

Improving the Social Studies Teacher Candidates' Skills of Analyzing the Advertisement Messages: An Action Research

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Abstract

The aim of the conducted study is to reveal the effects of the media literacy course taken by social studies teacher candidates on solving advertising messages they come across. This study is a qualitative study in the pattern of action research. The research group of the study constitutes 48 teacher candidates who are studying in the Department of Social Studies Teaching at Van Yüzüncü Yıl University and took Media Literacy course as a selective course in the 2016-2017 academic year. In the study, the results obtained from the interviews with the students was analyzed using content analysis method. When the findings obtained in this study are evaluated in generally, it is seen that, before giving any information about the media literacy course to the students in the department of social studies teaching, students interpreted detergents, cigarettes, telephone operators, razors, burgers and cakes advertisements as they saw on the screen and without questioning such as "detergent advertisements, cake advertisements, razor advertisements, etc."; after ten weeks of training related to media literacy, the same group of students have approached the same ads text more critically and questionably and have entered into an attitude that reveals the secret information contained in the ads text.

Keywords: Social studies, teacher candidates, media literacy, advertisements, messages, analysis

Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmen Adaylarının Reklam İletilerini Çözümleme Becerilerinin Geliştirilmesi: Bir Eylem Araştırması

Özet

Yapılan çalışmanın amacı sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adaylarının almış oldukları medya okuryazarlığı dersinin karşılaştıkları reklam iletilerini çözme becerilerine olan etkilerini ortaya koymaktır. Bu çalışma, eylem araştırması deseninde, nitel bir çalışmadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2016-2017 eğitim-öğretim yılında Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenliği bölümünde öğrenim gören ve Medya Okuryazarlığı dersini seçmeli ders olarak alan 48 öğretmen adayı oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada, öğrencilerle yapılan görüşmeler sonucu elde edilen veriler, içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak çözümlenmiştir. Bu araştırmada ulaşılan bulgular genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde; sosyal bilgiler öğretmenliği bölümü 2. sınıf öğrencilerine medya okuryazarlığı dersi ile ilgili herhangi bir bilgi verilmeden önce, öğrenciler izledikleri deterjan, sigara, telefon operatörü, jilet, hamburger ve kek reklamlarını ekranda gördükleri gibi, sorgulamadan “deterjan reklamı, kek reklamı, jilet reklamı vb.” şeklinde yorumladıkları; medya okuryazarlığı ile ilgili on haftalık bir eğitimden sonra aynı öğrenci grubunun aynı reklam metinlerine daha eleştirel, sorgulayıcı yaklaştıkları, reklam metinlerinin içerdikleri gizli bilgileri ortaya çıkarıcı bir tutum içine girdikleri görülmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sosyal bilgiler, öğretmen adayları, medya okuryazarlığı, reklamlar, analiz etmek

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Introduction

It is a known fact that people spare a lot of time by media means and use them effectively in today's world. A digital agency called as "We are Social" have made a report called as "Digital in 2017 Global Review" which was collected data from 238 countries and had 106 pages in cooperation with Hootsuite. It shows that 3,419 billion people connect to the internet, 2,307 billion people are in social media as active users, more people than half of the world's population has minimum one smartphone, people approximately two-thirds of world population has minimum one cellphone, more than half of the web traffic around the world is busy with cellphones, more than half of the mobile connections in the world is broadband, more people than one-fifth of the world population has done online shopping in the last 30 days. Examined the data from Turkey in the same report, it shows that 46,3 million people of the population of Turkey which is 79,4 million are in connection with internet and 42 millions of internet users are in social media actively. It also defines that the most used social media platform is Facebook with 32% and it continues respectively: WhatsApp with 24%, Facebook Messenger with 20%, Twitter with 17%, Instagram with 16%. The sorting goes on like Google+, Skype, LinkedIn, Viber and Vine, according to the report. 36 million people of social media users in Turkey have access in their mobile phones to the social media. According to the report, 95% of users' device is mobile phone and 75% of them use smartphone. While 51% of them use laptop or desktop, 98% of them watches TV and it shows that TV has still a huge part in our life. Social media users spend averagely 7 hours with computer, 3 hours connecting to the internet by mobile phones, 3 hours on social media platforms and 2 hours watching TV. According to the Web traffic of Turkey, the ratio of Web visits on computer has decreased from 65% to 36%, the visits on mobile phone has increased up to 61% by going up 33%. It shows how much mobile is important in Web traffic (<http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/internet-ve-sosyal-medya-kullanici-istatistikleri-2017/>).

These results show that how popular online activities among the today's individuals and how much they are interested in any type of media. It also can be seen as a result of the fact that media has functional roles in our life. Vural (2012:105-106), defines media as critical, social functions in democratic societies and categorizes them like the functions of notification, controlling on behalf of public opinion and criticizing, creating public opinion, training and entertaining. On the other hand, RTÜK clarifies the responsibilities of media informing and announcing, socialization, training and entertaining, protecting cultural values, creating public opinion and functions for introducing (RTÜK, 2007:26). However, Walsh (2001) states that the main goal of media is to breath rating record. The best way of breaking rating record is advertisement (Şahin, 2014). Thoman (2009) implies that all of media means are equipped by specific aims to change the opinions or to return profit for any company. Advertising and marketing provides companies to earn a lot. Advertising is the most important recipe to drive profit however it means making advertisement in every form, including putting forward to product (Namle, 2009). News and magazines published the ads on front pages and then they print the back pages for news. Advertisements are the significant parts of TV programs. The real goal of TV programs and texts on magazines to persuades us to desire what we don't need. It shows that produced media text are bought and sold as goods. Despite of considerate consumers' thoughts and expectations on creating media messages, it is important to examine that all messages are produced for institutionalized relationship of market. Media education is necessary for individuals to be able to improve the ability of perceiving, understanding, evaluating and

interpreting the messages of media they are exposed to. Carlsson et.al (2008) explains increasing of interest to radio , TV, computer , media and information literacy through the close relevance among the concepts of collaborative citizenship, democracy and media literacy. The situation inevitably has enabled to pave the way for a media education program which is integrated to the current curriculum effectively. Training for media literacy is not only a bridge providing students to gain critical abilities by its inquiry-side and also is a source training to keep the abilities which everybody needs in 21th century alive. Russian Education encyclopedia defines training of media as “studying on arrangement of mass media (newspaper, television, radio, cinema, video etc.)”. The main goals of training for media are to help new generation adapt to modern world of information, perceive the new information teach understanding it, provide people to notice its effect on psychology, try to teach to aim of non-verbal communication by technical information. To be a good media literate is not possible without putting students in the center of learning. Hart and Benson (1996) states that there are serious problems by means of defining the training activities which are done in the classroom. They think that it’s because of the fact that trainers don’t have enough qualification about current in-the-classroom activities. A media literacy lesson which teachers take in the pre-service process enables to be taken place in a creative environment in the classroom where there is a communication and both teacher and students enjoy training media. This study aims to prove the effect of the lesson of media literacy which social studies teachers take at the second grade of education faculty on the ability of interpreting to messages from advertisements.

It aims to show the effects of the lesson for media literacy that the candidates of social studies teachers have taken on the ability of analyzing to messages from ads they have met. In accordance with this purpose, the following sub-problems were sought. What are the opinions of prospective teachers;

- 1) About detergent advertising?
- 2) About cigarette advertising?
- 3) About cigarette advertising?
- 4) About the razor advertisement?
- 5) About the hamburger advertisement?
- 6) about the cake advertisement?

Method

Research Model

This study is a qualitative study in the pattern of action research. Action research is a type of research that is generally used in the field of education and preferred by teachers, consultants and managers (Derince ve Özgen, 2015:146). Action research focuses on different mechanisms of power and aims to raise awareness of participants to develop a critical awareness (Neuman, 2006:42). Mills (2011) stated the action research as a systematic process, carried out by teachers, on how education activities were conducted and how well students learned, and then carried out actions for improvement (As cited in: Gürgür, 2017:38). There are a number of steps to be followed in action research (Büyüköztürk et al, 2016). When these stages are examined:

1. Starting point-finding the problem: The main reason for the problem was that teacher candidates interpreted media messages without criticizing them. This problem was identified in the first weeks of media literacy course both as a result of the observer's observations and in the preliminary evaluations.

2. Identification of the problem: It was determined that the reason of this problem was the inadequacy of prospective teachers in interpreting media messages and lack of information.

3. Development of solutions: As a solution to this problem, it was planned to provide a media literacy training for prospective teachers.

4. Implementation of the solution and evaluation of the results: During a 10-week training period, important information about media literacy was given to the students and sample applications were made. As a result of the application, it was seen that prospective teachers evaluated media messages with a more critical understanding.

5. Sharing the result: In the first and last stages of the application, the responses of the prospective teachers to the same media messages were compared and the outcomes of the training were discussed.

In this respect, the study is designed as an action research because it tries to reveal the impact of the media literacy elective course given to the 2nd year students on the skills of interpreting messages in advertisements.

Group of the Study

The study group of this study is consisted of 48 pre-service teachers studying in the Department of Social Sciences Teaching at Van Yuzuncu Yil University in 2016-2017 academic year and choosing Media Literacy as elective courses. In the selection of the study group, non-probabilistic sampling method was used. In the non-probability sample, the chances of some elements in the universe to be included in the sample are higher or lower than others (Altunışık et al., 2002). The study group was chosen to be selected from the students who were thought to have an answer to the research problem. In the study group, male students were expressed with the letter of “m” and female students with the letter of “f”.

Table 1. Gender distribution of the students taking media literacy class

Faculty	<u>Gender</u>	
	Female	Male
Social Studies Teacher Candidates (2nd Grade)	30	18

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the study group consists of 30 female teacher candidates and 18 male teacher candidates.

Data Collection Tool

In this research, structured interview, which is one of the types of interview method, was used as data collection tool. Before and after taking the course of media literacy to students, videos about the advertising texts containing the same themes were watched. Between the first and the last application, a teaching activity including the subjects of media literacy, advertising and analysis of advertising was conducted for about 10 weeks.

A group of students who took “media literacy” as a selective class were given a 10-week training before the final test. Two lessons were held each week. After giving basic concepts about media literacy, applications related to advertising analysis were done. The content of the media literacy course given for

10 weeks was taken from Şahin's book (2014) called "Critical Media Literacy". The information about the teaching process is given in Table 2.

Table 2. The content of the class of Media Literacy

1st Week	What is media literacy? The extend of media literacy? The main principles related to media literacy
2nd Week	The main principles to be a media literate What is not media literacy? The main concepts of media literacy?
3rd Week	The essential conditions for media literacy
4th Week	What is advertisement? The main concepts of advertisements The extend of advertisement
5th Week	The functions of advertisement Types of advertisements
6th Week	The anatomy of advertisement (simplicity, propaganda techniques, writing or text, visual elements, slogans, advertising music, movement) Structural and figural components in the design of advertisements (area, line, shape-form, texture, color) Settlement elements in advertisements (range-scale, balance, integrity, rhythm, accent, harmony)
7th Week	The technique of analyzing ads with model practice Traps in ads with model practice
8th Week	The factors effecting the process of making news The main problems met in news The problem of bias in news The suggestions about consuming news
9th Week	The importance of emotions in terms of media The components moving media emotions (sexuality, violence) The activities for analysing of media messages
10th Week	The activities for analysing of media messages

When the table 2 is examined, it is seen that the theoretical information about media literacy (What is media literacy?, The extend of media literacy?, The main principles related to media literacy, The main principles to be a media literate, What is not media literacy?, The main concepts of media literacy? etc.) is given during the first 7 weeks and the activities of analyzing media contents such as advertising and news are included in the last three weeks.

Patton (2002) states that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study. The validating of study were to be ensured with researcher's proximity to the study area, face-to-face interviews with prospective teachers, obtaining in-depth information, defining the study group in detail, and applications such as collecting information during a 10-week training period. In order to ensure internal reliability in the study, firstly, the statements conveyed in the interviews were shared with the reader just below the tables without any comment. The researcher gave information about his position and purpose of the study. In addition, in order to increase the reliability of the study, data collection and analysis methods are explained in depth under separate titles. Another way to ensure reliability in the

study is to calculate the percentage of agreement. Percentage of agreement between researchers is tested with this formula; “Reliability = Number Of Agreement Statements/ Number Of Agreement Statements + Number Of Non-Agreement Statements”. The equation obtained by applying this formula is expected to yield a result of more than 70% (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001, s. 80-81). As a result of the analysis, the correlation between the researchers was determined as 0.85. (29/29+5). This result is another indication that the study is reliable.

Analysing of the Data

The expressions used by the students while interpreting the ads were analyzed by using the method of content analysis. The main purpose of content analysis is to reach the concepts and relations that can explain the collected data. In this context, data are tried to be defined through content analysis and facts that may be hidden in the data are tried to be revealed.

Coding of data: The codes and themes reached by examining the notes of the students about the advertisements are given in ANNEX-1. As a result of the examination, a total of 29 codes were reached. We tried to give each code under the title of the theme to which it was related.

Finding Themes: Based on the code, the themes have been reached which can explain the data at a general level and collect the codes in certain categories. Since the students interpreted the ads with different themes, 5 themes were explained which explained each advertisement in general.


Arrangement of Codes and Themes: The codes that were reached by the students' texts were divided into 6 themes.

Interpretation of the Findings: In this last stage, comprehensive interpretations were made to give meaning to the data collected, to explain the relationships between the findings, to specify cause-effect relationships, to draw some conclusions from the findings and to reveal the importance of the results obtained.

The Findings


In this section, the findings received according to participants' opinions are interpreted by analyzing.

Table 3. Pre-service teachers' opinions about the ads for detergent

The type of ads	Before the training of media literacy		After the training of media literacy	
	One of the ads of detergent	8f 9m	Detergent identified with the woman	12m 9f
	The mother playing in the ads	17f 8m	The visual and text of the ad is not simple	2f -
	Well-washing of detergent	4f -	The impression that the detergent was washed clean with a White laundry object	7f 4m
	The mother doing cleaning	- 3m	Playing one of the public in commercials to attract attention	6f 6m


In table 3, there are frequency of the answers which are given the questions of “Can you tell us what you see?” after students were watched an old detergent ad. Before the training of media literacy, it is seen that students define what they see as “an ad of detergent or a woman playing in the ad”. After the training of media literacy which had lasted for 10 weeks, students answer the question of “what they see in the ad?” like “Detergent identified with the woman, the visual and text of the ad is not simple, the impression that the detergent was washed clean with a white laundry object, playing one of the public in ads to attract attention”. It can be said that after the media literacy course, students are more critical of an advertisement they are watching and may have different messages in the background of the ad message.

Table 4. Pre-service teachers’ opinions about the ad of cigarette

The type of ad	Before the training of media literacy		After the training of media literacy	
The ad of cigarette 	The ad of cigarette	15f 12m	There is a hidden figure of woman on the leg of the camel	6f 3m
	A pocket of cigarette on which there is a Picture of camel	14f 4m	An ad covering hidden messages	11f 8m
	An ad encouraging to smoking	2f 2m	An ad of cigarette on which there is a Picture of camel	5f -
			An ad encouraging to smoking	3f 6m


In table 4, after being watched a commercial video about a brand of cigarette, the frequency for the answers of the question of “Can you tell us what you see on the pocket of the cigarette?” is given. Most of the students answers the question like “I see an ad of cigarette or a pocket of cigarette on which there is a picture of camel.” before the training of media literacy. After the training of media literacy, they answer to the same question like “There is a hidden figure of woman on the leg of the camel, an ad covering hidden messages, an ad encouraging to smoking.”.

Table 5. Pre- services teachers’ opinions about an advertisement of telephone carrier

The type of ad	Before the training of media literacy		After the training of media literacy	
An ad of telephone carrier 	The ad of Türk Telekom and Ronaldo plays it	23f 12m	A famous person is played for building trust.	28f 11m
	The speed of Ronaldo and network of TT are associated.	8f 2m	The speed of Ronaldo and network of TT are associated	1f 8m


In table 5, after being watched a commercial video about a telephone carrier, the frequency for the answers of the question of “Can you tell us what you see in this ad?” is given. Before the training of media literacy, most of the students answers like “the ad of Türk Telekom and Ronaldo plays it. After the training of media literacy, most of them answers to the same question like “A famous person is played in it for building trust.”

Table 6. Pre-service teachers’ opinions about an advertisement of razor

The type of ad	Before the training of media literacy		After the training of media literacy	
An ad of Razor 	The ad of razor which Messi plays	26f 12m	A famous person is played for building trust.	30f 18m
	A popular person is played in the ad	5f 6m		

In table 6, after being watched a commercial video about a razor, the frequency for the answers of the question of “Can you tell us what you see in this ad?” is given. Before the training of media literacy, most of the students answers like “The ad of razor which Messi plays. After the training of media literacy, it is seen that they answer to the question like “I recognize that a famous person is played in the ad for building trust.”


Table 7. Pre-service teachers’ opinions about an advertisement of hamburger

The type of ad	Before the training of media literacy		After the training of media literacy	
 The Advertisement of hamburger	The ad of hamburger	10f 9m	There are tricks in the ad to show the product better	14f 6m
	An ad which appetizing	5f 3m	Only the full side of the product is showed.	11f 3m
	A chock full hamburger	13f 2m	An ad encouraging to obesity	5f 4m
	Encouraging to the products of Fast Food	3f 4m		

In table 7, after being watched a commercial video about a hamburger, the frequency for the answers of the question of “Can you tell us what you see in this ad?” is given. Before the training of media literacy, most of the students answers like “I see the ad of hamburger, an ad which appetizing, a chock full hamburger, encouraging to the products of fast Food.” After the training of media literacy, it is seen that they answer to the same question like “I can that there are tricks in the advertisement to show the

product better, only the full side of the product is showed, these kinds of ads encourage people to obesity.”

Table 8. Pre-service teachers' opinions about an advertisement of cake

The type of ad	Before the training of media literacy		After the training of media literacy	
<p>The Ad of Cake</p> 	The ad of cake	15k 12e	Additive is used to show the product fresher, which is a trick of ad	30k 18e
	Cream is used to demonstrate the cake better	12k 7e		

In table 8, after being watched a commercial video about a cake, the frequency for the answers of the question of “Can you tell us what you see in this picture?” is given. Before the media literacy training, most of the students answers like “I see the ad of cake, cream is used to demonstrate the cake better.” After the training of media literacy, it is seen that they answer to the same question like “Additive is used to show the product fresher, which is a trick of ads.

Discussion and the Results

One of the most important functions of the media is advertising or product marketing. Advertising, which can also be considered as a communication process, is to transfer the information about goods, services or a specific brand in the first stage to the target masses and to create a new and desired behavior, to strengthen the feelings and also to improve the negative perceptions of the people who have a positive perspective towards the product. Target (Elden, 2004). It is a known fact that today's advertising companies, which are prepared with great professionalism, are very effective on human perception. It is the most important indicator of the effect of advertising messages on human perception. This result suggests that all media messages should be queried. Querying media messages in the critical approach to is a skill that can be gained through media literacy training. Media literacy is also an important qualification that gives individuals the ability to perceive, understand, evaluate and interpret media messages they are exposed to in their daily lives. This study aims to reveal the effects of the media literacy course which the teacher candidates of Social Studies who will perform the teaching profession in the future takes at the faculty on the skills of analyzing the advertising messages. When the findings are evaluated, before the course of media literacy is given to 2nd grade students of Teaching Social Studies Faculty, the students interpret the advertisements of detergent, cigarette, telephone carrier, razor, hamburger and cake like “the advertisement of cake, the advertisement of cigarette etc.” as it is seen in the screen and unquestioningly. After the 10-week training of media literacy, the same group of students interprets the same advertisements more critical, interrogator and they try reveal hidden messages in the ads. Examined the literature, there are studies which are done with different level of students groups and support this results. When the literature is examined it seen many studies that support the benefit of the

media literacy course. Atmaca (2016) in his study “The Effects of Media Literacy Course on Teacher Candidates” concluded that the total number of words (5099) used by the prospective teachers who took media literacy courses to answer open-ended questions was almost twice that of the total number of words (2915) used by the prospective teachers who did not take this course. İlhan and Aydoğdu (2015) concluded from their studies “Media Literacy Course and Its Effects on the New Media Perception” that the media literacy course given to primary school students is useful and necessary for evaluating the content of internet media and that students gain a critical perspective against the new media and their content. Görmez (2014) in the “Media literacy levels of secondary school students” study concluded that students attending Media Literacy course have higher acquisition level on the outcomes of the target units (What is Communication? Mass Communication, Media, Television, Newspaper and the Internet) than those who did not attend this course, but no difference found in terms acquisition of Internet Unit outcomes between two student groups. Koçak (2011) states in his study which he did to identify 6th and 7th grade students’ perceptions about the class of media literacy that the students generally perceive media literacy in positive way, their perception didn’t show differentiation according to their schools however, with the factor of the school, there are some meaningful diversity related to media, the practice of media literacy training, the perception of media literacy training and the effects of media literacy. Ankaraligil (2009), in his research which he made for analyzing the relationship between 6th and 7th grade students’ critical thinking skill and media literacy, defines that the students taking media literacy course have more level of critical thinking skill than those who didn’t and the girls have more level of critical thinking skill than boys in the primary schools. Kartal (2007) has resulted in his study which is done in order to determine the effect of media literacy training given to 10th grade students on the perception of the messages in TV series, that the training of media literacy improves the awareness of students towards to media messages, gains a critical perspective and the skill for evaluating by analyzing against to media messages.

These results indicate that media literacy education offers positive contributions to individuals' ability to interpret media messages. It is a proposal that the media literacy course which is evaluated within the scope of lifelong learning should not be limited to a few hours of lessons in secondary schools, and this course should be considered as one of the compulsory courses that should be taught in all departments and stages of higher education by taking into account the changing conditions of the day throughout the student's life. In addition, the media environment in which the media literacy course will be taught is also very important. The classroom environment in which this course will be given should have a design suitable for discussion. Most importantly, there should be all kinds of mass communication tools within the classroom that both the prospective teacher and the instructor can reach. The lack of a well-equipped classroom for media literacy is an important problem.

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