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SHAPING CRITICAL THINKING AS A FACTOR OF THE LOCAL SECURITY IN WARTIME CONDITIONS

KSZTAŁTOWANIE KRYTYCZNEGO MYŚLENIA JAKO CZYNNIKA BEZPIECZEŃSTWA LOKALNEGO W WARUNKACH WOJENNYCH

Summary

The aim of the article is to analyze the information and psychological wars which have become a real threat to the modern world, leading to damage to the individual and mass awareness of the population, ethno-political divisions, internal and external armed conflicts and wars, and the loss of states' sovereignty. The most relevant example of the consequences of information and psychological warfare is Russia's propaganda aggression against Ukraine. Providing security today is one of the main priorities for Ukrainians, in particular, local security issues in wartime require more attention, taking into account the factor of people's dependence on information and its content. The research problem focusses on shaping critical thinking as a factor of the local security in wartime conditions. One of the means of information and psychological resistance and protection of the individuals from Russian aggressive propaganda is critical perception of information, which is based on critical thinking. The formation of critical thinking is one of the ways of informational and psychological resistance to Russian aggression, a tool of psychological protection against the negative impact of information, which ensures the informational and psychological security of the individual and the country.

Keywords: critical thinking, information and psychological war, information and psychological resistance, local security.

Streszczenie

Celem tego artykułu jest przeanalizowanie wojen informacyjnych i psychologicznych, które stały się realnym zagrożeniem dla współczesnego świata, prowadząc do zniszczenia indywidualnej

i masowej świadomości społeczeństwa, podziałów etniczno-politycznych, wewnętrznych i zewnętrznych konfliktów zbrojnych oraz wojen, a także do utraty państw suwerenność. Najbardziej istotnym przykładem konsekwencji wojny informacyjnej i psychologicznej jest propagandowa agresja Rosji na Ukrainę. Zapewnienie bezpieczeństwa jest dziś jednym z głównych priorytetów Ukraińców, zwłaszcza kwestie bezpieczeństwa lokalnego w czasie wojny wymagają większej uwagi, biorąc pod uwagę czynnik uzależnienia człowieka od informacji i jej treści. Problem badawczy koncentruje się na kształtowaniu krytycznego myślenia, jako czynnika bezpieczeństwa lokalnego w warunkach wojennych. Jednym ze sposobów informacyjnego i psychologicznego oporu oraz ochrony jednostek przed rosyjską agresywną propagandą jest krytyczne postrzeganie informacji, które opiera się na krytycznym myśleniu. Kształtowanie krytycznego myślenia jest jednym ze sposobów informacyjnego i psychologicznego oporu wobec rosyjskiej agresji, narzędziem psychologicznej ochrony przed negatywnym wpływem informacji, które zapewnia bezpieczeństwo informacyjne i psychologiczne jednostki i kraju.

Słowa Kluczowe: krytyczne myślenie, wojna informacyjna i psychologiczna, opór informacyjny i psychologiczny, bezpieczeństwo lokalne.

Introduction

The global digitalization all over the world has led to the booming development and conversion of the information and communication technologies, conducted the creation of competitive economies, and, on the other hand, has caused significant risks associated primarily with the information security of countries, as well as with the information and psychological security of societies and citizens. Information and psychological wars have become a real threat to the modern world, leading to damage to the individual and mass awareness of the population, ethno-political divisions, internal and external armed conflicts and wars, and the loss of states' sovereignty.

The most relevant example of the consequences of information and psychological warfare is Russia's propaganda aggression against Ukraine. The armed conflict in the east of Ukraine, which began in 2014, escalated into the full-scale war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 and resulted in the loss of Ukraine's integrity and independence, massive deaths of Ukrainians, destroyed cities and villages, internal and external migration of working-age population, children and youth.

Methodology

The purpose of the research – to reveal the essence of the critical thinking as a factor of local security in wartime conditions and a tool of informational and psychological resistance to Russian aggression.

Research object – critical thinking of citizens in wartime conditions.

Research subject – the process of shaping the critical thinking of citizens as a local security factor in the conditions of Russia's war against Ukraine.

Research methods. A complex of theoretical research methods was used, which will ensure obtaining reliable material: analysis, synthesis, systematization, analogy, abstraction, generalization, comparison.

Research hypothesis – shaping of critical thinking throughout life, starting from preschool age and ending with self-education is one of the ways to increase national and local security and the organization of informational and psychological resistance in wartime conditions.

Security and critical thinking

Providing security today is one of the main priorities for Ukrainians, in particular, local security issues in wartime require more attention, taking into account the factor of people's dependence on information and its content. One of the means of information and psychological resistance and protection of the individuals from Russian aggressive propaganda is critical perception of information, which is based on critical thinking. Critical thinking is an opposite, an antithesis to aberrant thinking, the essence of which is interpreted as a person's consciousness detached from reality, which has lost touch with this reality and reflects it incorrectly, in an inverted, distorted form. That is, a person is poisoned with false, obsessive ideas that do not correspond to the true reality¹.

The war quickly made adjustments to the content of the education system in Ukraine. The formation of critical thinking throughout life, from preschool age to self-education, is now seen in educational institutions as a way to organize information and psychological resistance to Russian information warfare, and to ensure national and local security. The newest educational standards for preschool, primary, general secondary, vocational/vocational-technical, and higher education are based on the "Recommendations of the European Parliament and of the Council of Europe on key competences for lifelong learning", 2006/962/EC (18.12.2006). Critical thinking is a cross-cutting skill that permeates all key competencies².

1 Kurylo V. S., Karaman O. L. Natsionalno-patriotychne vykhovannia osobystosti yak zasib informatsiino-psykhologichnoho sprotyvu rosiiskii ahresii v Ukraini [National-patriotic personality education as a means of informational and psychological resistance to Russian aggression in Ukraine]: Naukova dopovid na metodolohichnomu seminaru NAPN Ukrainy "Natsionalno-patriotychne vykhovannia ditei ta molodi v umovakh voiennoho stanu ta povoiennoho vidnovlennia Ukrainy: stratehii i zavdannia" (April 6, 2023). Visnyk Natsionalnoi akademii pedahohichnykh nauk Ukrainy, 2023, № 5 (1). P. 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.37472/v.naes.2023.5118>

2 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC). *Official Journal of the European Union*. L 394/10. <http://surl.li/ucxsw>

Cognitive security as a type of local security

The information aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine is carried out in the form of illegal actions in the media sphere, which are used in a limited and localized manner in order to ensure the impossibility or difficulty of calculating the consequences of the damage caused. It is aimed at destroying the Ukrainian social consciousness, which involves conducting cognitive war, using cognitive methods that influence the collective worldview, and promoting strategically oriented propaganda narratives of the state-aggressor. Cognitive War forms and influences individual and group thoughts and behavior in favor of the aggressor's tactical or strategic objectives (disagreement, splitting of the whole society, loss of its collective will to resist the aggressor's intentions). This allows the enemy to subdue society without resorting to direct force or compulsion^{3, 4}.

Cognitive security as a type of local security concerns the protection of the human mind⁵, emphasizing the threats and risks associated with cognitive activity, negative media influences, and the person's being in virtual reality⁶. It focuses on the use of cognitive biases in large social groups; social influence as an objective in itself; formality and quantity measurement (Rand Waltzman, 2017)⁷.

Cognitive security in Ukrainian context involves two factors that the Russian Federation is afraid of:

1. preservation of the ethnic core, language, traditions, and culture of the Ukrainian people;
2. European identity in the mass consciousness⁸.

Critical thinking in the context of cognitive security

In the context of cognitive security, critical thinking is a tool to resist manipulation, a way to rationally understand socio-cultural phenomena, historical and political processes. It is primarily characterized by the ability to use certain methods of information processing, including making logical conclusions,

3 Johns Hopkins University & Imperial College London. *Protydiia kohnityvni viini: informovanist i stiikist* [Countering Cognitive Warfare: Awareness and Resilience]. 2021. <http://surl.li/zych>

4 M. Strelbytskyi, M. Hryn (2023). Kohnityvna viina rosii proty Ukrainy [Cognitive war of Russia against Ukraine]. *Naukovi pratsi Mizhrehionalnoi Akademii upravlinnia personalom. Yurydychni nauky*, 2023. № 1 (64), P. 46-52. <https://doi.org/10.32689/2522-4603.2023.1.7>

5 Y. V. Kryvolap, *Spivvidnoshennia poniat "informatsiina bezpeka", "bezpeka informatsii", "kiberbezpeka". "Kohnityvna bezpeka" yak stiikist proty informatsiino psikhologichnykh vplyviv na liudynu i suspilstvo* [Correlation of the concepts "information security", "security of information", "cyber security". "Cognitive security" as resistance against informational and psychological influences on a person and society]. *Svoboda, bezpeka ta nezalezhnist: pravovyi vymir*: XIII International science and practice conference, Kyiv (February 24, 2023). P. 195-197. Kyiv, National Aviation University [in Ukrainian].

6 I. P. Rushchenko, N. V. Zubar, Viina informatsii [Information war]. *Oboronnyi visnyk*. 2017. № 8. P. 4-9

7 R. Waltzman. *The Weaponization of Information. The Need for Cognitive Security*. Testimony presented before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity on April 27, 2017. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT473.html>.

8 I. P. Rushchenko, N. V. Zubar, Viina informatsii [Information war]. *Oboronnyi visnyk*. 2017. № 8, P. 4-9

making justified decisions, analyzing the information received, and being result-oriented⁹.

Critical thinking helps to rationalize the actions of the population and promote social solidarity in emergencies¹⁰. For example, a crowd in which the majority of citizens think critically will be active in extraordinary situations of emotional excitement, and the emotional contagion of citizens will contribute to their psychological readiness to act together, exchange useful efficient information, and maintain communication. And on the contrary, without the ability to critically assess the situation, the crowd turns into a panic and is marked by a shared sense of fear triggered by the danger to life, a low level of awareness of their actions, the spread of distorted, modified messages, and the rise of rumors¹¹.

Consequently, critical thinking as an invariant of cognitive organization at the rational, cognitive and empirical level¹² plays an important role in the formation of subjects as a community that is aware of interdependence and the right of everyone to have their own point of view, shows care, understands internal connections and relationships, possible distortions of information, is capable of critical reflection, which ensures cognitive security, community and coherence of actions in the context of information aggression.

Information aggression, local security, and shaping critical thinking

It should also be mentioned that the concept of local security is often associated with ensuring the privacy of information and automatic data confidentiality in file systems. However, this understanding of local security is narrowly specialized. For this reason, in this article, we consider local security as one that, in addition to information protection, includes personal and collective (public) human security, which are part of the local life security. Local life safety is the safe interaction of a person with the environment or the effective protection of acceptable living conditions in the environment, person's vital interests and existence from the excess of the permissible level of influence of negative factors (hazards, threats) of social, man-made or natural origin, which as a result of Russian aggression are currently present in Ukraine in a wide range and in all these aspects.

9 V. Melnychuk, L. Horokhova, Krytychne myslennia yak skladova informatsiinoi bezpeky [Critical thinking as a component of information security]. *Visnyk Lvivskoho universytetu. Filozofski nauky*. 2022. № 29. P. 7–13. <https://doi.org/10.30970/PHS.2022.29.1>

10 T. Horokhova T., L. Dubynska, A. Claiute, V. Usyk, O. Chernykh Posibnyk dlia navchannia z pytan sotsialnoi zghurtovanosti y bezbariernoho seredovyscha v molodizhnomu sektori, projekt [Training manual on issues of social cohesion and barrier-free environment in the youth sector, project]. 2022. <http://surl.li/lmqjlj>

11 O. R. Okhremenko, Sotsialna psykholohiia [Social Psychology]. 2012. Kyiv: DP “Vyd. dim “Personal”

12 H. A. Baluta, Krytychne myslennia i kohnityvni praktyky osvity [Critical thinking and cognitive practices of education]. *Aktualni problemy dukhovnosti*. 2019. № 20, P. 72–85

From the point of view of the environmental approach, there is no such thing as a local war, because the consequences of even the smallest military actions and information aggression spread throughout the world and have extremely harmful results for the health and life of the entire humanity. For instance, National Institute for Strategic Studies of Ukraine, from the point of view of determining the limits of influence of the Russian Federation's informational aggression against Ukraine, has revealed an approach according to which informational propaganda is not limited to the conflict zone. It is complex and has a global outreach. However, such influence can be differentiated by content, style and form depending on the target audience:

1. *influence on the population of Russia itself* – Russia uses negative information messages about the illegitimacy of the current Ukrainian government. The phrases “fascists”, “Kyiv junta”, “NATO puppets”, etc. are used against Ukraine and the Ukrainian government. They also use narratives in the form of statements about the organization of Euromaidan by Western intelligence services, the dominance of radical nationalism in Ukraine, and repression of the Russian-speaking population, which causes the so-called need for its forced protection by Russia, as stated by Russia.
2. *influence on the population of the annexed, temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and territories directly located in the combat zone* – messages are being promoted about the forced actions of the Russian Federation against the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the so-called DPR and LPR, aimed at eliminating the threat to the population living in these territories, in particular, protecting Russian-speaking citizens from the aggression of the “Kyiv junta”. Russia is imposing ideas about the legitimacy of the so-called “referendums” it organized, about the war in Ukraine as a civil war, about civilian casualties as a result of the actions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.
3. *impact on the population of Ukraine on the whole* – Russian messages about the guilt of the Ukrainian authorities in the casualties, territorial losses and undermining trust in the state authorities, the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other law enforcement agencies; Russia's spreading panic rumors among the civilian population; its support for pro-Russian separatist organizations and movements; propaganda of the ideas of Russian chauvinism, racism, neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism; falsification of history to deny the existence of the Ukrainian nation and Ukrainian statehood.
4. *influence on the population of other countries, international organizations and the world community* – portrayal of Ukraine's illegitimacy and

failure, accusing it of starting a “civil war”, “genocide of its own people”, fascism, radical nationalism, extremism, constant violations of human rights and the Minsk agreements; calls for a revision of the existing world order, division of zones of influence between the strongest states, etc.¹³

Understanding these components of the impact of informational aggression, which constitutes a threat to national interests, national and local security in the information sphere, is one of the ways to protect the individual, group and mass consciousness of citizens. This is also relevant to Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and other countries that were part of the so-called socialist camp. Countries’ reliance on a developed structure of independent media is particularly dangerous. As the practice shows, this is not a guarantee against information danger, because russian information and psychological operations work perfectly well in countries with an established structure of independent media either, even in such countries as the United States, France, and Germany. This is precisely because information and psychological operations are based on the desires, psychological complexes, phobias and stereotypes of ordinary citizens.

Conclusion

Providing security today is one of the main priorities for Ukrainians, in particular, local security issues in wartime require more attention. Cognitive security as a type of local security concerns the protection of the human mind emphasizing the threats and risks associated with cognitive activity and in Ukrainian context involves two factors that the russian federation is afraid of: preservation of the ethnic core, language, traditions, and culture of the Ukrainian people and European identity in the mass consciousness. The formation of critical thinking throughout life, from preschool age to self-education, is now seen in Ukrainian educational institutions as a way to organize information and psychological resistance to russian information warfare.

Thus, critical thinking is a cross-cutting skill that permeates all key competencies and a tool of psychological protection against the negative impact of information, which ensures the informational and psychological security of the individual and the country.

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13 NISS. “Uchast hromadskykh obiednan u protydii informatsiinii ahresii rF” [“Participation of public associations in countering informational aggression of the russian federation”]. Analytical note. 2016. <http://surl.li/ubrqu>

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