

AN ANALYSIS OF GERMAN-LANGUAGE MEDIA TEXTS ON TOPICS INVOLVING SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

Anastasia LEVITSKAYA – Lyudmila SELIVERSTOVA



Dr. Anastasia Levitskaya, PhD.
Faculty of Humanities
Taganrog Management and Economics Institute
Petrovskaya 45
349000 Taganrog
Russian Federation
a.levitskaya@tmei.ru

Anastasia Levitskaya is the member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education and the Vice Rector for Research of the Taganrog Management and Economics Institute. Her postdoctoral affiliations include being Guest Professor and visiting senior research scholar at the University of Central Florida (under the Fulbright grant programme, 2003 – 2004), the Humboldt University (Berlin, Germany, 2011, grant DAAD) and the Mainz University (2013). She is the author of 100 scholarly articles and 7 books about media culture, media literacy education and film studies.



Dr. Lyudmila Seliverstova, PhD.
Faculty of Humanities
Taganrog Management and Economics Institute
Petrovskaya 45
349000 Taganrog
Russian Federation
Seliverstova@tmei.ru

Lyudmila Seliverstova is an Associate Professor at the Taganrog Management and Economics Institute. She was the member of scientific groups in various research projects related to media and communication. Her research interests include media linguistics, media culture and mass communications. She is the author or co-author of 30 scientific articles and 3 books about media culture, media literacy education and film studies.

ABSTRACT:

The study offers a hermeneutic analysis of German-language media texts on topics regarding schools and students (German films and media contents published on websites of general interest, on news portals and in specialised online magazines, as well as on Internet portals specifically intended for teachers and teachers' personal blogs). These media texts were examined in terms of representation of image of the main participants in the educational process - the teacher and the student, as well as the educational institution as a whole - school and/or university. The analysis indicates a change in the educational paradigm in (late) modern Germany, which leads to a change in the roles of participants in the educational process, as reflected in media texts of all genres and forms, including those published on the Internet. The modern teacher is assigned the role of a facilitator, consultant and moderator, who accompanies and guides the student, but not a leader who students follow, as it used to be earlier. A common set of topical issues in the field of education is discussed in relation to the German-speaking cinema and the Internet space. However, media form predominantly negative content with regard to teachers and school education; specialised magazines focused on a certain circle of readers (parents, teachers, etc.) mainly discuss the positive aspects of the learning process; teachers in their blogs discuss the current issues, sharing experiences and effective work practices with their students.

KEY WORDS:

Germany, hermeneutic analysis, the Internet, media text, school, student, teacher, university

Introduction

The role of media in modern society is difficult to overestimate. Today, a global information infrastructure provides access to information, its collection, processing and transmission through modern

telecommunications. Many audio-visual media, as a universal communication environment, are distinguished by a high level of interactivity, speed of information exchange, its availability and ease of transmission. Media in the (late) modern world are not only a convenient and accessible source of information but also, more importantly, the means of accessing knowledge and shaping society as a whole, along with individuals' attitudes towards the reality. Thus, in addition to fulfilling the main communicative and informational functions, media also perform educational and actuating functions. In this regard, it is important to consider audio-visual media content on the topics related to schools and universities. This article aims to present an analysis of German-language media texts on the above-mentioned set of problems.

Theoretical Outlines

Various kinds of analyses of the Internet-distributed media texts on schools and student themes are present in several research inquiries.¹ The image of a teacher as a reflection of the crisis of (late) modern society in terms of German-written literature is analysed by K. Emeis,² in terms of literary texts and modern German cinema by G. Helmes,³ G. Rinke,⁴ M. Friedrichsen⁵ and others. It should be noted that the image of a teacher in the German Internet space also deserves attention and is of interest in many social, cultural and ideological contexts.

According to the analysis of German novels on the topic of school, experts observe the loss of teachers' importance in modern society and the decline in their authority compared to literary works written at the beginning of the 20th century.⁶ In late modern German-written media products – books, films and radio or television programmes created after 2000 – emphasis has shifted from the student, who used to be the one suffering from the teacher's injustice, to the teacher as a victim.⁷ Confirmation of this fact can be easily found on the Internet. In one of the online issues of the magazine *Der Spiegel*, a teacher with nine years of experience at the college of the federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia speaks frankly about sexism, homophobia and aggression expressed by adolescents against teachers as a problem of the modern young generation that does not have the slightest respect for teachers.⁸ This issue becomes so obvious that the relevant authorities are forced to respond to it. For example, the Ministries of School Education of the Federal Lands of Thuringia⁹ and North-Rhine Westphalia¹⁰ have published on their official websites recommendations for teachers on how to behave in situations involving psychological pressure that often transforms to school students' harassment

1 Compare to: LEVITSKAYA, A., GORBATKOVA, O., SELIVERSTOVA, L.: Hermeneutic Analysis of Media Texts of the Russian Internet (1995–2017) on School and University Topics. In *Distance and Virtual Education*, 2018, Vol. 121, No. 1, p. 84–93; MACHENIN, A.: The Collective Image of the School Teacher Reflected in TV/Film/Internet Media Space. In *Media Education*, 2016, Vol. 50, No. 3, p. 23–48; MIKHALEVA, G.: Hermeneutic Analysis of Internet Sites of English-Speaking Countries about School and University. In *Media Education*, 2018, Vol. 58, No. 3, p. 119–128.

2 EMEIS, K.: *Schul-Aufgabe. Der Lehrer als Figur der Krise in der deutschen Literatur zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts*. Würzburg: Königshausen u. Neumann, 2017, p. 3.

3 HELMES, G.: "Ich hab' echt gedacht, der Beruf past zu mir. Aber weit du was: Ich kann Kinder nicht ausstehen!" Überlegungen zu neueren und neuesten deutschsprachigen Fernseh – und Spielfilmen zu den Themen "Lehrersein" und "Schule". In HELMES, G., RINKE, G. (eds.): *Gescheit, gescheitert, gescheitert? Das zeitgenössische Bild von Schule und Lehrern in Literatur und Medien*. Hamburg: Igel Verlag, 2016, p. 157.

4 RINKE, G.: LehreraufFluchtwegen. In HELMES, G., RINKE, G. (eds.): *Gescheit, gescheitert, gescheitert? Das zeitgenössische Bild von Schule und Lehrern in Literatur und Medien*. Hamburg: Igel Verlag, 2016, p. 137.

5 FRIEDRICHSEN, M.: "Er kennt seine Grenzen – und rennt drüber." Stefan Vollmer aus Der Lehrer als Vorbild eines neuen medialen Lehrertyps? In HELMES, G., RINKE, G. (eds.): *Gescheit, gescheitert, gescheitert? Das zeitgenössische Bild von Schule und Lehrern in Literatur und Medien*. Hamburg: Igel Verlag, 2016, p. 237.

6 THEELE, I.: "Fressfeind" war gestern. Vom Wandel der Lehrerfigur im aktuellen Adoleszenroman. In HELMES, G., RINKE, G. (eds.): *Gescheit, gescheitert, gescheitert? Das zeitgenössische Bild von Schule und Lehrern in Literatur und Medien*. Hamburg: Igel Verlag, 2016, p. 113.

7 SCHWEIKART, R.: Von Menschen, die große Pausen brauchen. In ZABKA, T., CAPPELMANN, I. (eds.): *Schule in den neueren Kinder – und Jugendliteratur*. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 2008, p. 27.

8 *Eine Lehrerin über ihren Alltag am Berufskolleg*. Released on 13th September 2018. [online]. [2018-09-13]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/karriere/jobprotokoll-lehrerin-berichtet-ueber-alltag-am-berufskolleg-a-1227558.html>>.

9 *Thüringer Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport*. [online]. [2018-09-13]. Available at: <<https://www.thueringen.de/th2/tmbjs/index.aspx>>.

10 *Ministerium für Schule und Bildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen*. [online]. [2018-09-13]. Available at: <<https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/docs/bp/index.html>>.

of teachers on the Internet/cyberbullying/mobbing.¹¹ The discussion about Internet mobbing was largely provoked by the German social media platform in the form of the youth interactive magazine *Spickmich*¹², created in 2007 by three students from Cologne. This online resource gave students the opportunity to evaluate their teachers and schools. The evaluation was anonymous; according to the criteria of "readiness for a lesson", "fairness of assessments", "humanity", as well as "appearance", "demeanour", etc., on a scale from 1 to 6. Any teacher could get results of their evaluation upon request. Designed as a feedback channel, the portal became incredibly popular: in the first year and a half of its existence, the number of registered users reached 800,000. However, this popularity turned into scandalous cases. Many teachers felt their rights were violated by this kind of assessment procedure. Some of them, having received low rating on the website, filed a complaint to the court; however, the court did not consider the procedure of evaluation present on the website offensive and rejected the complaint.¹³ Besides *Spickmich*, the portal *Schulradar* appeared, thanks to which parents had the opportunity to vote for their children's schools. This site was intended to help parents choose an educational institution for further education after primary school. Schools were assessed according to the following criteria: "focus on the personality's development", "the school's building and facilities", "teaching faculty", "school management", "psychological climate at the school" and "types of extracurricular activities".¹⁴ In August 2014, without any formal explanation of the reasons, both platforms were closed.

The efforts to define the actual criteria for assessing teachers have not been abandoned by the expert community; the topic is still addressed by many scholars, including O. Köller, Professor at the University of Cologne, and his colleague from the University of Oldenburg, G. Meyer. They propose the "good teacher" model. The authors are aware that it is essentially impossible to formulate an unequivocal answer to the question of what constitutes a "good teacher".¹⁵ According to their model, a "good teacher":

- seeks to create strong working relationships with their students;
- knows how to use didactic and methodological tools;
- combines deep scientific knowledge and a high level of competence in the subject taught;
- tries to develop democratic culture in the educational process (in line with the understanding of J. Dewey and W. Klafki);
- combines theory and practice in the classroom and exhibits "pedagogical tact" in the understanding of J. F. Herbart;
- realises that some tasks may contain contradictions and tries to balance them;
- respects pupils and demands respect for themselves and for each other;
- enjoys working in a team and feels like a member of the professional community;
- upgrades qualifications and is willing to develop their own skills;
- develops political professional understanding.¹⁶

The question of what kind of a teacher can be considered a good one is also raised by H. Giesecke,¹⁷ who follows the transformation of the image of a "good teacher" in Germany from an 'idealistic' image dating back to the ideas of Pestalozzi from the beginning of the World War I, through the mid-1960s, the 'technocratic' im-

11 *Handlungsempfehlungen. Mobbing von Lehrkräften im Internet. Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Hrsg.)*. [online]. [2018-12-13]. Available at: <http://www.jugendnetz-berlin.de/de-wAssets/docs/05ratundhilfe/Handlungsempfehlungen_Mobbing.pdf>.

12 *Spickmich* [online]. [2018-09-13]. Available at: <<http://www.spickmich.de/>>.

13 *Legal Act No. VIZR 196/08*. Released on 23rd July 2009. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://juris.bundesgerichtshof.de/cgi-bin/rechtsprechung/document.py?Gericht=bgh&Art=en&Datum=2009-6-23&nr=48601&pos=16&anz=23>>.

14 FLOHR, M.: *Das neue Schulradar. Spickmich für Mama und Papa*. Released on 8th April 2008. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/das-neue-schulradar-spickmich-fuer-mama-und-papa-a-545901.html>>.

15 KÖLLER, O., MEYER, H.: *Was ist eine gute Lehrerin / ein guter Lehrer?* Berlin: Cornelsen Stiftung Lehren und Lernen, 2013, p. 31.

16 KÖLLER, O., MEYER, H.: *Was ist eine gute Lehrerin / ein guter Lehrer?* Berlin: Cornelsen Stiftung Lehren und Lernen, 2013, p. 25.

17 GIESECKE, H.: Gute Lehrer – schlechte Lehrer. In OHIDY, A., TERHARD, E., ZSOLNAI, J. (eds.): *Lehrerbild und Lehrerbildung. Praxis und Perspektiven der Lehrerausbildung in Deutschland und Ungarn*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007, p. 127–134.

age in the 1970s – 1980s, and the ‘socio-pedagogical’ image from the mid-1990s, till present.¹⁸ From the position of the ‘idealistic’ approach, being a teacher is not a profession, but a calling that not everybody is meant to experience. According to the ‘technocratic’ principle, if you want to become a teacher, you can. To do so, it is enough to get proper training. The ‘socio-pedagogical’ approach presupposes giving up or at least softening the coercive nature of the educational process at schools by shifting priorities: the instruction becomes a secondary concern, and the primary one is the perception of the student as a whole person, with their problems and concerns. A modern teacher plays the role of an advisor and moderator, who accompanies and guides students, not a leader who students follow (like before). In Giesecke’s study, the criteria for assessing the work of a teacher from the students’ point of view almost coincide with those used for teachers’ evaluation on the website *Spikmich*. According to H. Giesecke, only three aspects are important for the student: whether the teacher is an expert in the discipline taught, whether they are able to explain the material, and whether their relationships with students are positive. For the school administration, a good teacher is the one who children and parents are satisfied with. For parents, a good teacher is the one that does not wear down their children with homework and gives good grades. As a result, the author comes to the conclusion that the only criteria for the efficient teacher’s work are the level of the class’s achievement in their subject and the progress of individual students.¹⁹

Along with experts, teachers themselves reflect on the transformation of the teacher’s profession on the pages of online media. Thus, in an interview, two teachers of different generations, both of them experienced in teaching at secondary grammar schools (67-year-old Michael Schlenker and 31-year-old Sandra Gesner) confirm the dramatic changes in school education that have been going on in the last 30 – 40 years. If the previous generations of teachers came to school with a desire to change the world, now teaching the subject is a priority. The current generation of schoolchildren is flexible, ready to adapt to various conditions, and does not try to fight against the rules to change them. The role of the teacher has changed as well: if the teacher used to be a guide leading their students to the summit of knowledge, a competent leader along the way, an expert responsible for their students, then today a modern teacher is only an “attendant”, walking alongside but letting the student to autonomously choose the path to reaching their goals. In accordance with the role, the relationship pattern between the teacher and students (“I will lead you to the goal”) has changed to the partnership pattern (“We will arrive at our goal together”). The main task of the school as an educational institution has also changed. Today it is important not to disseminate knowledge as such, but rather to make sure the students are interested in obtaining it.²⁰

It would seem that all changes in the educational environment, due to the requirements of the time, should lead to the best; however, the prestige of the teaching profession and the status of a teacher in today’s German society are invariably decreasing. In 2013, based on the initiative of the UK Public Opinion Research Institute, an online survey was conducted amongst citizens of 21 countries, including China, the United States and several European countries. According to the survey, 40% of Germans are convinced that modern teachers are not respected by school students. German citizens (as compared to other Europeans) least of all believe that teachers in schools are able to provide a good level of education. Less than 20% of the respondents would recommend their children to become a teacher, whose status is compared with the profession of a social worker. In comparison, teachers are most respected in China, where to be a teacher is as prestigious as to be a doctor.²¹

18 GIESECKE, H.: Gute Lehrer – schlechte Lehrer. In OHIDY, A., TERHARD, E., ZSOLNAI, J. (eds.): *Lehrerbild und Lehrerbildung. Praxis und Perspektiven der Lehrerausbildung in Deutschland und Ungarn*. Wiesbaden : VSVerlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007, p. 129.

19 GIESECKE, H.: Gute Lehrer – schlechte Lehrer. In OHIDY, A., TERHARD, E., ZSOLNAI, J. (eds.): *Lehrerbild und Lehrerbildung. Praxis und Perspektiven der Lehrerausbildung in Deutschland und Ungarn*. Wiesbaden : VSVerlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007, p. 131.

20 WELZHOFER, L.: *Der Lehrer – Dein Freund und Helfer. Man muss es gut mit Schülern meinen*. Released on 16th September 2015. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.stuttgarter-nachrichten.de/inhalt.der-lehrer-dein-freund-und-helfer-man-muss-es-gut-mit-schuelern-meinen.9ea45f09-b3cb-4d3c-9115-f9242b207713.html>>.

21 GREINER, L.: *Weltweite Umfrage zu Status. Lehrer werden in Deutschland kaum respektiert*. Released on 3rd October 2013. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/weltweite-umfrage-deutsche-lehrer-werden-kaum-respektiert-a-925826.html>>.

Certainly, the results of the online survey cannot be seen as 100% objective, since they were obtained through continuous sampling without regard to gender, age, etc. However, they do demonstrate the general tendency of the society’s attitude towards the phenomenon in question. The question arises – what is the reason for the diminishing status and weakened prestige of the teaching profession in late modern German society? The more so, because this problem is not new: even magazines’ headlines published 20 years ago wrote about the loss of the teachers’ authority amongst schoolchildren.

Perhaps this is, amongst other things, due to the unjustifiably high demands placed on teachers by today’s society, as many researchers agree. Therefore, H. Giesecke notes that, unlike in other professions, it is impossible to lighten a teacher’s workload with the help of IT technologies. On the contrary, with the development of the Internet, psychological and physical burden on teachers has only increased, as evidenced by frequent cases of professional burnout, retirement due to illness before the due date, etc.²² The image of a teacher, who faces excessive demands from students, their parents and the society as a whole, has become typical in modern media of all genres and types.²³

Materials and Methods

The material of the study consists of German media texts, whose stories contain the topics concerning school and/or university. The analysed materials include contemporary German films; furthermore, the weekly editions of *Stern*,²⁴ *Der Spiegel*²⁵ and *Focus*²⁶ are analysed, as well as a magazine targeted at parents *Schule*,²⁷ teachers’ personal blogs named *Kreide fressen*²⁸ and *Bildungslücken*,²⁹ along with the Internet portal *Vielfalt lernen*,³⁰ sponsored by the Stiftung Bertelsmann, the portal *Der Lehrerfreund*³¹ and others.

As the main method of inquiry, a comparative hermeneutic analysis of the German media texts relating to this topic (including an analysis of stereotypes, ideological analysis, identification analysis, iconographic analysis, etc.) is used. In the process of the analysis, we rely on the methodology proposed by A. Silberblatt,³² J. Potter,³³ U. Eco³⁴ and A. Fedorov,³⁵ and on such key terms of media education as “media agencies”, “media categories”, “media technologies”, “media languages”, “media representations” and “media audiences”,³⁶ since all these concepts are directly related to the hermeneutic analysis of media texts.

22 GIESECKE, H.: Gute Lehrer – schlechte Lehrer. In OHIDY, A., TERHARD, E., ZSOLNAI, J. (eds.): *Lehrerbild und Lehrerbildung. Praxis und Perspektiven der Lehrerausbildung in Deutschland und Ungarn*. Wiesbaden : VSVerlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007, p. 128.

23 SCHWEIKART, R.: Von Menschen, die große Pausen brauchen. In ZABKA, T., CAPPELMANN, I. (eds.): *Schule in den neueren Kinder – und Jugendliteratur*. Baltmannsweiler : Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 2008, p. 27.

24 *Stern*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.stern.de/>>.

25 *Der Spiegel*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/>>.

26 *Focus*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.focus.de/>>.

27 *Magazin Schule Online*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/>>.

28 *Kreide fressen*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.kreidefressen.de/>>.

29 *Bildungsluecken*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://bildungsluecken.net/>>.

30 *Vielfalt lernen*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.vielfalt-lernen.de/>>.

31 *Der Lehrerfreund*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.lehrerfreund.de/>>.

32 SILVERBLATT, A.: *Media Literacy*. Westport, Connecticut, London : Praeger, 2001, p. 4.

33 POTTER, W. J.: *Media Literacy*. Thousand Oaks, London : Sage Publications, 2001, p. 5.

34 ECO, U.: *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. St. Petersburg : Simpozium, 2005, p. 3.

35 Compare to: FEDOROV, A.: *Analysis of Audiovisual Media Texts*. Moscow : Information for All, 2012, p. 6; FEDOROV, A., LEVITSKAYA, A.: Comparative Analysis of the Development of Mass Media Education in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Countries. In *Media Education*, 2018, Vol. 58, No. 3, p. 39-62; FEDOROV, A., LEVITSKAYA, A.: Mass Media Literacy Education in Modern Russia. In *Media Education*, 2018, Vol. 57, No. 2, p. 6-23; FEDOROV, A., LEVITSKAYA, A.: Media Literacy Education and Mass Media Education in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In *Media Education*, 2018, Vol. 56, No. 1, p. 7-17; FEDOROV, A., LEVITSKAYA, A., CORBATKOVA, O.: The Structural Model of the Contents of Audiovisual Media Texts on School and University Topic. In *Media Education*, 2018, Vol. 56, No. 1, p. 197-203.

36 BAZALGETTE, C.: Key Aspects of Media Education. In ALVORADO, M., BOYD-BARRETT, O. (eds.): *Media Education*. London : British Film Institute, 1992, p. 189.

Late Modern German Cinema about Schools and Universities

The theme of the possibility and justifiability of the domination of some people over others is a red thread through the history of German cinema of all periods, starting from the post-war period and leaving almost no room for modern filmmakers. In the film *Die Welle* (in English *The Wave*, 2008, director Dennis Gansel), German students discuss social conditions leading to totalitarianism and pose the question: is dictatorship possible in Germany? Absolutely convinced that “*dictatorship in Germany is no longer possible, we are too clever for that*”, the students voluntarily become participants in an experiment that results in a positive, yet shocking answer: yes, it is possible.

The main protagonist of the film is Wenger, a physical education teacher who enjoys the trust and respect of his students, is very democratic, wears a black rocker T-shirt, and has a tattoo and a short haircut – a kind of an anti-stereotypical image of a teacher wearing a suit and tie. Within a few days, the teacher Wenger fills the “*vacuum in the life of teenagers*” with the help of “*fascist tricks*”³⁷ – satisfies their need to be part of a certain society where you are accepted and supported just the way you are. First, Wenger offers himself as a leader and indicates his leading role by the fact that the members of the group have to address him as Mr. Wenger. Then he implements the principle of “*power through discipline*”, clearly stating the rules of the game; those who do not follow them, should leave.

There is no room for dissent. He then sits down weaker pupils with stronger pupils and suggests that everyone should change into the same white T-shirts. The uniform levels social differences and individuality, helps to identify ‘our own’ amongst the ‘others’. Having added a common symbolism and greeting to all that, step by step the teacher creates his own totalitarian society. The victims cannot be avoided; they include the teacher himself, a fanatical student devoted to his master Wenger and a classmate shot by him. In one of the film’s final shots, the teacher’s face is shown in a close-up – the face of the whole Germany, which suddenly woke up from the horror of the war years. The mouth of one of the heroes, a teenager of Turkish origin, conveys another very important message to the viewer; that one cannot live by guilt alone, that one should “*let the Germans be proud of their country, otherwise it will come back as a boomerang and they will hate the others*”. This film shows the desire of German filmmakers to rethink the causes and consequences of the national tragedy.

The film *Die Welle* (*The Wave*) was included in the 25 Best Films about School according to the rating of the German youth magazine *Unicum*,³⁸ along with *Feuerzangenbowle* (in English *Fire Tong Punch*, 1944, director Helmut Weiss, 1970, director Helmut Käutner), *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer* (*Flying Class*, 1954, director Kurt Hoffman, 1973, director Werner Jacobs, 2003 director Tomy Wigand), *Guten Morgen, Herr Grothe* (*Good Morning, Mr. Grothe*, 2007, director Lars Kraume), *Jonas* (2012, director Robert Wilde) and *Fack ju Göthe* (intentional misspelling of *Fuck you, Goethe*/ international title *Suck Me Shakespeer*, 2013, 2015 and 2017, director Bora Dağtekin). The series *Unser Lehrer Doktor Specht* (*Our Teacher, Doctor Specht*, 1990, director Werner Masten (Episodes 1–57), Vera Loebner (Episodes 58–63) und Karin Hercher (Episodes 64–70)) on ZDF and *Der Lehrer* (*The Teacher*, 2012, director Christoph Schnee) on RTL became particularly popular amongst viewers.

The lead protagonist of *Guten Morgen, Herr Grothe* (*Good Morning, Mr. Grothe*, 2007, director Lars Kraume) is 37-year-old Michael Grothe, a German language teacher affiliated with an ordinary Berlin secondary grammar school. He is committed to his profession; his work and the problems of students take up all his time, and therefore he has no personal life. He still attempts to help his student Niko, a frustrated aggressive teenager, while other colleagues have long ago put him in the category of ‘hopeless’. Niko is not the only complicated student of the class; many of the boys live in socially disadvantaged families, in families of

migrants, etc. Grothe is a controversial character who places excessive demands on himself as a teacher and at the same time an irresponsible father. He gives all his strength to Niko, while his own son is brought up in his absence.

The drama *Lehrerin* (*Teacher*, 2011 director Tim Trageser) tells a story about a young educator Katja Schleper, a victim of armed aggression of a schoolboy. Katja sustains a serious injury, and with her, haunted by severe psychological trauma, also other 25 students of her class and the teaching staff of the school. Katja’s class is then led by her friend, a biology teacher Andrea Libnitz, who tries to help the children cope with the difficult life situation. On the day of the tragedy Andrea planned to quit her job and thus put an end to her teaching career; however, after 13 tiring years of working in school, the heroine of the film rekindles her passion for the profession and together with the students of the class returns to normal life.

The teacher is in the victim role also in the movie *Spieltrieb* (*Player’s Instinct*, 2013, director Gregor Schnitzler). The protagonists of the film are 15-year-old Ada and barely legal Alev who start the game ‘Know Yourself’ with a teacher named Smootek. Alev, a skilled manipulator and schemer, encourages his intellectually gifted and lonely classmate Ada to seduce the teacher with the purpose of blackmailing him. However, the teenagers do not blackmail for the sake of blackmail; they want to ‘free’ the teacher and “*make him happy*”, to “*give him a chance to free himself from the shackles of old life or finally destroy it*”. The game gets out of control, and all the participants find themselves in the courtroom. The author of the film reflects on the very topical issue of the late modern world; whether freedom can be imposed against desire.

Amongst the other German films about the school environment, we believe *Die Konferenz* (*The Conference*, 2004, director Niki Stein) and *Frau Müller muss weg* (*Mrs. Müller has to leave*, 2015, director Sönke Wortmann) are especially important. In both films, the place of action is a closed school space. In *Die Konferenz* (*The Conference*) it is the hall of the school library, where a cold winter evening gathers nine teachers to decide the fate of a student accused of attempted rape of a 17-year-old classmate. Slowly abandoning the main topic of the discussion, the teachers switch to their own differences. The author of the movie raises the question of why society members unreasonably expect teachers to solve problems that they cannot solve themselves at home, in their families.³⁹

The same question is asked by the film *Frau Müller muss weg* (*Mrs. Müller Has to Leave*), where parents of ‘difficult’ junior grade children come to school with the sole intention of convincing the teacher to give up the class to another teacher, and they are absolutely certain that this is the only correct solution to their problems. The attitude towards the school as a service sector is clearly seen in the teacher’s remark: “*I am a public servant, but not a servant*”. At the end of the story, parents change their minds and persuade Mrs. Müller to leave the classroom management behind. Having received a vote of confidence in her pedagogical experience and skills, the teacher gives her consent, and the parents get an impulse to realise the existing problems and the possibility to solve them.

The aforementioned film *Suck Me Shakespeer*, which became the leader of the box office in Germany in 2013, was controversially criticised by the press, but amongst the positive moments was noted the successful decision of the director to transfer to the screen the German youth’s language, to exactly reproduce the slang and manners of speech of modern German teenagers.⁴⁰ The comedy’s story continued in the films of the same name in 2015 and 2018, but, according to critics, each subsequent version was worse than the previous one. The analysis of late modern German films on the subject of school and university allows us to structure their main parameters as follows:

Historical context (the specifics of the historical period of creation of media texts, the market conditions that contributed to the conception, the process of creation of media texts, and the degree of influence of the events of that time on media texts)

37 PROBST, M.: *Macht durch Handeln!* Released on 13th March 2008. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.zeit.de/2008/12/Film-Die-Welle>>.

38 *Unicum*. [online]. [2018-08-01]. Available at: <<https://www.unicum.de/>>.

39 KEGEL, S.: *Die neun Geschworenen*. Released on 2nd April 2005. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/kino/fernsehen-die-neun-geschworenen-1214317.html>>.

40 USLAR, M.: *Geisterkrank!* Released on 12th May 2013. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.zeit.de/2013/50/teenagerkomodie-fack-ju-goethe-sprachkritik/komplettansicht>.

The heyday of the “new cinema” in Germany dates back to the 1970s; the cooperation with television, i.e. the investment of television companies in film production, gave new impetus to the development of cinema. German cinema re-gained international popularity in the late 1990s with the release of Tom Tykwer’s *Lola rennt* (*Run, Lola, Run*, 1998) and since then it has held a notable place amongst other national cinemas around the world. Awareness of historical events certainly helps to understand film references to historical and cultural realities. Thus, in the film *Ich bin ein Elefant, Madame* (*I Am an Elephant, Madam*, 1969, director Peter Zadek), individual scenes can be clearly correlated with the protest movement of schoolchildren against the increase in transport tariffs in Bremen in January 1968. The teenagers got on the tram tracks and blocked the traffic; the initiative of the schoolchildren was supported by the trade union organisations of large corporations of the city. The Bremen City Council was forced to make concessions and reduce tariffs. There was no university in the city at the time, and schoolchildren became the leading force of the extra-parliamentary opposition.

In the film, addressing the ruling circles of the city, German language teacher Nemitz analyses the reasons for holding the protest: “*Under your leadership, ladies and gentlemen, there are not enough schools, not enough teachers... Lack of love... It is not the prices of tram tickets that are the subject of children’s discontent. Children have chosen money as the subject of the protest just because it is the only language you understand*”.

Sociocultural, ideological, philosophical and religious context – ideology, trends, goals, objectives, tasks, worldviews, concepts of the authors of these media texts in the socio-cultural context; culture of peace depicted in media texts

Post-war films were based on the cinematic traditions of the Weimar Republic. Films about the educational environment belonging to New German Cinema acknowledged the protest movement of schoolchildren and students in the 1960s, which was largely influenced by the Frankfurt School’s philosophy.

The movement as a whole was directed against any form of authoritarianism, condemned ‘the generation of executioners’ and its coming to power in Germany, and fought against the hypocritical sexual morals of the 1950s. Modern German cinema expressed a clear aim of young people to search for themselves, their place in life and society.

The worldview of the characters of the school and student world depicted in German media texts

German post-war films about schools and universities showed pictures of ideal relationships between teachers and students, built on mutual respect. “*I learned a lot from them...*” recognises teacher Seidel in the film *Der Paucker* (*Dogmatic*, 1958, director Axel von Ambesser). At the end of the film, the students as one stretched out into the string, welcoming the teacher and thus expressing deep sincere respect and recognition of authority.

The feature films of New German Cinema, on the other hand, showed opposition, absolute rejection and even an open protest of schoolchildren against teachers and the school system. The main character is often an indifferent cynical observer – this is the case of Törless in *Der Junge Törless* (*Young Törless*, 1966, director Volker Schlöndorff) – or a provocateur (Ruhl in *Ich bin ein Elefant, Madame*, i.e. *I Am an Elephant, Madam*, 1969, director Peter Zadek), who opposes the general mass of their peers and teachers, as well as the society as a whole.

In late modern German cinema, neither teachers nor parents of children live to fulfil certain goals; the absence of morals and values is underlined here (for example, in *Die Welle* or *The Wave*, 2008, director Dennis Gansel; or *Suck Me Shakespeer*, originally titled *Fack ju Göthe*, 2013, 2015, 2017, director Bora Dağtekin). Young people do not have any respect towards the older generations, and teenagers communicate freely with teachers on an equal footing. ‘Advanced’ teachers allow these students to talk to them as if they were friends (*Lehrerin*, in English *Teacher*, 2011, director Tim Trageser).

Structure and methods of narration in these media texts

During the period under inquiry, cinema moved from black and white to colour. Schematically, the structure, plot, representativeness, ethics, features of genre modification, iconography, character of media texts on school-related topics in German cinema of the period under consideration (from 1945 to 2018) can be presented as follows:

a) The place and duration of the media texts

Since the mid-1950s, the closed male and female secondary grammar schools (presented in, for instance, *Der Paucker*, i.e. *Dogmatic*, 1958, director Axel von Ambesser. *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*, also known as *Flying Class*, 1954, director Kurt Hoffmann, *Mädchen in Uniform* or *Girls in Uniform*, 1958, director Géza von Radványi, or in *Der Junge Törless*, in English *Young Törless*, 1966, director Volker Schlöndorff) came to replace the unified schools in the GDR and the integrated general schools in West Germany. In today’s Germany, the schools are general in composition; they are provided with quality equipment and offer ample opportunities for sporting activities.

b) The media environment and the living environment in which these texts are used

In the post-war period, classrooms were furnished ascetically, with nothing unnecessary – school benches, a teacher’s table, a whiteboard and other attributes of the educational process: a globe, maps, etc. Over time and up to now, not much has changed: long monochrome school corridors of public educational institutions, the same unremarkable audience, except that the teacher’s table is on the same level as the students’ desks.

c) Genre modifications of German films about schools and universities

A full variety of genres, typically drama, comedy, tragicomedy and thriller.

d) (Stereotypical) techniques of depicting reality, character typology (character traits, clothing, body composition, vocabulary, facial expressions, character gestures, presence or absence of stereotypical character representation in these media texts)

There are several typical images of the teacher in post-war films. A teacher-mentor, respected by students, understanding, wise, visionary – the director of the Brodersen secondary grammar school in the film *Reifende Jugend* (*Adult Youth*, 1955, director Ulrich Erfuhr) or the protagonist appearing in *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer* (*Flying Class*, 1954, director Kurt Hoffmann). In other cases the teacher is a ‘little man’, capable of little by little, walking step by step to provoke serious changes in society; for example, Seidel, the short, skinny, externally vulnerable and peaceful (suit, tie, glasses, hat, cane) teacher in *Der Paucker* (*Dogmatic*, 1958, director Axel von Ambesser) or Hofer in *Hauptlehrer Hofer* (*Headmaster Hofer*, 1975, director Peter Lilienthal). In the times of divided Germany, dogmatists were replaced by cartoon characters, such as the teachers Grey and Bommel, as well as by the headmaster of the Knauer secondary grammar school in *Feuerzangenbowle* (*Fire Tong Punch*, 1970, director Helmut Käutner). In addition to the ‘right’ teacher such as Brasch in the movie *Kaltgestellt* (*Suspended from Work*, 1980, director Bernhard Sinkel), there also appeared a teacher with a non-traditional orientation who was loved by students: Frank in *Taxi Zum Klo* (*Taxi to the Toilet*, 1981, director Frank Ripploh). In late modern cinema of the united Germany, a companion-teacher comedy has been formed (Zeki Mueller in the *Fack ju Göthe* film trilogy also known as *Suck Me Shakespeer*, 2013, 2015, 2017, director Bora Dağtekin). In dramas, teachers are often lonely people with failing personal lives, unable to find balance between family and work, and preferring the latter because of personal convictions (Stefan Vollmer in *Der Lehrer*, in English *The Teacher*, 2012, director Christoph Schneck) or circumstances (Andrea Libnitz in *Lehrerin* or *The Teacher*, 2011, director Tim Trageser).

e) *A significant change in the lives of the characters appearing in the media texts and the problem encountered (disruption of everyday life)*

In post-war films, the choice between ‘street romance’ and ‘education’ (*Der Paucker*, in English *Dogmatic*, 1958, director Axel von Ambesser) was a problem. The teacher usually gave the student who had once made the wrong choice a chance to redeem themselves (*Der schmutzige Engel* or *Dirty Angel*, 1958, director Alfred Vohrer). Film directors of the New German Cinema era identified the desire of young people to oppose society and suggested that the solution to the problem should be to ‘squeeze out’ those who do not want to integrate into it; for example, students such as Törless and Ruhl, who were expelled from secondary grammar schools. In late modern cinema, students try to transform the social space around them, to change their existence (*Die Welle*, i.e. *The Wave*, 2008, director Dennis Gansel) and the lives of others (*Spieltrieb*, in English *Player’s Instinct*, 2013, director Gregor Schnitzler). However, these attempts often turn into tragedies.

German Internet Media Texts about Schools and Universities

In the framework of the discussed topic, German-language media texts published on the Internet are examined in terms of their representation of the main participants in the educational process – the teacher and the student, and the educational institution as a whole – the school and/or university.

For the purpose of the study, we monitored online versions of the popular German magazines *Stern*, *Der Spiegel* and *FOCUS* and analysed publications on the themes related to school and university, using the sample of the first 10 publications of 2018, 2008 and 1998. The overwhelming majority of articles on the websites of these three journals were associated with the negative implications of the teaching profession. A number of problems have not lost relevance over the past 20 years; for example, teachers have been alarmed by the loss of teachers’ authority since the 1990s.⁴¹ During the analysed period, the question of the students’ appearance and dress code in an educational institution in accordance with religious affiliation was discussed on the Internet, namely wearing hijabs (headscarves) by Muslim female students present in the classroom. In general, while ten years ago the questions of the quality of education, an insufficient level of qualification, and the incompetence of school teachers were highly topical, at present German schools are facing the problem of an acute shortage of teaching staff.⁴² This is not surprising, since the profession of a teacher can nowadays be classified as dangerous. In 70% of the analysed media texts on the given topic published in 2018, the teacher is portrayed as a victim: they have to capitulate to aggressive schoolchildren and their parents, suffer from physical and/or psychological overload, are subject to disciplinary actions for participating in strikes, are under pressure from political parties, should promptly report cases of anti-Semitism in schools to the police, etc.

The analysis of the modern German-written Internet-distributed contents on the themes related to schools, universities and students allowed us to structure their main parameters as follows:

Historical context (features of the historical period of creation of media texts, the market conditions that contributed to the idea and the process of creating media texts, the impact of events on media texts)

The main historical event of the end of the 20th century in Germany was the reunification of its eastern and western parts. However, the people geographically, culturally and ideologically divided for 41 years could not be re-united only with the stroke of a pen. This process lasted for decades, so it is not surprising that all

41 SCHUBERT, B.: *Großer Verlust an Autorität*. Released on 15th November 1999 [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/deutschland-grosser-verlust-an-autoritaet_aid_179871.html>.

42 JENSEN, M.: *Ärger von Lehramtsstudenten “Ich verstehe, dass so viele das Studium abbrechen”*. Released on 14th September 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/uni/lehramangel-lehramtsstudenten-ueber-maengel-im-studium-a-1227725.html>>.

spheres of German life, including education, were viewed by the media through the prism of this process. At the end of the 1990s, the standard of living and wages in the former GDR and the FRG differed greatly. Thus, 36 teachers moved from Thuringia to Hessen for two years as a cheaper labour force. Their labour costs were seven times lower, since only 5 full-time teachers – Hessen citizens – could have been hired with this much money.⁴³ In the re-united Germany, especially in the first 10 – 15 years of its existence, the socialist regime and ideology were condemned; any reminders of them were eliminated, which contributed to the emergence of the so-called “ostalgie” (nostalgia for certain aspects of life in East Germany). It was not easy for former East Germans to adapt to these new conditions, which often led to conflicts in the educational environment. We find confirmation in the article entitled “*Is the old GDR still living in schools? Teachers in the Thuringia town scoff at a colleague asking questions about the role of a teacher in a state under the SED regime*”⁴⁴ (*SED = Socialist Unity Party of Germany*).

The generally unstable internal political situation in the country at present (mainly due to the influx of immigrants to Germany and other European countries) affects the educational environment and is also reflected in the texts published by online media. Today, teachers are concerned about the growing hostility of a notable amount of young people that goes far beyond the problem of ‘German citizens vs. refugees’. They consider it necessary to discuss the cases of public demonstrations of racism and aggression in schools and universities, such as the August events in Saxony in Chemnitz.⁴⁵

The large influx of refugees and immigrants from different countries to Germany led to the creation of cross-ethnic preparatory courses in educational institutions across the whole country. To work in such classes, knowledge of one’s subject is not enough, so teachers have to resort to various non-traditional forms of advanced training not provided by the university programmes. Thus, a teacher from Hamburg secondary grammar school, where quite a lot of schoolchildren have poor or almost no knowledge of the German language, has travelled to 14 countries to become acquainted with the homelands of his students.⁴⁶

Social, cultural, ideological, and religious contexts

The headlines of education-related online publications of *Stern*, *Der Spiegel* and *FOCUS* magazines provide a clear idea of the topical issues in the field of school education.

1998 – 1999:

“*Teachers are forced into a corner*”⁴⁷

“*The way teachers lose prestige amongst schoolchildren*”⁴⁸

“*4,000 unemployed teachers are waiting for employment*”⁴⁹

“*The level of achievement of teachers leaves much to be desired*”⁵⁰

“*Teachers neglect children of single-parent families*”⁵¹

43 *Kübelweise Schmutz*. Released on 11th November 1996. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-9118293.html>>.

44 HIELSCHER, A.: *Krach im Osten*. Released on 28th July 1997. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-8751618.html>>.

45 FOKKEN, S.: *Lehrer im Raum Chemnitz “Liebe Leute, macht euch nicht zum Schaf!”* Released on 30th August 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/chemnitz-lehrer-macht-sich-sorgen-um-menschenverachtende-haltung-a-1225519.html>>.

46 JENSEN, M.: *Ungewöhnliche Weltreise. Lehrer bereist 14 Länder, um Heimat seiner Schüler kennenzulernen*. Released on 4th September 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/karriere/hamburg-lehrer-jan-kammann-reist-um-die-welt-um-heimat-der-schueler-zu-sehen-a-1221910.html>>.

47 STEINKÜHLER, K.: *Lehrer in die Ecke*. Released on 11th October 1999. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/nrw-lehrer-in-die-ecke_aid_180254.html>.

48 „*Großer Verlust an Autorität (Interview mit Bettina Schubert)*”. Released on 15th November 1999. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/deutschland-grosser-verlust-an-autoritaet_aid_179871.html>.

49 *Zum Wohle der Doppelverdiener*. Released on 19th January 1998. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-7809914.html>>.

50 HOLM, C., MOHR, J.: *Lehrer-Leistung: Mangelhaft*. Released on 1st November 1996. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/spiegelspecial/d-9112041.html>>.

51 *Zweierlei Mass*. Released on 1st December 1997. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/spiegelspecial/d-8839798.html>>.

2008:

"Tighter control over the quality of education is needed"⁵²

"Aggression of schoolchildren and their parents can cause teachers' diseases"⁵³

"Is being a teacher a seasonal job?"⁵⁴

"The rector made schoolchildren draw a swastika"⁵⁵

2018:

"More than a cry for help: Capitulation to aggressive elementary schoolchildren"⁵⁶

"The federal state of Hessen disciplined 4,200 teachers"⁵⁷

"Teachers got lost in the Black Forest"⁵⁸

"Teachers deficit: A union of teachers warns of chaos in summer schools vacation"⁵⁹

"One in every 3 schools, teachers become victims of violence"⁶⁰

"Mobbing in schools"⁶¹

"Fights, threats and bullying: The Minister of Culture calls on teachers to signal aggressive schoolchildren"⁶²

"The ban on participating in strikes for teachers"⁶³

"Should teachers fear the AfD party?"⁶⁴

The list of headlines can be continued, but the conclusion is obvious: German-written news media on the Internet are demonstrating predominantly negative content regarding teachers and school education. The diametrically opposite picture of the educational process is presented in the magazine *Schule*, which is aimed at students' parents. Though similar problems are discussed, they are contemplated from a different angle, more positively. The examples of the headlines based on the keyword "teacher" are available below:

52 GIERITZ, V.: „Wir brauchen mehr Qualitätskontrolle“ (Interview mit Ludger Wößmann). Released on 17th November 2008. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/familie/schule/bildungspolitik/wir-brauchen-mehr-qualitaetskontrolle-bildungssystem_id_2779654.html>.

53 WIEGERT, K.: *Agressivität macht Lehrer krank*. Released on 11th July 2008. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/familie/schule/schulpraxis/aggressivitaet-macht-lehrer-krank-studie_id_2096655.html>.

54 *Saisonberuf Lehrer?* Released on 18th April 2008. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/familie/schule/schulpraxis/saisonberuf-lehrer-schule_id_2334448.html>.

55 *Rektorin ließ Schüler angeblich Hakenkreuze malen*. Released on 16th September 2008. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/grundschule-in-bayern-reaktorin-liess-schueler-angeblich-hakenkreuze-malen-a-578560.html>>.

56 *Mehr als ein Hilferuf: Kapitulation vor gewalttätigen Grundschulern: Lehrer schreiben offenen Brief*. Released on 23rd February 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/familie/schule/mehr-als-ein-hilferuf-kapitulation-vor-gewalttaetigen-grundschulern-lehrer-schreiben-offenen-brief_id_8514312.html>.

57 *Hessen setzt Disziplinarverfahren gegen 4200 Lehrer aus*. Released on 21st June 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/regional/wiesbaden/lehrer-hessen-setzt-disziplinarverfahren-gegen-4200-lehrer-aus_id_9138839.html>.

58 *Lehrer verirren sich im Schwarzwald*. Released on 22nd June 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://www.focus.de/regional/baden-wuerttemberg/notfaelle-lehrer-verirren-sich-im-schwarzwald_id_9142457.html>.

59 *Pädagogenmangel: Lehrerverband warnt vor Schulchaos nach den Sommerferien*. Released on 23rd June 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/lehrermangel-verband-warnt-vor-ausfaellen-nach-den-sommerferien-a-1214586.html>>.

60 WEGENER, B., HÜLSMEIER, D.: *An jeder dritten Grundschule werden Lehrer körperlich angegriffen*. Released on 13th June 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.stern.de/familie/kinder/gewalt--an-jeder-dritten-grundschule-werden-lehrer-koerperlich-angegriffen-7968134.html>>.

61 HAUG, K.: *Mobbing an Schulen. "Dann brennt bald die ganze Bude"*. Released on 13th June 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/carsten-stahl-kaempft-gegen-mobbing-a-1206970.html>>.

62 *Schläge, Drohungen und Mobbing: KMK-Präsident fordert Lehrer auf, gewalttätige Schüler anzuzeigen*. Released on 13th June 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/gewalt-gegen-lehrer-kultusminister-praesident-fuer-mehr-anzeigen-a-1212628.html>>.

63 HIMMELRATH, A.: *Streikverbot für Lehrer. Ein Nebenkriegsschauplatz*. Released on 12th June 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/karriere/streikverbot-fuer-lehrer-ein-gutes-urteil-a-1212460.html>>.

64 KLOVERT, H.: *Müssen Lehrer die AfD fürchten?* Released on 9th October 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/afd-plant-meldeportale-gegen-lehrer-und-schulen-die-wichtigsten-antworten-a-1232276.html>>.

2015–2018:

"The Koran without a headscarf on the head"⁶⁵

"Why I don't want to wear a school uniform"⁶⁶

"How to help refugee children integrate into German society"⁶⁷

"Being a teacher is a vocation"⁶⁸

"Individual approach: Something special for everybody"⁶⁹

"Goethe retires! What about Faust?"⁷⁰

"Unpretentious school"⁷¹

The image of a modern teacher: "They are young, dynamic, cute and look like they have just gone out of the fitness club ... " This is the characteristics of the best math tutors in Germany. Over 4 years, more than a million people have signed up for their lessons.⁷²

In contrast to popular news media, which primarily represent 'the dark side' of the educational process and the teaching profession, and specialised online magazines that represent schools more positively, contemporary German teachers take the middle-of-the-road view in their blogs. Teachers are aware of the pressing problems and are actively seeking ways to solve them; in fact, very much like representatives of other professions. The burning issues mentioned in teachers' blogs include the following topics:

- the principle of 'learning by doing', which, however, does not work for the non-motivated audience;⁷³
- the question of education in the media environment that meets its needs, since school no longer has total control over the learning process of children and young people, but only attends and assists them;⁷⁴
- challenges arising while working with children of refugees and migrants, and in mixed classes that include students of different ages.⁷⁵

The topical issues of university education discussed on the pages of such online publications embrace the following issues:

- the declining quality of scientific publications created by scholars pursuing a higher level of publication activity;
- the increasing number of pseudoscientific publications;
- the system of funding/financing/supporting research at universities on a competitive basis;

65 STEINER, C.: *Koran ohne Kopftuch*. Released on 10th February 2016. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/islamunterricht-an-deutschen-schulen/>>.

66 BELLOSILLO, A. D.: *Warum ich keine Schuluniform tragen möchte?* Released on 21st August 2017. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/warum-ich-keine-schuluniform-tragen-moechte/>>.

67 *Wie können wir Flüchtlingskinder integrieren? (Interview mit Berrin Özlem Otyakmaz)*. Released on 16th November 2016. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/wie-koennen-wir-fluechtlingskinder-integrieren/>>.

68 DILK, A.: *Lehrer sein ist eine Berufung!* Released on 4th May 2016. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/lehrer-sein-ist-eine-berufung/>>.

69 JACOBS, C.: *Individuelle Förderung: Für jeden eine Extrawurst?* Released on 21st March 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/individuelle-foerderung-fuer-jeden-eine-extrawurst/>>.

70 HEMMER, J.: *Goethe in den Ruhestand!* Released on 21st December 2015. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/schickt-goethe-in-den-ruhestand/>>.

71 *Schule ohne Schnickschnack*. Released on 7th February 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/normale-schule-ohne-schnickschnack/>>.

72 MASCHER, C.: *Schlau & cool*. Released on 13th October 2017. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/thesimpleclub-schlau-cool/>>.

73 SCHMIDT, S.: *Flippig sein heißt noch nicht Videolehre*. Released on 9th September 2017. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://cspannagel.wordpress.com/>>.

74 HEINEN, R.: *Stellungnahme zum Antrag Durch Stärkung der digitalen Bildung Medienkompetenz fördern und digitale Spaltung überwinden*. Released on 22nd April 2015. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <https://learninglab.uni-due.de/sites/default/files/Heinen_Stellungnahme_150422.pdf>.

75 EBEL, C.: *Pädagogische Arbeit mit Flüchtlingskindern und Kindern mit Migrationshintergrund – Sprachförderung in „Intensivklassen“ an der Georg-August-Zinn-Schule in Kassel*. Released on 6th June 2016. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.vielfalt-lernen.de/2016/06/06/paedagogische-arbeit-mit-fluechtlingskindern-und-kindern-mit-migrationshintergrund/>>.

- downsides of universal digitalisation in the university environment;
- the lack of demand for financial resources allocated for scholarships awarded by various funds, etc.

The worldview of the characters of the 'school and student world' depicted in media texts

Contemporary schoolchildren, and above all, their parents, are convinced that only having passed the Abitur (a type of qualification obtained at the upper Gymnasium level, i.e. after 12 or 13 years of school education in a German school, a school-leaving exam), one can apply for a good job in the future. In this connection, the number of graduates, who pass final exams authorising them to attend university, is increasing by one third every year. Meanwhile, teachers complain that parents are not even aware of the harm they cause, making their children study at the upper level of the grammar school at all costs.⁷⁶

The prestige of university education in Germany is growing, as indicated by the yearly increase in the number of academic graduates. The economic, legal, social and engineering areas of education continue to be popular.

The structure and narrative techniques in the media texts

The structure of media texts published on the Internet is characterised by non-linear narratives, hypertextuality, presence of multimedia and poly-coding.⁷⁷ The recipient of a media text available via the Internet can at any time follow the links from one text to another, thereby expanding the field of its perception. In addition to numerous links, online media texts usually include visual components, often audio and video texts; in other words, elements of different semiotic systems.

Schematically, the structure, plot, representativeness, ethics, features of genre modification, iconography and character of media texts on the school/university topics on the Internet can be represented as follows:

a) The media texts' setting

Contemporary German schools of all types – primary level (*Grundschule*), secondary level (*Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, *Gymnasium*, *Gesamtschule*) and higher level (*Universities*).

b) Media texts' typical environment, everyday objects

Modern, well equipped schools, research centres, scientific laboratories at major metropolitan universities with excellent facilities.

c) Genre modifications of the school/university topic

Media texts on the topic of schools and universities on the Internet are presented in the form of articles and interviews under such journal headings as "news", "life and learning", "family and school"; analytical articles in specialised journals, notes, criticisms and comments tend to be present in personal blogs and forums, i.e. on specialised Internet portals.

d) (Stereotypical) modes of depicting reality; the typology of characters (character traits, clothing, body build, vocabulary; facial expressions, gestures, the presence or absence of a stereotypical way of representing characters in these media texts)

76 WELZHOFER, L.: *Der Lehrer – Dein Freund und Helfer*. Released on 16th September 2015. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<https://www.stuttgarter-nachrichten.de/inhalt.der-lehrer-dein-freund-und-helfer-man-muss-es-gut-mit-schuelern-meinen.9ea45f09-b3cb-4d3c-9115-f9242b207713.html>>.

77 IVANOVA, S., ARTEMOVA, O.: Routing of the Perception and the Impact Potential of an Online Political Media Text. In *Political Linguistics*, 2013, Vol. 25, No. 3, p. 29-30.

In the given type of media texts, the participants of the events described are real people – teachers, pupils and their parents, university lecturers and students. Ethnically, students and schoolchildren can be divided into two main groups: ethnic Germans and immigrants. The former are trying to cope with the problems caused by the influx of immigrants into Germany, the latter are trying to adapt to the new living conditions. Teachers see their task in accepting diversity, helping foreign students during the process of integration into the social environment of the country, and looking for new forms of adaptation and socialisation of immigrants' children.

e) A significant change in the life of the media text's character(s) and the problem that has arisen (violation of the usual life)

Teachers must be flexible in accordance with the requirements of time and morals in a rapidly changing society. By the example of the situation in Indiana, USA, where a teacher refused to call a transgender student by their newly chosen name and had to resign as the result,⁷⁸ the German educators are asked to be tolerant towards all specifics of the current generation of students. The modern approach to the perception of the social roles of men and women in European society explains the emergence of new characters. So, at the last year's annual meeting of Santa Clauses (*Weihnachtsmänner*) at the University of Berlin, which had been attended exclusively by male students, while the female students had been assigned the roles of Christmas angels in white dresses with wings on their backs, "Christmas Women" (*Weihnachtsfrauen*) appeared as well.

In Hamburg schools, pupils are urged to report to the *Alternative for Germany (AfD)* party department about cases of 'politically non-neutral behaviour' of their teachers.⁷⁹ Thus, teachers seem to be forced to waive their right to freely express their opinion regarding political parties and movements in contemporary Germany.

Conclusions

German cinema on the topic of education in the post-war period can be characterised as a tool to improve the social climate in society; this return to the pedagogical traditions of the Weimar Republic looks like an attempt to create the desired ideal image of the relationship between the student and the teacher, i.e. an attempt to smooth over the acute problems of the younger generation in the post-war reality of defeated and divided Germany. The ideal teacher is an adult whom children can trust.

In the divided Germany, films about school reflect acute social problems. These problems of misunderstanding between generations of mothers, fathers and children also aim to search for possibilities to pay off the Nazi past for crimes against humanity by their awareness and condemnation. The films show rebellious tendencies, both in terms of authoritarian pedagogy and hypocritical attitudes towards sexual morality.

In late modern films, teachers are, above all, people; ordinary people with their own personal concerns and aspirations, experiencing moments of success and failure. The change of the education's paradigm in late modern Germany as a whole has led to a change in the roles of participants in the educational process, which has been reflected in German-language media texts of all genres and forms, including those published on the Internet. The (late) modern teacher is assigned the role of a facilitator, a consultant, and a moderator, who accompanies and guides the student, not a leader whom students follow, as earlier.

A common set of topical issues in the field of education is being discussed in the German-speaking Internet space. However, online (news) media form predominantly negative content with regard to teachers and school education. On the other hand, specialised magazines, which are focused on certain circle of readers (parents, teachers, etc.), mainly discuss the positive aspects of the learning process. And finally, teach-

78 *Lehrer soll gehen, weil er Transgender-Schüler falsch anspricht*. Released on 6th June 2018. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/lehrer-soll-gehen-weil-er-transgender-schueler-falsch-anspricht-a-1211445.html>>.

79 FOKKEN, S.: *AfD – Appell an Schüler: Überflüssige Provokation*. [online]. [2019-02-02]. Available at: <<http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/afd-auf-ruf-fuer-schueler-in-hamburg-ueberfluessige-provokation-a-1229435.html>>.

ers in their blogs discuss the current issues, sharing experiences and effective work practices with students. The overwhelming majority of media texts about schools and universities directly or indirectly address the issue of migrants and refugees. The issues of violence, aggression, anti-Semitism, racism and sexism amongst schoolchildren are raised in relation to both representatives of other countries and teachers. The political and social activity of foreign students is being discussed as well. The pressing problems include an acute shortage of teaching staff in schools, particularly a lack of elementary school teachers, prohibition on the participation of employed teachers in strikes and the pressure put on teachers from political parties.

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