Media Literacy and Learning: Conceptual Contribution in the Field of Media Education

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Abstract

Social transformations related to digital technologies and new media offer significant challenges to education. The school is no longer the leading space, the ways of knowing and producing knowledge are expanded and diversified, and communicative practices they become more complex. This makes it necessary to examine the skills and learning that should be promoted to act and participate in media and digital scenarios. The article presents a review critical conceptual about media literacy and learning from Latin American traditions, American and European, based on the compilation and analysis of publications that deal with the two last decades. A reading is proposed that integrates theoretical contributions from both communication and of Education. Literacy is understood as a social practice that implies construction and social consensus for the generation and negotiation of meanings, thanks to the mediation of language; processes that are achieved from learning.
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Keywords: *Media literacy; learning; competencies; language; media practices; digital technologies.*

Introduction

The development of digital technologies and the relevance of new media communication in the daily life of a large part of the population have implied transformations social and cultural challenges with important challenges for education. Most of the boys, girls and today's teens were born into a highly mediated world, where screens are present in its various spaces and routines. All these transformations that manifest clearly in media practices are involving new learning that involves technical, social, semiotic, aesthetic, and ethical aspects (Buckingham, 2007; Gee and Hayes, 2011).

One of the main changes relates the communication processes and the mediation of technologies, today, thanks to the expansion of the internet and the generation of audiovisual technologies digital, there is the possibility of producing and creating "homemade" content, and putting it in circulation on various media platforms. Thus, the so-called social media 7 or the media associated with web 2.0

favor the questioning of the classic linear and rigid relationship
(Ardévol, Gómez-Cruz, Roig and San Cornelio, 2010), typical of the media of masses, where the action of the subjects was focused on the reception of content created by a small group of expert producer staff. This new scenario favors not only participation and full development in the messages issued and transmitted, but also, the possibilities of producing such messages, mastering the technical tools and patterns, semiotic and aesthetic that allow the production of digital media content.

In order to understand the transformations, it is necessary to review and discuss the theoretical and conceptual constructs with which the phenomena have traditionally been approached educational, social and communicative involved. This article is intended to review the route made in this area located at the intersection between two fields

that share an interdisciplinary configuration: communication and education. Particular attention is paid to one of the phenomena that becomes relevant in the current media scenario, literacy.

Media practices involve mastering a set of skills and knowledge; dispositions and attitudes, which allow daily action oriented towards media or in relation to them (Couldry, 2004). In this sense, technological transformations and cultural stress the ways in which the acquisition and development process has been conceived of the languages involved. What does it mean to be a literate person in the current historical context ?, what is the object of literacy ?, or in other words, what semiotic systems are they involved in the languages to be literate and mobilized in media practices? The original term in English is chosen, as well as the referenced authors (Ardévol, et al, 2010) for avoid the loss of meanings that translation often causes. In fact, the same middle term makes reference to the entire mediated communication process and not only to the media involved, meaning found in some literature in Spanish.

These questions raise the more general question about learning, in terms of the process that allows the acquisition and development of knowledge, values, skills and dispositions, in this case media, which occur in formal and informal contexts. With this, it is pointed out, in addition, to the decentralization of education in the school itself. Introducing learning into the discussion about media literacies aims to bring together the theoretical contributions of both fields, communication and education, and understand that the central objects of each one, construction of meaning in communication and learning in education, they are mutually involved.

As De Fontcuberta (2001) points out, all the educational process is based on a communicative action. In the socio-historical line that is still here, learning and human development begin and enhance from the acquisition of language and the construction of meaning of the self and the world. The first article reviews the theoretical and conceptual paths that have given life to the field or space of intersection communication-education , and the tensions that today experience.

Then, the conceptual discussion on media literacy is developed, evidencing the existing polyphony; the concept of media competence is presented, which acquires certain relevance and has been associated with literacy. Finally, learning is addressed in the media practices as a phenomenon situated in specific historical contexts, and where language is that tool that promotes literacy, and develops from it.

Theoretical-conceptual trajectories in edu-communication

Communication studies in recent decades generated a body of theoretical and practical knowledge about the relationship between education and communication, problematizing especially the role of the mass media in the development of childhood and youth, and in the forms of

their inclusion in educational practices. Now for some studies, such as Leaning (2009),this still does not achieve solidity or cross-sectional consensus in the community of researchers.

From Latin America, a current is developing that collects influential works such as those of Martín-Barbero (2002, 2003) in the study of the communication-culture dyad from a critical perspective. A fundamental contribution was to give depth and complexity to the communication where the focus moves away from the mass media and broadens to the processes of mediation and significance of the subjects in relation to the media. A key purpose was question what is instituted in the hegemonic logics of culture and research frameworks in communication. The term edu-communication is coined from where it is built not only a framework of theoretical knowledge, but also an accumulation of educational experiences, both in the formal and non-formal space.

Based on this work, the intersection between communication-education is proposed as a new field, where diverse theoretical perspectives and social and professional practices converge with different interests (Huergo, 2000; Valderrama, 2000). Being both communication and education fields already defined by their interdisciplinary, one wonders how the space meeting and intersection between them is transformed into a new field, which by the way shares this interdisciplinary character. An answer may lie in the conception that hold studies convinced of their existence, where the confluence of various perspectives implies the dispute between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses and practices on the objects typical of this nascent field (Espitia and Valderrama, 2009). This characterization of a disputed space is close to Bourdieu's concept of field, so it would make sense from that perspective. However, it may be insufficient to clearly define what is that which distinguishes it with respect to each of the fields of which it is tributary. This, to despite what other more recent research suggests: Morabes (2014) conceives the link between communication and education in an articulatory way, which implies that the identities of each are modified because of the relationship.

According to Huergo (2000) andValderrama (2000), it is possible to organize the theoretical and practices in the following lines: education for reception, communication in education and education and new technologies.

Education for the reception from the 60s has a significant influence until even into the present century. The initial proposals were based on the classical model of communication, with linear logic of sender-message-receiver. At the end of the seventies there is move on to critical views of both the media and the possibilities of the audience. In this online are the contributions of critical reading of the media, studies of active reception (CENECA, 1992), and those of audience education (Valderrama, 2000).

As will be seen later, it is possible to identify some convergences between the last contributions and Media literacy, an Anglo-Saxon proposal where the media are important creators and mediators of the knowledge that circulates in societies and representations of reality. The focus is on the critical analysis of media products.

As can be seen, the communicative relationship that this line supposes supports a dichotomy between the producing entity and the receiving public, no matter how active it may be. Education is seen, then, as the means that allows to achieve active or critical reception, and the formation of audiences, that is, giving rationality and reflexivity to the media experience.

The media outlined here are the mass media. And, while it is true, the influence and presence in everyday media practices it is still significant, the theoretical and conceptual contributions that are in this line do not manage to give coverage or total understanding to current phenomena, where social media have repositioned the relationship with the media and the position of the audience. From In fact, in these cases, the use of the concept of audience is questioned.

For its part, communication in education , the second area identified by Valderrama (2000) , focuses on the communicative dynamics that underlie the pedagogical relationship and in the interaction of the actors of the teaching-learning process, both inside and outside the school institution. In a contemporary way to the development of the previous field, the works of Freire (1999) and Kaplún (1987) propose work proposals with communities that aim to the transformation of the binary, transmissive and oppressive relationship. Communication and education popular were originally developed for extracurricular contexts, but quickly it was tried to introduce in the school.

Although Valderrama (2000)does not consider them, you can link, to this area, the lines research that, from pedagogy, developmental psychology and research in education, have their objects in communication within educational processes. In this plane are the contributions of Vygotsky (1978) and sociocultural psychology (Wertsch, 1999), discourse research in the classroom (Cazden, 1991) and studies addressing interactions educational (Mercer, 1997). These contributions are included, as they allow visualizing the connection between the fields, assessing the contributions that education can make to this area.

The field of education and new technologies emerges, following Valderrama (2000), from the reflection on the place of new technologies in culture; the future of societies and the impact on education, and cognitive processes. This is likely to be one of the areas that have had, in recent years, greater development, both within the field of communication-education, as in each of them. Although Valderrama (2000) points out that studies in this area are mainly focused on technological development and skills and less in the incorporation of the dimension of communication and cultural contexts, currently it is possible to find some experiences and programs research that does advance in the configuration of the communicative-educational problem of the use of ICT.

Finally, Huergo (2000) proposes a fourth area, what he calls institutions educational and cultural horizons. What is intended here is to decentralize the discussion of the media, to put it in the space of culture and communication, as construction of meaning. The author addresses the tensions between school culture and culture media (Huergo and Fernández, 1999).

As can be seen, although the theoretical body developed from Latin America achieves a certain stability and coherence in the understanding of educational-communicative phenomena, their relevance is more related to the media practices that occur prior to the transformations current. A second aspect that deserves review is the less dialogue that is made with the contributions of research in education, and with the theoretical-conceptual discussions generated in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Next, there will be a review of the term media literacy that is intended be more comprehensive in perspectives, showing in turn, the complexity present in the field, to articulate consistent approximations.

Literacy and media competence: Conceptual details

The relevance that the concept of literacy adopts in the field of communication- education arises from the position, from various sectors of society, to advance in the media education to promote more profitable use of these tools (Aguaded-Gomez, 2012). This task of training citizens for consumption and media practices more diverse and conscious had a starting point with the Grünwald Declaration , carried out by UNESCO in 1982 (Pérez, 2007), which urges governments to develop education in media, in order for subjects to be more critical of the content they consume and, at the same time, have the ability to be producers and participate in the public space constituted by the media messages that circulate. From this beginning arises the concept that condenses the purpose of media education, media literacy, or media literacy , defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of ways (Aufderheide, in Potter, 2010). To this brief definition, most of the works that address the subject are welcomed, with nuances. Despite this high acceptance is worth reviewing some aspects that may seem ambiguous, since stated by Buitrago, García and Gutiérrez (2017), the terminological diversity within the the field of edu-communication requires a conceptual revision to clarify the panorama.bPicking up that call, then some concepts involved will be delimited, starting with that of literacy .

Literacy or literacies

In the English language, the word literacy, according to theEnglish Oxford Living Dictionaries (nd) corresponds to both the "ability to read and write" and "the competence or knowledge in a specific area ”and is

translated into Spanish with the term literacy . This translation has presented some drawbacks, as Buitrago et al. (2017), is inappropriate since both terms seem to point to different phenomena although closely related: literacy as a product of the educational process, or literacy as the process itself. Another complex aspect of this translation has to do with the load carried by the term in Spanish and that tends to be quickly circumscribed to literacy , while literacy to development and acquisition of various languages.

Bearing the foregoing in mind, it should be noted that the use in Spanish of the word Literacy associated with the media has an eminently political meaning. Hug (2013) argues that the use of the term has the metaphorical intention of indicating the similarity of the process of mastering the reading-writing code with that of other languages (visual, audiovisual, etc.); but, in addition, it would imply an intention to strategically assign the importance or urgency to master certain skills in a world that imposes certain idioms. Along the same lines, Wilson (2012) points out that the challenges of the 21st century make literacy is insufficient, and broader literacy is imperative as a matter of justice, and Livingstone (2004) adds that media literacy. It is part of a package of measures to illuminate media regulation 'from above', returning responsibility for media use from the State to individuals.

Whether for conceptual or political reasons, the openness of the concept has paved the way for path for the application of various types of literacy. Research lines appear around "multiple literacies", which are linked to a greater or lesser extent with what mediatic (Buitrago et al., 2017). The idea that the domain of reading-writing codes is a process that resembles others that occur in other areas explains, in part, that, in addition of media literacy, concepts such as new media literacy , digital literacy, information literacy (Catts and Lau, 2008; Koltay, 2011; Literat, 2014).

Faced with this explosion of proposals for new literacies, answers appear that they argue that, in reality, it is about "multi-literacies"; that is, unified knowledge, which is they condense into certain binding concepts. Gutiérrez and Tyner (2012) argue that it is risky the proliferation of terms, not only because of the confusion it causes, but also because runs the risk of privileging some dimensions - specifically the more "technical" – for over others. In that sense, they call for terminological convergence, adhering to the positions that promote the inclusion of all these dimensions in the term media literacy.

In the effort to generate consensus and common language, two proposals are particularly relevant due to the impact they have caused at the level of academic discussion within the field of communication-education.

On the one hand, there is UNESCO's proposal for media literacy and informational (AMI or MIL, in English), which integrates the currents of media literacy with that of information, seeking a holistic approach that refers not only to the media communication (and its mediated or published content), but also other entities information providers (Buitrago et al., 2017 ; Wilson, 2012) . That integration was considers a "qualitative leap forward" (Pérez-Tornero and Tayie, 2012, p. 12) within the edu-communication. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the breadth of its purposes, reflected in the curriculum MIL (Wilson et al., 2011) and the skills –competencies– that it promotes must be translated into time to be implemented in specific educational practices (Wilson, 2012) and particularized (to mode of development of literacy , as will be seen below), so it seems to be more useful as a general frame of reference for national policies, especially in realities. Where technological and social development is precarious (Saleh, 2012).

On the other hand, there is the proposal made by Ferrés (2007) in Spain, who talks about competence in audiovisual communication , taken up by Pérez and Delgado (2012) who, in an effort not to divide into multiple literacies, postulate the competence media that is both digital and multimodal(Gee and Hayes, 2011; Gutiérrez and Tyner, 2012).

Unfortunately, the use of the concept of competence adds an additional element to the confusing landscape of concepts in this research field. It is convenient, then, to try certain clarifications. The use of the term extends from the line that beginsFerrés, et al. (2011), very prolific in empirical research (Aguaded et al., 2011; Ferrés and Santibáñez, 2011; García-

Ruiz, Ramírez-García and Rodríguez-Rosell, 2014; Gozálvez and Zeballos, 2013). Your research are aligned with a process of defining skills transversally acquired by populations located in various geographic locations (key competencies) with the model promoted by the European Union in its declarations of Bologna, Lisbon and Barcelona regarding a transversal training at European level, with interests of standardization (Gimeno, 2008)on the measurement of media competence (Ferrés, 2007; Ferrés et al., 2011).
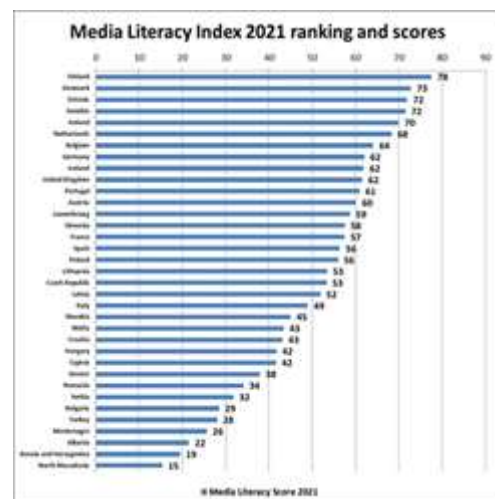

Fig 1 (UNESCO) Media Literacy index 2021

The confusion is generated by the indistinct use that in the extension of the investigations mentioned empirical concepts is made of the concepts competence and literacy, which results complex in a research environment with so much polysemy (Martens, 2010).

Beyond this indistinct use, both in the proposal just mentioned, and in that of the UNESCO, and even in those that refer to parceled literacies, the incidence of from a vision of literacy as a set of competencies (Buitrago et al., 2017). This raises a second distinction related to the scope and approach of literacy.

Literacy as competence or literacy as literacy

The conceptualization of the research line initiated by Ferrés (2007) around the media competence is ascribed to the majority position of those who investigate the media literacy , in the sense of pursuing the acquisition of a series of knowledge and skills generic and standardized, leaving in the background the sociocultural context that in media practice occurs (Martens, 2010). However, it should be specified that not all perspectives that follow the majority trend are the same. Leaning (2009) difference, between those, which seek to prevent subjects from the negative effects of the media (Potter, 2010) from an inoculation (cognitive) perspective ; and those that pose a more active and review (Kellner and Share, 2005), demystifying in some way.

Regardless of the nuances, the approaches that reveal the acquisition, either of a code or a competition –which accredits standardized levels of achievement on the part of the subjects– pay attention to the sociocultural context in which media practices take place, aspect that is key to give meaning to learning and educational work (Martens, 2010). The availability of digital technologies allows a vision that, within the framework of the practices educational, it is of great potential, because according to Buckingham (2003), you have to take over that today people, especially children and young people, have knowledge and experiences prior to the media and digital technologies so deeply rooted in their daily life, that this cannot be ignored or excluded.

In this sense, educational action and pedagogical should pay attention to these sociocultural contexts and the relationships that subject to literacy have with digital media and technologies.

The competency-based education perspective is criticized for assuming a standardization of knowledge (Gimeno, 2008). However, even when conditions are excluded sociocultural aspects of media practices, Ferrés's (2007) proposal focuses more than in pedagogical practices or in evaluative activities in the everyday school context, in general evaluations, to evaluate the performance of curricular policies. The author points out that "the effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is conditioned in good measured by the effectiveness of the evaluation systems that are incorporated " (Ferrés and

Santibáñez, 2011, p. 12) to which he adds: "[The evaluation of the degree of media competence] aims to contribute to promoting the development of a media education policy, and to outline the objectives, contents, procedures and attitudes that are necessary to develop in this area "(p. 15). Something very similar to what happens with the UNESCO proposal, as mentioned; it proposes more a platform for reflection on national policies, rather than a detailed mechanism of media education in the classroom or other social spaces. By therefore, it is important to consider the political and educational purpose and orientation of research in media literacy related to the development of competencies.

The purpose is to contribute to the definition of universal or national goals, probably the contribution competence in it; now, if what you want is to establish guidelines so that the media literacy processes occur in a relevant, consistent and meaningful way. In the entire population, this perspective is insufficient.

Therefore, so that this approach is not incomplete, it needs to be complemented byvan understanding of literacy as literacy, as the acquisition of a language to through media practice, where specifically pedagogical action operates much more of media education.

Learning, media literacy and language

From a perspective that contributes to the gaps mentioned regarding the conceptualization of media literacies, the work of Gee (2004) can be a contribution significant, since it introduces two key elements in the discussion: language and its possibilities expressive, and learning as a process that allows its acquisition and development.

Although literacy is from its origins associated with the literacy process, literacy inclusion of language allows broadening this perspective, and being consistent with the current scenario media and digital, where other semiotic systems acquire importance.

Language (verbal) can be seen as a set of social conventions about how words, phrases and sentences are combined to communicate meanings. These combinations grammatical words are expressed both via oral discourse and through signs and writing (Gee and Hayes, 2011). For these authors, literacy constitutes one of the technologies that facilitate verbal language, but not the only one, since written language is an invention relatively recent within the history of human communication, which precedes the oral language, long before writing. Now the main feature of literacy is that it allows the relocation and amplification in time and space of meanings, allowing to reach contexts that are neither present nor direct (Gee and Hayes, 2011) .

His studies highlight the fact that language itself is, and always has been, a mixture of sounds, words, images created in the minds and gestures, used in contexts full of objects, sounds, actions and performances. This is what multimodality refers to language, and this characteristic is one of the central aspects in new media and digital technologies. As Gee (2004) points out, these pose opportunities and challenges for learning and knowledge

generation. In contrast to the mass media, which maintain the separation of what is said with who says and where, and postpone the conversation more beyond here and now; new media and digital technologies would present a scenario where the dialogue is brought back to this more conversational, interactive foundation of the here and now: back to its multimodal possibility.

This also rethinks the possibility of generating knowledge and learning, as it could distance itself from the construction of expert knowledge, relieving the generation intelligence and collective wisdom, knowledge transfer among amateurs, giving with this, space for a greater diversity of content and forms of expression. While the language it has always been multimodal, today it is more persuasive and diverse than before (Gee and Hayes, 2011). With the above it follows that learning requires, in turn, a definition consistent with these scenarios of greater multimodality and flexibility. In principle, it supposes recognize the particularities of settings, contexts, activities and mediating entities that are at stake. This implies understanding learning as a social and situated phenomenon (Lave, 1991; Wertsch, 1999). In this sense, you not only learn about content, but also you also learn to participate in the stage, acquiring the practices and norms that organize participation in a community of practice (Gee, 2004; Lave and Wenger 1991).

The new media and digital technologies present certain characteristics that would allow us to redefine the processes that frequently characterize learning. In particular, it is worth mentioning two: participation with a double simultaneous role, that is, teacher-apprentice; and the use of exploration strategies, experimentation and collaboration with other people.

Perhaps, here is the main challenge facing schools, those who educate and those who educational systems: recognize and incorporate new learning, new ways participation that some children and young people experience, and that other groups have as a potential development horizon.

The state, specific governments, or the public, own a large proportion of the world's media - especially radio and television. The term "public media" is often used to refer to these forms of media ownership. There are important distinctions between these forms however.

• Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) uses public money to broadcast in the interests of the public as a whole. They are often established by law, but they are non-partisan, not supporting a particular party including the incumbent ruling party. PSBs are not-for-profit.

• State and government media are owned by the state or the government of the day (and financed out of public money) and directly controlled by it. It may perform a public service function or it may be a propaganda instrument of the state or government. State and government media is also generally not-for-profit.

These media may be financed out of one or all of these sources:

- A license fee paid by television viewers
- The government budget
- A programming fee paid by partner stations
- Public subscriptions and grants
- Commercial advertising

These different revenue sources have potential implications for the broadcaster's day-to-day independence. A license fee, advertising, and other revenues that do not go directly through the government budget may make it easier for the broadcaster to maintain a distance from government (although many still depend on government mechanisms to collect license fees).

UNESCO defines Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) as "broadcasting made, financed and controlled by the public, for the public. PSBs are neither commercial nor state-owned; they are free from political interference and pressure from commercial forces. Through PSBs, citizens are informed, educated and also entertained. When guaranteed with pluralism, programming diversity, editorial independence, appropriate funding, accountability and transparency, public service broadcasting can serve as a cornerstone of democracy."

Widely-accepted principles for PSBs include:

- Universal accessibility (geographic)
- Universal appeal (general tastes and interests)
- Particular attention to minorities
- Contribution to sense of national identity and community
- Distance from vested interests
- Direct funding and universality of payment
- Competition in good programming rather than numbers
- Guidelines that liberate rather than restrict programme-makers

PSBs may be mainly funded by television license fees, as is the case for the British Broadcasting Commission (BBC); directly by the government, for example the Australian Broadcasting Commission; by individual subscribers, grants and programming fees as is the case for National Public Radio (NPR) in the US; or at least partially from commercial sources, as is the case with the Australian Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). What PSBs have in common in terms of funding is that they are not dependent on advertising.

PSBs are often established by government through acts of parliament, and while some are subject to broad oversight by the state, most also have strict guarantees of independence written into their constitutions. The Swedish PSB for example, SvT, is kept at arms-length from the state by being owned by a foundation, not the state, and by directly collecting license fees from the public, not via the government. However it is subject to broad oversight by a parliamentary committee as a check-and-balance mechanism.

In transitional democracies there have been some bold attempts to rapidly retrieve and modernize the public service ideal, after a history of heavy-handed state control. In South Africa since 1993 the public broadcaster has statutory independence and even, at one stage, had its board members appointed after public hearings.

However others struggle to achieve true public service broadcasting. In the former Soviet Union, "PSB development…is still affected by local transitional challenges [as well as] coping with global challenges of [the] media environment." In Latvia in 2011 for example, "PSB policy making is still oriented to the value for officials or elite rather than for the public," with PSBs still operating as "paternalistic broadcasters that tend to function as public educators "from above."

Media Ownerships

State- and government-owned broadcasters, directly controlled by the state, were a common model in the Soviet Union (and later in many countries that followed its lead). In the post-Soviet era, these broadcasters have often proven difficult and slow to reform. In Latvia for example, two decades since independence the distinction between public service broadcasting and state broadcasting remains unclear to many parliamentarians.

French and British colonisers took their public broadcasting model overseas, but it did not travel well, and colonial broadcasters enjoyed little independence. After independence, many post-colonial governments continued with the same tradition of broadcaster-as-government-propagandist.

Public service broadcasting was founded on a belief that still holds true in most of the world: the private sector alone cannot guarantee pluralism in broadcasting. The trouble is that public media have largely failed to do that too. In many countries, the advent of private broadcasting has made governments even more determined to cling onto editorial control of the public broadcaster.

Public, state or government media are usually broadcasters. But there are still some government- and state-owned newspapers in existence. They do not enjoy the same economic rationale as public broadcasters and often function as little more than government propaganda sheets. There are exceptions, and Uganda is an interesting example. The largest newspaper in the country is New Vision, in which the state holds a controlling stake. The paper is known to have a level of editorial independence, professionalism, and for publishing a range of views – though this independence was questioned when New Vision was accused of pro-government bias in the 2011 elections. Fortunately, there is also a range of independent private media in Uganda that voice alternative views.

Unlike public media, private media is distinctly for profit. Private media is sustained by commercial revenue. Corporate media is simply private mass media that is controlled by a corporation as opposed to individuals. For example, while in the 1980s roughly 50 different corporations controlled the vast majority of private media in the US, in 2012 this had consolidated to six mega corporations: Time Warner, Walt Disney, NBC Universal, CBS Corporation, Viacom, and Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Another company, Clear Channel owned over 1000 radio stations.

Private and corporate media cover the spectrum of media types:

Private broadcasters range from giant multinational corporations run by some of the richest and most politically powerful people in the world to small, local FM stations. In most cases, broadcasting will be under the terms of a license granted on a periodic basis by a public authority. How prescriptive or restrictive are the terms of that license will also vary, often laying down certain terms under which news or current affairs can be broadcast. Sometimes this will include prescriptions as to what election coverage should be carried. There may also be an explicit public service component to the license - for example, obliging the licensee to carry voter education programmes.

Private print media is also extremely diverse, ranging from daily to weekly newspapers and magazines, to special-interest publications and journals, relying on advertising and sales for revenue. Even in situations where the state retains a large stake in broadcasting, the print media are usually in private hands. Even in authoritarian contexts, at least some newspapers in any country are likely to conduct serious news investigations and to comment in a reasonably sophisticated manner on political developments.

But private newspapers often still have their own political agendas, which may not necessarily be a democratic one. A notorious example was the Chilean newspaper El Mercurio, which, aided by the CIA, campaigned against the elected government in 1973 and in favour of a military coup - a clear case where the press dismally failed to promote political pluralism.

Even in mature democracies, newspapers are perhaps more likely than broadcasting stations to endorse a political candidate or party explicitly, although political culture varies from country to country. In many countries explicit editorial endorsement of a political choice would be unthinkable; in others it is regarded as normal. Journalistic ethics would still demand that news reportage of fact be strictly separated from the expression of editorial comment. Nevertheless, a chosen political agenda will almost inevitably affect the selection of which news is to be covered. The usual argument, however, is that the existence of a variety of newspapers reflecting different viewpoints will ensure a better-informed public and a free interplay of political ideas.

Media convergence means that the concepts of separate print, broadcast and online media are starting to become obsolete. Many outlets which were traditionally one thing or another are now operating across a range of mediums.

Corporate media is big business. The past half-century has witnessed the expansion of large media conglomerates

owning a wide range of media as well as other business interests (and of non-media conglomerates buying into the media industry). The result of these developments has been a media landscape that is often far removed from the ideal of the neutral "fourth estate" – press that are independent and detached from the political process. The media owners have a partisan interest in the political process in the same way that any company will have. Thus in a sense the line between private, or (supposedly) independent media, and state-owned media is blurred.

Nevertheless, private media play a crucial role in all the various aspects of media's contributions to the democratic process, including elections. Not all private media are monopolised by large conglomerates, particularly in the developing world. Those that are owned by large <u>conglomerates also exercise independence and objectivity at least some of time</u>.

In many parts of the world, community media are a rapidly growing phenomenon. Community media usually refer to, at minimum, the following characteristics:

1) Community ownership and control
2) Community service
3) Community participation
4) A non-profit business model

Community media can be print or broadcast, as well as online and may publish in local languages. Community newspapers have a long history in some contexts, with small print runs and volunteer writers and editors allowing for affordable publication. Community radio stations now proliferate as a model for promoting local-level development and civic education, spurred by liberalizing of licensing regimes and the increasing affordability of technology. Community television stations are also increasing in number. In some countries, national public broadcasters will also play a community role, carrying material produced by (or aimed at) particular local communities, or communities of interest.

The definition of 'community' is often questioned when discussing community media. What exactly is a community? Traditionally it has been assumed to refer to a geographical community. But in South Africa, for example, with one of the widest networks of community radio in the world, the term is also used to refer to a community of interest, especially among disadvantaged sectors of society. Thus there might be a 'women's community', a 'gay community' or a 'community of people with disabilities'. There may also be community media aimed at people of a certain religious faith.[ii] In the Solomon Islands, Vois Blong Mere ('Women's Voices') is a non-profit community radio organisation broadcasting for the past ten years, focusing on women's voices in all aspects of life. Virtual communities also challenge the definition of community. They are social media-based and transcend geographical boundaries, yet count as communities of sorts. Given that they often adhere to the four broad principles of community media mentioned above, some uses of social media usage can also be considered community media.

The significance of this for elections is immediately apparent. Community media, almost by definition, have a limited but loyal audience. For purposes of voter education, community media is very important, especially as they can reach sections of society that may be bypassed by more traditional media.

The terms of community broadcasting licences often prohibit explicit political campaigning. It is particularly important for a regulatory authority to monitor compliance with the terms of a licence during election periods.

Essentially, political party media fall into one of three categories, and it is for a regulatory authority to decide which:

- Propaganda sheets that do not fall under a media regulator, but may be monitored if, for example, they constitute campaign spending, which may be limited by law.
- Conventional private media that just happen to be owned by a party. In that case, they will have to conform to the prevailing standards or regulations for other private media.
- Government media, in a situation in which the ruling party and government have been intertwined. In that case, media using public funds should conform to the same standards as any other public media - which in practice probably means that they cannot campaign for the party at all.

Political party-owned media are most often newspapers. In many countries, political parties are not allowed to own broadcasting stations, since this is deemed to be an unfair allocation of a national resource - the frequency spectrum - to a narrow political interest. In Turkey, for example, the 2011 Law on Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and their Media Services, states that "A broadcasting license cannot be granted to political parties [and a range of other entities]" and that they cannot be "direct or indirect shareholders of media service providers."

Another type of media straddles the distinction between party and private media. Individual politicians, or business leaders with political aspirations, own media that appear to be regular outlets. Politician-owned media has become common practice in Ukraine, where advocates for freedom of expression are gravely concerned about pluralism in media ownership and the control of key broadcasters by wealthy political oligarchs and their families. In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi's broadcasting stations successfully promoted his ambition to become his country's Prime Minister. These politician-owned media are conventional private media that are subject to the same laws and regulations as any other, yet the potential conflict-of-interest and the question of a pluralism of views in major media are causes for concern.

Final thoughts

Starting from the conceptual paths outlined above, it is possible to establish some aspects that seem central when it comes to delimiting the objects and concepts of education communication in the current scenario of social transformations. Although the field of communication-education may present some gaps conceptual that, for now, prevent approaching and understanding in their total complexity the practices current media reports of boys, girls and young people, does contribute experiences of how to outline the keys, discussing and articulating coordinates. This is seen in the systematized trajectories from Latin America. However, consideration and dialogue with the contributions are necessary. That, from the disciplines that make up the fields of education and communication (together and separately), can enrich the knowledge of educational-communicative phenomena. This especially, if a socio-historical theoretical perspective is assumed as is the case of work presented, since education and learning have, at the base, communicative processes that they make them possible, and where language or languages are a fundamental piece.

A second key aspect is the need to incorporate into the discussion on media literacy, the subject of this article, the phenomena of learning and multimodality in language, because through them it is possible to account for the particularities presented by digital scenarios and technologies, and new media, to advance in the knowledge of media practices and social transformations that they suppose. This would allow complementing and more precisely outline the orientations. Educational programs that offer the most influential media literacy perspectives, and which, as noted, seem more relevant to policy advocacy and guidance educational and communicative on a national or regional scale.

An education that takes on the challenge of training and promoting active participation and Criticism in the media and digital scenarios that are everyday today requires the definition. Relevant skills; the most appropriate literacy processes; and above all, must take into account the experiences and media practices of the subjects in which it is sought the development of these skills.

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