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## The Synergy of Media and Language Literacy to Foster Kazakh Students' Critical Thinking and Communication

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### Abstract

This paper examines the impact of incorporating media literacy practices into language instruction. The study explores a practical pedagogical approach to increase language learners' awareness of media content and ability to recognise, resist, and respond to fake news and disinformation and guide them to become critical thinkers and effective communicators in a media-saturated world. The paper presents the integrated media literacy and language learning model as a teaching framework that guides the designing and implementing effective teaching strategies for contextual learning of the real world. During the research, we discovered that media literacy and language learning synergy can help students engage with various media forms and develop strong communication skills. The study results show that the suggested approach creates an educational environment that encourages the application of concepts to address real-world issues by analysing information, comprehending new ideas, solving problems, and making decisions. Students show significant improvement in reading and interpreting specific texts, viewing media critically, understanding and examining sources of information, and communicating their opinions and ideas using various multimedia tools. The study concludes with practical recommendations for educators implementing media literacy instruction to enhance students' critical communication skills.

**Keywords:** language learning, media literacy, awareness of media content, critical thinking and communication, pedagogical framework.

### 1. Introduction

The rapid development of information technologies makes the task of education to introduce pedagogical tools for transferring and acquiring new knowledge even more relevant. Today's interconnected and media-driven world urges higher education to train specialists who can interpret various messages critically, some conflicting ones, to overcome daily challenges (Hobbs, 2018). Modern citizens should possess critical listening, creative cooperation, collaborative problem-solving, and responsible decision-making skills to meet the challenges of the media-saturated world (Gáliková Tolnaiová, Gálik, 2020; Goodman, 2003). Thinking critically about mass communication is crucial for survival in a society driven by technology and consumerism (Worsnop, 2004). The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has recognised Media Literacy (ML) as a crucial skill for success in modern life and identified the need to incorporate ML into educational programs (Partnership..., 2004). Possessing ML skills enables media consumers to assess the

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content, examine its form, investigate its use and effect, and create alternative content (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2019).

In language learning, media significantly affect individuals' thoughts and behaviour (McLuhan, 1967), and developing ML skills is essential for analysing, interpreting, and evaluating media text, which can build language learners' communication skills (Tryphonopoulos, 2023). It also increases the motivation of students to acquire content-based knowledge and involves them in the cognitive process when discussing various topics using various experiential learning methods (McNeal, 2015). Such an approach displays the fundamental concept behind the synergy of media and language literacy (MLL), which refers to accessing and utilising media for critical thinking and communication in conventional media and new digital platforms to develop specific media-related knowledge and skills.

Although ML has been a component of education in most developed countries for decades, it is in its infancy in Kazakhstan (Akhmetova, 2016; Akhmetova et al., 2023; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2019). Only a few Kazakh educational institutions have incorporated ML skills into their programs. There are several reasons why transforming education has been challenging, including insufficient teacher training, inadequate technical support, excessive emphasis on drill and practice programs, reluctance to depart from traditional teaching methods, and limited time (Bates, 2019; Erdem, Erişti 2018; Reyna et al., 2018). One of the main challenges in the case of the Kazakh education system is that the Kazakh government defines ML alongside digital one quite narrowly as the technical skills associated with using the Internet to search for data, access social services, produce various media products (i.e., videos, blogs, websites), using media products as teaching materials (i.e., for reading, listening) (State..., 2017). However, as it turned out during our research, educators acknowledge the importance of maintaining ML in language education to increase youth awareness of media content and their ability to recognise, resist, and respond to fake news and disinformation. Teaching integrated with ML language requires a different skill set than simply becoming literate (Bates, 2019). Language educators face the challenge of not only understanding ML themselves but also of being able to develop pedagogical strategies to teach about the language while using media to communicate with and engage their students. This shift to mastering ML as central to language learning and teaching (LLT) requires extensive pre-service and professional development for teachers, resources and curricula, technology support, and new pedagogical approaches. Thus, this study examines the teaching modes that enhance Kazakh students' critical communication skills by integrating ML into English classrooms to address the abovementioned reasons. The study aims to explore some key questions and challenges for incorporating ML in LLT:

1. What pedagogical approaches take language learners through media content and structure to become critical thinkers and effective communicators in a media-saturated world?
2. Are students satisfied with media literacy and language learning approaches to foster critical thinking and communication?

As the use of ML in the Kazakh education system is still in its early stages, pedagogical solutions are needed to equip teachers with the relevant teaching tools to address this learning gap. The increasing role of media in consuming and producing new knowledge urges introducing media literacy education (MLE) in schools and designing a sufficiently 'critical' pedagogy to implement it. Thus, developing students' critical communication skills through synergising LLT and ML is justified.

## **2. Materials and methods**

### *Participants*

The study involved undergraduate students of second-year Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages (hereafter Ablai Khan University) and al-Farabi Kazakh National University (hereafter al-Farabi University). All participants (n=146) are aged between nineteen and twenty. The focus was on this particular group because it is a critical age in the education system, where self-esteem, self-expression, and self-image are gradually reinforced. Ablai Khan University groups were selected as control groups (CG) (n=70), while al-Farabi University groups were selected as treatment groups (TG) (n=76). The decision to choose al-Farabi University groups as the TG was based on the fact that these students were less active in sessions during learning before the treatment. The aim was to improve their learning outcomes experimentally using ML in language learning based on the MLL. The CG was provided with conventional learning.

### *Data Collection Instruments and Data Analysis*

This research examines the effectiveness of incorporating ML into LLT during CGs' and TGs' English sessions for specific purposes. The study used various methods such as testing, interviews, and student discussions to verify the study statements' validity. During the study, students were given a non-fiction print, audio, video, or visual media message followed by open and checklist questions to measure their ability to analyse messages. At the beginning and end of the treatment sessions, pre-tests and post-tests were conducted to determine the student's level of English proficiency. The language proficiency test consisted of Writing (reading, listening and article critique) and Speaking parts. Articles came from news networking platforms such as BBC Global News ([bbcglobalnews.com](https://www.bbc.com/news)), The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com>), and Euronews ([euronews.com](https://www.euronews.com)), among others. The student's analysis of the text plot, key message, or character was followed by a contextual discussion and critical view during the Speaking part. The researchers enlisted three PhD language instructors from the same department who have been teaching English for more than ten years as test experts to ensure that the tests were of similar difficulty in scope and format.

## **3. Discussion**

### *Literature Review*

McLuhan (1967) suggested that one must know how media functions as an environment to comprehend social and cultural transformations. McLuhan believed that the medium through which information is transmitted profoundly influences how people perceive and understand the world, claiming that media technologies shape human consciousness, social interactions, and cultural dynamics. Each medium has inherent characteristics affect how information is received and interpreted, often overshadowing the content (Jenkins, 2006). Thus, developing an individual's literacy to understand the effects of media rather than focusing solely on its content is essential.

Initially, literacy was used to represent the ability to read and write, but its meaning was gradually extended. With the development of communication information technologies, 'literacy' has expanded from '*mastery of capabilities in reading and writing print texts*' to '*engagement with a range of semiotic forms of visual, aural, and digital multi-modal texts*' (Kress, 2003; Jenkins, 2006). UNESCO introduced the following definition: "*Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning enabling individuals to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their community and wider society*" (UNESCO, 2013: 23).

Media literacy has been defined variously at different times. ML is mainly about understanding media effects, content, media industries, the real world, and oneself. With this knowledge, individuals can become more aware during information-processing tasks, make better decisions when seeking and working with information, and construct meaning from it (Thoman, 1999: 51). ML is the knowledge, skills, and competencies essential to use and interpret media content (Buckingham, 2003). ML involves a combination of aural, visual, and digital skills. These skills include comprehending the influence of images and sounds, utilising that influence, manipulating digital media, widely distributing it, and quickly modifying it to adapt to new forms (New Media Consortium, 2005). ML seeks to offer media consumers the ability to comprehend the role of media in society and develop practical skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for all citizens (Hobbs, McGee, 2014). ML is more of a process that includes asking essential questions, reflecting on how media affects society and civic engagement, and having the skills to access, analyse, and even create media (Kellner, Share, 2019). The authors argue that individuals can only participate adequately in public life with mindful and critical media consumption (Kellner, Share, 2019: 421). As part of our study, we adhere to the definition of ML proposed by A. Fedorov: "*the ability to perceive, interpret, analyse and evaluate media texts to develop one's creative and communicative skills, critical thinking with the help of and on the material of various forms of media*" (Fedorov, 2018: 8).

Critical scholars believe education is the key to addressing the disparity in media use. McLuhan emphasised the need to master and teach "mosaic patterns" of meaning or mass media's linguistic and perceptual biases (cited in: Tryphonopoulos, 2023: 10). The convergence between media and education has significantly changed what and how we learn in a multi-tasking and vibrant world (Kellner, Share 2019). According to Jenkins (Jenkins, 2016), school programs must

prioritise the development of ML in the younger generation to adapt them to the changing environment. The author claims that the focus of literacy has shifted from individual expression to community involvement. The new literacies require social skills built through collaboration and networking, complementing traditional literacy, research, technical, and critical analysis skills taught in classrooms (Potter, 2013). MLE enables individuals to scrutinise and evaluate media content, investigate effects, and create alternative media messages in various formats (Hobbs, McGee, 2014). It also promotes critical thinking skills necessary to understand and communicate complex issues facing modern society (Jolls, Johnsen, 2018). MLE supports peer learning, student engagement, and collaborative and contextualised learning (Kelly, 2018). MLE involves acquiring the skills and knowledge to comprehend, analyse, and create different types of texts and media while developing the intellectual tools and abilities to participate in society (Fedorov, 2018). The researcher emphasised connecting culture, society, media literacy, and education. They suggested that classrooms adopt a multi-literacy approach to education, which does not favour literacy over others (Fedorov, 2018: 17). As a cross-curricular approach, ML can be utilised at any grade level and in any subject area, including social sciences, language, arts, history, health education, communication, and other sciences, enhancing overall teaching and learning (Potter, 2022).

McLuhan (McLuhan, 1969: 47) claimed that traditional reading and writing literacy is no longer sufficient: “Radio and TV are not audio-visual aids to enhance or to popularise previous forms of experience. They are new languages. We must first master and then teach these new languages”. This notion allows us to enlarge what is conventionally considered and taught as “media literacy” to “integrated media and language literacy.” LLT and MLE are inseparable and stimulated parts of all subject curricula, and adjusting ML in the language curriculum reinforces the 21st-century learning skills required for lifelong learning in a constantly changing world. The potential of ML in language education has been recognised to benefit metalinguistic analysis as an authentic classroom activity, facilitating the development of a critical stance toward linguistic prescription, language-related prejudice, and language ideologies (Kung, 2016). It encourages students to question, analyse, and evaluate the messages conveyed through different media forms, cultivating their comprehension, vocabulary building, and critical thinking skills (Hattani, 2016). Incorporating ML into LLT provides extra language input and enhances learners' comprehension. Students master linguistic knowledge and abilities independently by utilising diverse media forms incorporating language, sound, imagery, and multimedia technologies (Erdem, Erişti, 2018). Expanding the concept of ‘text’ from interpreting print texts to creating and communicating one’s ideas in various message forms helps students develop the necessary skills to succeed in the modern world (Ugalingan et al., 2022). So, integrating ML into FL classrooms can enhance students’ critical thinking, information evaluation, intercultural competence, and digital citizenship.

#### *The Synergy of Media and Language Literacy*

Enhancing Kazakh students’ critical awareness alongside LLT is essential, as current National Education Standards are based on different learning theories and goals without considering sociocultural content (Akhmetova, 2016; Akhmetova et al., 2023; Rydchenko et al., 2023; Yelubayeva et al., 2023). Although MLE has become crucial in Kazakhstan and needs to be incorporated into the education system, it has gained more momentum in journalism, mass media, and communication study programs, where students are taught to create high-quality media content (Akhmetova et al., 2023; Kuanysheva et al., 2019). Regarding the LTL, Kazakh teachers often need modern textbooks and digital educational resources. However, the reality is that the teaching-learning materials do not focus on enhancing students' ability to interpret and produce media content critically, although media platforms are used for educational purposes. Kazakh instructors cannot teach language through media literacy without new or unique materials. They have already employed media resources such as textbooks, newspapers, videos, print texts from the Internet, TV, movies, ads, radio broadcasts, social media, and more. However, not everyone knows some functions of media content, like transmitting fake news and disinformation. Thus, what is crucial for Kazakh language instructors is to have a comprehensive understanding of what they are teaching with media materials and adopt an approach that maximises the potential of these materials as teaching tools for literacy.

Several attempts have been made to incorporate ML into education standards, such as those proposed by (Cheung, Chau, 2017; Mihailidis, 2018; Reyna et al., 2018; Thoman, Jolls, 2004). Thoman and Jolls (Thoman, Jolls, 2004) developed a framework that helps students increase their knowledge of current media content, analyse information, and communicate effectively in a diverse

global media culture. It is designed to develop media literacy education in both school and non-school settings and enables learners to participate in media creation and express themselves through various media resources. Mihailidis (Mihailidis, 2018) proposed the 5 A's framework to help young learners become responsible global citizens. The framework includes access to media, media power awareness, media coverage assessment, appreciation for the media's role in creating civil societies, and action to encourage better communication. Its purpose is to foster diversity and encourage individuals to take responsibility and contribute to improving our planet.

These frameworks comprehensively organised and structured classroom activities for implementing media learning in education. However, research shows that incorporating well-organized teaching methods with media materials is more effective for LLT than solely focusing on teaching about media manipulation. In addition, having a more tangible and meaningful approach to help students master their metacognitive skills, such as 'reading,' 'interpreting,' and 'writing' in audio/visual multi-media language, is crucial nowadays (Zou, Ou, 2020). Language instructors need a new teaching approach that organises educational experiences to raise students' awareness about the power of language in influencing and connecting people by reflecting on the realities of media content and exploring how media images and sounds are formed, function, and relate to each other across communication in different contexts (Chen, 2021; Díaz-Martín, 2023; Richards, Rodgers, 2001). By viewing the media as a tool for developing communication, the new approach should focus on mastering skills to delineate 'reliable' from 'unreliable' content (Chen, 2021), maintain identities, construct discourse and community (Reyna et al., 2018), warn students against the harmful effects of media (Cheung Chau, 2017), and explore the fluid nature of meaning in media texts (Fedorov, Mikhaleva, 2020). It should also allow language instructors to create a learning environment where students can envision real-life contexts and use authentic resources to complete their assigned tasks (Díaz-Martín, 2023).

Based on our findings, we propose utilising the MLL model as a teaching approach to incorporate ML into LLT classrooms (Table 1). This approach emphasises contextual teaching and learning and developing necessary skills for the 21st Century. It guides the design and implementation of effective teaching strategies to train students to become critical thinkers and effective communicators. Along with developing students' linguistic skills (phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, syntax) and language (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) skills, it drills reflecting on media texts, enhancing their critical thinking skills and ability to deliberate on the reasons and truths behind daily life events. The Model prioritises the need to activate and extend students' prior knowledge from their experience with mass media to acquire media literacy competencies. While students can complete the activities in any order, they tend to develop critical thinking skills more effectively when following the sequence presented below: *Access* valuable information and comprehend its meaning effectively; *Detect* how a message is constructed to carry a specific idea for a target audience; *Analyze* the credibility of information from various sources; *Adjust* messages to different situations and audiences; *Create* a new message with compassion and mutual respect; *Communicate* accurately, clearly, and creatively in various contexts using different forms of media.

**Table 1.** Media Literacy & Language Learning Model

<i>Learning Skills</i>					
Linguistic Skills		Language Skills		Critical Communication	
<i>Competencies</i>					
Accessing	Detecting	Analysing	Adjusting	Creating	Communicating
<i>Teaching Methods</i>					
Case-based Learning	Inquiry-Based Learning	Problem-Based	Project-Based Learning	Collaborative Learning	
<i>Teaching Instructions</i>					
Content-based		Technology-based		Competency-Based	
<i>Learning Resources</i>					
Audio & visual materials		Print materials		Internet resources	
<i>Learning outcomes</i>					
1) evaluating the reliability of information obtained from various sources,					

- 2) conveying a message through various forms of media with accuracy, clarity, and creativity,
- 3) encouraging students to compare different perspectives in media texts,
- 4) engaging students in research and critical thinking,
- 5) fostering students' collaborative autonomous learning abilities,
- 6) mastering students' proficiency in communicating and disseminating their thoughts and ideas,
- 7) acknowledging the values and perspectives embedded in the plot and
- 8) encouraging students' interest in various global and local issues.

*Learning Objective:*

- a) Enhancing the acquisition of information skills,
- b) Facilitating the development of a critical stance toward linguistic prescription, language-related prejudice, and language ideologies,
- c) Improving understanding and communication of complex issues facing modern society,
- d) Minimizing the gap between the classroom and real life.

Prior research on ML has demonstrated that media-oriented skills and abilities can be learned effectively through discovery processes pursuing meaningful global goals instead of isolated ones. The teaching instructions (TI) for LLT that align with contemporary theories, such as case-based, inquiry-based, problem-based, project-based, and collaborative learning, prioritise student involvement, critical thinking, and self-expression. These methods focus on analytical learning and problem-solving, encouraging learners to actively engage in learning and create personal connections to solidify their knowledge (Richards, Rodgers, 2001). They promote collaboration and boost participation by putting learners at the centre, empowering them to take responsibility for their learning and become more autonomous. The collaborative functions engage learners in deep thinking or acquiring specific skills or prompt them to work together toward a standard end media product (Ahmad et al., 2023: 271). These are practical methods for designing classroom activities applicable to all levels of language proficiency, enabling students to apply their knowledge to life scenarios inside and outside the classroom. Students produce their best work when they engage in personally significant activities (Kelly, 2018: 411).

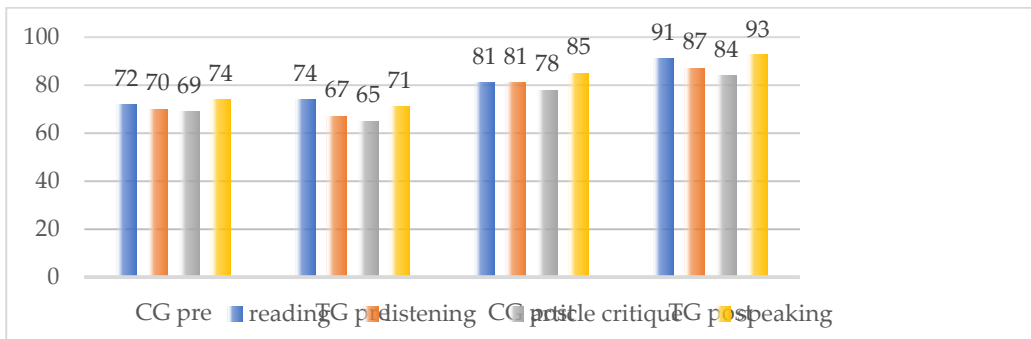
It is a content-based, technology-based, and competency-based TI, wherein activities focus on students using the media materials and resources to create real, meaningful communication in language learning (Yelubayeva, Mustafina, 2020). All these TIs have already advocated their value at all levels of education. *Content-based TIs* integrate the presentation of subject matter (global warming, nanotechnologies) in teaching a second language, while *Competence-based TIs* prioritise a student's ability to demonstrate desired learning outcomes as the central aspect of the learning process. *Technology-based TIs* encourage active learning strategies focusing on problem-solving, project-based, or inquiry-based approaches. In an integrated way, content, technology, and competency-based language TIs offer dynamic and evolving input for meaningful interaction, embedding learning within real-world contexts and exposing students to authentic materials. With integrated TIs, students can actively participate in classroom settings, take charge of their learning process, and be trained to think creatively and find solutions to complex issues that may arise in the future (Appendix A).

The MLL Model application is expected to promote learning techniques, consider international social contexts, offer new education landscapes and insights, and provide relevant use of information. It does not replace traditional learning methods but complements them and is a valuable part of modern teaching. Additionally, this approach is adaptable to various teaching methods. The synergy of LT and ML raises students' awareness of their choices in their life and career and how they fit into a greater social context because the suggested framework is aimed at *enhancing the acquisition of information skills, facilitating the development of a critical stance toward linguistic prescription, language-related prejudice, and language ideologies, improving understanding and communication of complex issues facing modern society, minimising the gap between the classroom and real life.*

Hence, we can presume that integrated MLL classrooms (1) are good practices for students to expose actual language, extract accurate information from an authentic text, and react to trends and challenges the same way L1 speakers do, and (2) can manage the student' development to become a critical thinker and effective communicator.

### 3. Results

The first step in performing a one-way MANOVA is to quantitatively compare the language proficiency of CG and TG students across four components: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. MANOVA results show that the two groups were homogeneous – without significant multivariate and univariate differences in English language proficiency level before receiving treatment sessions (Figure 1). Figure 1 demonstrates the results of the pre-test and post-test. At the beginning of the experiment, the TG showed a comparatively poor language proficiency level (overall 69 %) compared to the CG results (71.25). By the end of the experiment, the TG demonstrated significant improvements in speaking (+21), reading (+16), listening (+20), and writing (+12) sections due to careful adjustment of students' assignments. The TG's English proficiency level was improved. Both groups showed progress in their language skills, but the treatment group (TG) showed a significant improvement up to 88.75 % (+19.75) in their overall performance. The CG also improved their academic performance, but it was half as much (+10) for 81.25 %. The CG writing constructs in this analysis were still the weakest, but all productive and receptive skills improved (Figure 1). The results indicated that students preferred communicating with others and were actively engaged in in-class activities. The MLLL collaboration improved TG's critical thinking and creative written and spoken communication.



**Fig. 1.** Pre- and post-experiment English Proficiency Test Results in CG and TG

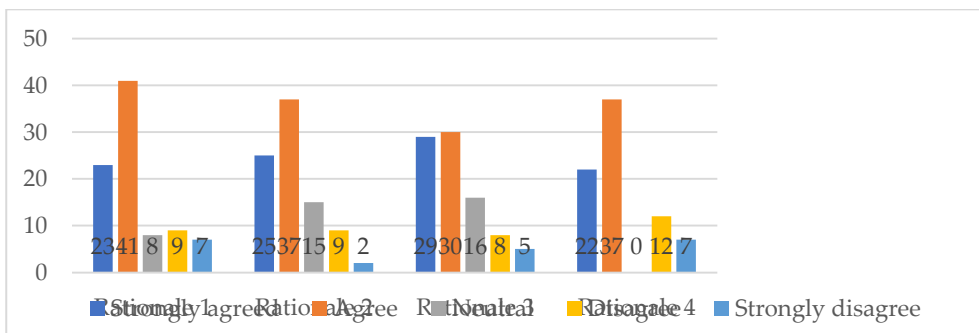
Following the language proficiency test, the students were given a questionnaire with multiple choice answers (Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree) to determine their attitudes towards implementing ML in the English language classroom. The questionnaire results are given in Figure 2. The questionnaire contained four rationales (R):

R 1: ML increases students' interest in learning English;

R 2: ML practice involves mastering four language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking);

R 3: Media products make English content more meaningful and flexible;

R 4: Media products master critical awareness.



**Fig. 2.** Rationales for Introducing ML in EL Classrooms

Out of the 146 respondents, eighty-eight voluntarily participated in a follow-up interview to discuss their responses to the questionnaire. About 73 % of the respondents believed incorporating ML education into English instruction boosts motivation for studying English. Students tend to be

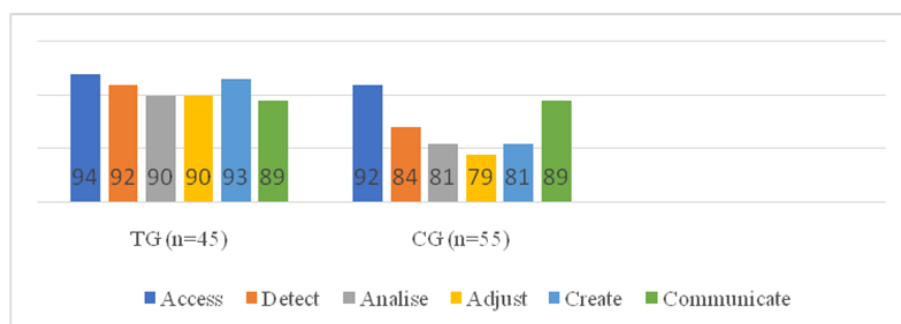
more motivated to develop language proficiency when they use their media experiences in an educational environment (Buckingham, 2015). Additionally, 71 % of the respondents believed that MD is closely related to teaching the four language skills. The interviewees stated that ML is easy to implement in English lessons since they listen to music, watch videos, read articles, write messages/essays/emails, and discuss various topics. They also claimed that the meaningful and flexible content of ML makes it a valuable addition to English classrooms.

Furthermore, 67 % of the respondents believed that the English teaching content is adaptable to students' abilities and interests. They agreed that practising ML enhances their broad knowledge and analytical skills, effectively allowing them to analyse and synthesise media messages. Moreover, actively using methods to analyse and structure information independently, check facts, and reach valid conclusions promotes cognitive activity and critical thinking among students. The respondents' positive attitudes towards the survey demonstrate their eagerness and preparedness to participate in the experiment. They believe the investigation can significantly improve the quality of language learning and teaching and their academic achievements.

Figure 3 presents the final results of assessing critical communication skills in TG and CG, which took place three weeks later after treatment sessions. The diagram shows the levels students achieve on their exams in the take-home assignment format. The take-home exam assignment asks students to work on their exam text in three stages individually. First, they chose an article from open internet sources on the suggested topics and critiqued it. Next, they post their critique on the article's web page. Then, they share the link on the social account for the feedback to analyse. They need to summarise the stages of the exam, but the main focus should be analysing the input. This assignment tests students' ability to perform media and language literacy with full awareness accurately and respond to their followers' feedback. The assessment criteria used to evaluate the student's criticism and creativity performance in communication are as follows:

- *accessing* various media formats and technologies to facilitate information and create, share, and communicate messages;
- *detecting* how messages are constructed to carry a specific message for a particular audience;
- *analysing* the way messages are constructed to build meaning for the target audience;
- adjusting messages to different situations and audiences;
- *creating* contextual information and critical perspectives extracted from a text to demonstrate critical judgment and interpretation skills;
- *communicating* with greater mutual understanding, recognising diversity in multicultural and multilingual societies, and respecting such diversities.

Notably, 37 % of the TG students in the experiment performed exceptionally well academically and academically. Of these, 47 % had already achieved the same level before the review, while 16 % of students still needed to achieve good results (Figure 3). It may be due to low enthusiasm for learning, lack of motivation, interest in education, weak willingness to learn, and poor learning mentality. All TG participants' communication skills improved significantly, with an overall score of 91, considering they were the least anxious EFL learners.



**Fig. 3.** Post-experiment communication skills result in TG & CG

The participants generally had a positive view of the MLLL classes. The CML was an efficient tool for testing students' media literacy communication skills. Most participants (85 %) felt the MLLL model effectively incorporated language and media literacy, while 79 % found the task-based



assignments feasible. Only 21 % found the tasks to be infeasible. [Figure 4](#) displays the results of the student's perception of the MLLL model.

Research indicates that the treatment has significantly impacted students' critical thinking abilities and media literacy. All 88 students who were enrolled in the treatment completed the surveys. According to the surveys, most participants showed dramatic progress in their knowledge of various media formats, the specificity of the English-speaking environment, and deep insight into the discussed issues and problems. They also demonstrated an increased ability to make inferences, higher critical judgment and interpretation skills as media viewers, and active participation in debates compared to the initial surveys. However, the remaining 14 students performed differently, which could be partially explained by poor attendance or failure to complete home assignments aimed at viewing mass media outside the class.

All students showed more flexibility in their thinking after completing the treatment. Interviews with students and teachers revealed that they appreciated the new teaching approach, finding it exciting and enjoyable. However, students found the home assignment policy requiring excessive media viewing a drawback. Similarly, most course instructors admitted that preparing for the course was time-consuming.

The study used the following criteria to assess the level of media literacy of students: the ability to gather information from different media formats, accurately identify critical points of a question, comprehend the depth and significance of a problem, draw thorough and consistent conclusions, exhibit improved proficiency in foreign languages, and demonstrate high-level critical judgment and interpretation skills. Integrating ML into language classrooms has numerous benefits: (1) it enhances students' comprehension skills, analytical abilities, independent thinking, production skills, worldview, and use of their interests; (2) it helps them understand the message behind every story they read or watch and evaluate whether it is positive or negative; (3) it develops their analytical skills, enabling them to distinguish between real and fake news and form their own opinions; (4) it teaches to create media responsibly, such as writing blog articles, making videos, or composing music, makes producing media content more accessible; (5) it helps students see how bias in the news can impact how a story is understood, and learn to understand the author's perspective and how it can affect their views.

## 5. Conclusion

After discussing the feasibility of the MLLL framework, we identified the reasons for the failure of the treatment tasks. We found that poor communication was the primary factor. Some students needed to establish positive communication channels, and their confidence improved as they got to know their peers. Teachers decided to implement a task management system to facilitate smooth group communication. Second, some students had low English proficiency levels despite the group's overall pre-intermediate proficiency. Therefore, classroom activities need to be adjusted to meet individual needs. Third, we discovered that more than assigning roles alone was required. Teachers should regularly monitor progress and appoint team members responsible for their actions. When team members feel accountable, they perform better and achieve better results.

Students also hesitate to apply critical communication skills due to a fear of negative judgment or opinions. Rather than offering quick tips, this fear can be overcome through consistent practice in the classroom. Tasks based on the MLLL framework encourage students to engage in discussion and critical thinking, promoting social awareness and engagement while enhancing their communication skills.

The study findings have shown that it is essential to customise task instructions to meet students' individual needs, create a learning environment for effective group communication, promote media education in Kazakhstan, and explore the role of new technologies in language and media literacy development. Here are some tips to help educators seamlessly incorporate media literacy into their teaching approach:

1. Critically evaluate media content to question and assess the reliability and credibility of information sources.
2. Create short explanations or video clips instructing students to break down complex information into digestible parts to enhance their understanding and retention.
3. Provide chronological historical events with timelines to visually represent events, helping students better comprehend the historical context.

4. Adapt short stories into movies to encourage students' creativity and deepen their understanding of narrative elements like plot, character, and setting.

5. Identify fake news on your own before teaching students how to do so.

6. Use online tools, such as fact-checking websites and plugins, to teach students how to critically evaluate information and distinguish between credible sources and fake news.

7. Integrate digital storytelling into lessons to develop students' critical thinking skills, challenging them to think deeply about their experiences, beliefs, values, and opinions.

These efforts will enable students to go beyond consuming media – producing, sharing, and communicating their content, thus overcoming various challenges. Therefore, by integrating media literacy into FL classrooms, educators can empower students to engage critically with various media forms, develop discerning communication skills, and become responsible and informed digital citizens. Following the suggestions presented in this article, language instructors can effectively prepare their students to navigate the media-saturated world and communicate successfully across diverse cultures in the digital era.

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## Appendix

### Classroom Activities to Practice Mastering ML in LLT

Activities	Objective	Instructions (* St = Student)
Media Source Evaluation	Develop St’s critical thinking skills and the ability to evaluate the credibility of media sources.	Provide St with a mix of online articles, ranging from reputable news sources to less credible platforms. Have them analyse and compare the reliability of the sources by considering factors such as authorship, publication date, and supporting evidence; focus on the language used, the tone, and the overall message; discuss how different media outlets may present the same information differently.
Media Genre Exploration	Familiarise St with different media genres and writing styles.	Provide examples of news articles, opinion pieces, and editorials. Have them discuss the unique features of each genre, including language conventions and tone; write their short pieces in various genres to apply their understanding.
Media Bias Analysis	Increase St’s awareness of bias in media and develop skills to identify different perspectives.	Select news articles from different sources that cover the same event. Ask St to analyse the language used, tone, and framing to identify potential biases; discuss how the same information can be presented differently based on the source's perspective.
Fact-Checking Challenge	Enhance St’s fact-checking and promote critical research skills	Provide St with some statements or news headlines, some accurate and some false. Ask them to research and verify the information independently using reliable sources. Guide the fact-checking and identifying signs of misinformation, discussing their findings to reinforce the importance of fact-checking.

Adaptation Projects	Encourage St's creativity and practice the use of various media formats.	Assign St to choose a news article and adapt it into different formats, such as podcasts, infographics, or videos. This exercise reinforces comprehension and encourages creativity and understanding of various formats.
Digital Storytelling	Enhance digital literacy and communication skills through multimedia storytelling.	Assign students to create a digital story using a combination of text, images, and audio. This exercise encourages creativity, effective communication in different formats, and an understanding of the unique aspects of digital media.
Interview Analysis Exercise	Improve listening skills and analyse communication in interviews	Provide students with video or audio interviews and ask them to analyse the language used by interviewees and interviewers, focusing on clarity, tone, and effective communication. Have students identify key messages and potential biases and discuss how interviewees and interviewers convey information and the impact of their choices.
Advertisement Analysis Project	Develop awareness of persuasive techniques in media and improve visual literacy.	Assign students to analyse a series of advertisements from various sources, considering language, visuals, and target audience. Have them present their findings, discussing how advertisers use language and imagery to convey messages and influence consumer behaviour. Discuss the persuasive techniques used in language and visuals. Encourage students to deconstruct the message and consider the intended audience and impact.