinformation, filter bubbles can lead to closed-off world of limited information, fostering vulnerability to manipulation.

⁴⁸ *Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności 2030* (general section), MEN 2019; *Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności 2030* (detailed section). *Polityka na rzecz rozwijania umiejętności zgodnie z ideą uczenia się przez całe życie*, MEN, Warsaw 2020. In the detailed section of the publication (p. 11), digital skills are defined as “a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for functioning in today's digital world, extending beyond purely technical or IT-related skills. At the core of these skills lies “the responsible use of media and digital technologies, which encompasses, among other aspects, the ability to use information (including the ability to assess source credibility and awareness of the risks of disinformation), communication and collaboration through ICT, the creation of digital content and tools, compliance with digital security principles and the application of ICT methods and techniques in both learning and teaching.”

⁴⁹ *Model Edukacji Medialnej...*, pp. 6–7.

⁵⁰ M. Przybylski, *Edukacja medialna i kompetencje cyfrowe młodzieży...*, p. 42.

In this context, media literacy should play a key role in developing skills for critically receiving and analysing media content, enabling young people to recognise manipulation, distinguish reliable information from fake news and use digital tools consciously. Therefore, it is essential to develop educational programs that teach not only technical skills but also ethical and social competencies supporting responsible and safe functioning in the digital world. Only through systematic and integrated actions can we effectively counteract the threats posed by modern media and provide youth with the tools for conscious and critical participation in the information society.

The conclusion drawn from the analysis indicates the necessity for further development of media education in Poland. Future actions should be taken towards several key objectives:

1. Systematic approach from the beginning of education – media education should be introduced at all stages of learning, starting from early childhood, so that children and youth can develop critical media literacy skills from the beginning of education. This means it should be part of the core curriculum.
2. Holistic approach – beyond teaching technology skills, it is important to emphasize humanistic aspects such as understanding messages, evaluating content, recognizing manipulation and disinformation. Ethical and social values should be taught.
3. Interdisciplinary collaboration – teachers of various subjects especially language teachers, librarians, IT specialists should cooperate to create cohesive and effective educational programmes.
4. Preparation teaching staff in terms of media literacy – teachers of languages, history or Polish should be adequately prepared to integrate media literacy with their subjects.
5. Further attempts to introduce media education as a school subject should be undertaken.

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