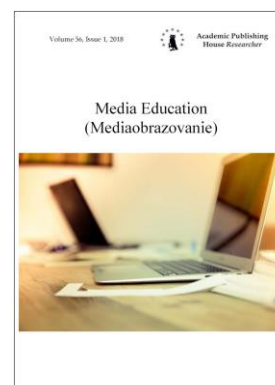




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The Image of the Teacher of English in Soviet and Post-Soviet Films

Olga Pechinkina ^{a, *}, Tatiana Vepreva ^b

^aNorthern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, Russian Federation

^bNorthern State Medical University, Russian Federation

Abstract

In the last decades when Russia has entered the process of globalization and internalization we have a wide range of possibilities to travel abroad, to communicate with representatives of other countries and cultures, to collaborate in professional spheres participating in joint projects and events and to gain information, knowledge, and skills wherever published or uploaded. In most cases to succeed in cross-cultural communication or knowledge acquisition, we need English that is considered to be a language of international communication or lingua franca, a language that bridges people. Films play a crucial role in the formation of images as they can raise or damage the prestige of particular professions and create or ruin stereotypes. In recent years there has been considerable interest in studying the image of a teacher in feature films, however, all the researchers have only focused on the teacher image in general. This study is the first to retrace the transformation of English teacher image shown in Soviet and post-Soviet (Russian) films. To achieve the aim the authors use literature review, theoretical analysis and synthesis, descriptive and comparative analyses and historiographical methods. The empirical research is based on the hermeneutical analysis of audiovisual media texts with a particular emphasis on the character analysis. The investigation reveals no significant differences in the transformation of the image between the English teacher and the teacher in general.

Keywords: image, teacher of English, film analysis, character analysis, English lessons.

1. Introduction

In the last decades when Russia has entered the process of globalization and internalization we have a wide range of possibilities to travel abroad, to communicate with representatives of other countries and cultures, to collaborate in professional spheres participating in joint projects and events and to gain information, knowledge, and skills wherever published or uploaded. In most cases to succeed in cross-cultural communication or knowledge acquisition, we need English that is considered to be a language of international communication or lingua franca, a language that bridges people.

The teacher is one of the main sources of knowledge. Nevertheless, the role of the English teacher is much more important. S/he acts as an intermediary between people of different nationalities providing students with the knowledge that will later facilitate communication. That is why it is very hard to overestimate his/her significance in society.

All of us have subjective experiences (inspiring or disappointing) in learning English. As we study a foreign language for some years at several stages of life (at school, at the university,

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: o.pechinkina@narfu.ru (O.V. Pechinkina)

at language courses or private lessons) we interact with various teachers of English. So we form a specific image of the teacher of English owing to personal impressions, other people's opinions, representations and stereotypes portrayed by media.

It is common knowledge that the media influence the formation of images of people shown there. Media are omnipresent in every sphere of life, either everyday routine, professional or scientific domains. Media are a source of information that is constantly available everywhere. They affect every person via their influence on society. In such a way media form public consciousness that involves implicit or explicit attitudes towards different phenomena and problems of the reality (Mitina, 2014: 72). Moreover, they are considered to be the means of shaping society as well as educating and actuating (Levitskaya, Seliverstova, 2019: 22).

As for media texts, they can be created by professionals or amateurs; they are aimed at achieving different goals; they use various agencies and send multifold messages to the audience. Finally, media texts form stereotypes that can influence society in general and individuals in particular. At the same time, we would suppose that these stereotypes are borrowed from real life and, being slightly or significantly transformed, they produce new stereotypes affecting the community.

The aim of this study is to retrace the transformation of English teacher image shown in Soviet and post-Soviet (Russian) films. The objectives are to specify the media image of a school teacher of English at a particular time, to define the transformation of this image throughout the last 50 years and to find out a stereotypical image or its traits persistent until now. The novelty of the research is the emphasis on the teacher of English by contrast to previous research that has studied the teaching profession in general.

2. Materials and methods

The research methods applied in the present study are literature review, theoretical analysis and synthesis, descriptive and comparative analyses as well as historiographical methods. The empirical research relies mainly on the hermeneutical analysis of audiovisual media texts with a particular emphasis on character analysis (Fedorov, 2017: 7). Considering outcomes of the previous researchers (Fedorov et al., 2018; 2019), we focus our attention on the character of the teacher of English omitting the key media education aspects (media agencies, media / media text categories, media technologies, media languages, media representations, and media audiences) as they are thoroughly analyzed in the papers mentioned above. Besides the appearance and temper, we also take into consideration the methods of teaching and equipment used by teachers, as well as teachers' relationships with other characters.

The research materials are Soviet and post-Soviet (Russian) feature films involving the topic of school shot during 1968 – 2016, exactly, 12 films.

3. Discussion

The term "image" has several definitions but we adhere to the one denoting "the representation of a person or an organization which has emotional, psychological and intellectual influence aimed at making a subject (person or organization) popular" (Mynbayeva, Yessenova, 2016: 111). The image is essential not only for those working in public, i.e. politicians, actors, broadcasters but for those dealing with other people, for example, teachers (Kashirskaya, Sagalaeva, 2014). So, as for pedagogical image, it is considered to be a symbolic and dynamically changing created in pupils', colleagues', and public conscience in the process of professional and information activity (Mynbayeva, Yessenova, 2016: 111). The image is built both directly and indirectly, that is during personal interaction or via media and other channels. Moreover, it can be constructed spontaneously or intentionally. The image results from planned or unplanned messages that come from an object, person, group or organization and it does affect the status, success, attitudes, and behaviours towards the person or organization (Ölçüm, Polat, 2016).

The notion "image of a teacher" implies representation of the system of his/her internal, external and procedural components reflected in the individual professional style, appearance, speech, gestures, facial expressions as well as in the aesthetic style (clothes, haircut, makeup, etc.) and his/her working environment (Tkacheva, 2011: 246). These components are classified into several aspects, i.e. a) external (clothes, haircut, makeup, accessories, perfume), b) kinetic (posture, gait, gestures, facial expressions, smiles, glances, etc.), c) verbal (culture of speech, literacy, register, handwriting), d) environmental (interior, design of the class, workplace) and e) productive

(outcomes of his/her work). The internal component is considered to be crucial as it mirrors the inner world of a person, his/her intellectual and spiritual development, life goals, interests and values, personal characteristics (Zhazykova, 2014: 59). Taken all together these aspects form an impression about a person as an individual and a professional. Although some other aspects can be added, for example, the tolerance that means the use of various methods of teaching and upbringing with respect to others (Shashaurov, 2015).

Each of us has his/her representation of a teacher formed by personal experience, professional standards, public opinion, stereotypes, etc. For example, meeting a teacher for the first time, pupils and students initially pay attention to his/her appearance and demeanour, then to the first lesson taught (professional, verbal skills), later on to the attitude towards pupils, further to the intelligence and expertise (Kashirskaya, Sagalaeva, 2014: 72). Modern schoolchildren in Kazakhstan evaluated teachers and their image according to four criteria: individual traits, communicative features, characteristics of professional activity, and appearance (Kalyzhny, 2010: 74). At the same time, we understand that these criteria should be harmonized: it is impossible to share what you do not possess – teaching a native language the teacher should constantly improve its culture, teaching physical education the teacher should be an example of a healthy way of life, teaching English the teacher should convey both language and culture of the country which language is studied (Zhazykova, 2014: 61). Thus, pupils expect teachers to conduct classes in a capturing manner, to know how to teach others to learn, to be just, wise and friendly, to know the subject in-depth, to look up-to-date, to be able to adequately assess pupil's knowledge, to love children, to be good-looking and sympathetic.

Simultaneously, similar research in Turkey reveals specific features of a teacher profession expressed by such adjectives as “tolerant, affectionate, sympathetic, jocund, communicative, helping to attain an outstanding character, responsibility and self-confidence, honest, reliable, fair” (Polat, Unisen, 2016: 2). Moreover, the study emphasizes that almost all respondents are demanding to the qualification of a teacher whose profession has a shade of sacredness and sometimes is equated to the prophets' profession in Turkey and China (Levitskaya, Seliverstova, 2019; Polat, Unisen, 2016). However, research carried out in the United States and some European countries show the opposite attitude when the teaching profession is losing its prestige, contemporary teachers are not respected by students and compared to social workers (Levitskaya, Seliverstova, 2019: 24).

Specifying existing models of a “good teacher” A. Levitskaya and L. Seliverstova have analyzed researches by H. Giesecke, O. Köller and his colleagues (Levitskaya, Seliverstova, 2019). They highlight that, on the one hand, in his/her work a “good teacher” combines scientific knowledge, didactic and methodological background, professional competence in the field taught, respect for every pupil and willingness to create strong working relationships, readiness to work in a team and find a compromise, aspiration for lifelong professional development, etc. On the other hand, some three aspects seem to be more meaningful: if the teacher is an expert in his subject, if s/he can easily explain the academic material, and if s/he has positive relationships with students. However, the researchers pinpoint that the idea of a “good teacher” can be interpreted differently by pupils, their parents, and administration.

Thus, considering the idea of a teacher and a “good teacher” we should bear in mind that this concept is treated in different ways in diverse countries by various social and age groups. For instance, the attitude towards the profession of a teacher diverges from country to country. Hence, in Germany about 46 % of teaching staff are women, in Great Britain this rate goes beyond 50 % and in Russia attains 90 % (Sokolova, 2014: 182). The reasons are varied: in some countries this profession is compared to the profession of a pilot because of its complexity, in others, it is equated to a service sphere. Image as a symbol is a manifestation of culture at a particular historical period. That is why in Russia we can follow the transformation of a teaching profession: prestigious and respected previously it became unattractive, underpaid and neglected by youth (Kashirskaya, Sagalaeva, 2014: 68). Although in the public conscience the idea of a teacher as the representative of values, social norms, culture, experience still persists. Anyhow, paying attention to the expertise, communicative skills, we should not forget that good clothes open all doors.

Research carried out in Ural Federal University (Russia) emphasizes a number of traits of an ideal teacher such as: a) professional, enthusiast, d) like-minded, c) friend, d) altruistic, e) humanist, f) optimist, and g) citizen (Ogonovskaya, 2015: 85). The ideal teacher aspires to achieve challenging goals, inspires his/her audience and develops his/her pupils, communicates

with his/her pupils as an equal, is ready to help them in difficult situations and to sacrifice his/her own free time in favour of pupils, chooses methods of teaching with respect to pupils' peculiarities and requirements, passionately loves his/her job, takes an active civil position, etc.

Researchers distinguish three types of the teacher image. Firstly, the one that exists in public conscience as clichés in media, literary characters, stereotypes. Secondly, representations of a particular teacher about his/her professional activity, professional behaviour, etc. Thirdly, these are pupils' representations about their teachers arising from their own observations and evaluations (Polyakov, Petriyeva, 2014: 7). Within the scope of the present research, we focus on the first type, namely, the image in the media.

Mass media transfer the information, expand and enrich the knowledge, describe situations and express opinions. Moreover, they can foster particular media content and trigger feelings of the audience (Polat, Unisen, 2016). For example, in the Soviet Union media were actively used to form the image of an ideal Soviet teacher in public conscience. It was done by means of describing his/her high cultural and educational level, communicative skills, speech culture, austerity, accuracy, discipline, etc. (Mitina, 2014: 73). So, people who do not interact with teachers are likely to borrow the image of a teacher from media acquiring a sense of pride or disappointment, trust or anxiety, respect or disdain, etc. Thus, this feeling can be inspiring or deteriorating for no reason.

The analysis of a corpus of films involving the topic of school and education carried out by Argentine researcher L. Gagliardi reveals three types of a teacher: a) an inspiring dedicated teacher, b) a reputable figure, c) an employee (Gagliardi, 2019). These types imply, respectively and in descending order, a person aspiring to overcome all hardships and inspiring his/her pupils to do the same, a person as a component of a system monitoring pupils and their following school rules, and a person within a school striving to get profit from the job. N. Shipulina distinguishes three main stages in the general image of a teacher in Soviet and post-Soviet feature films: a teacher as a fighter for ideology or an intellectual educating adults and homeless children; a teacher as a friend and a spiritual leader to his pupils; a teacher as a socially unsuccessful, unattractive and unrespected person (Shipulina, 2010).

In Russia there has been a scrupulous and detailed research of different film genres on school and university topic (Chelysheva, 2018; Gorbatkova, 2017; Machenin, 2016; Muryukina, 2017), films shot in various historical stages, for instance, thaw or stagnation period (Chelysheva, 2017; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2018; Mitina, 2015a; Mitina, 2015b; Shipulina, 2010), as well as films produced in Russia or abroad (Chelysheva, 2019; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2018; Levitskaya, Seliverstova, 2019). Cumulative papers summarizing previous research have been recently published (Fedorov et al., 2018; 2019). The first one (Fedorov et al., 2018) gives thorough description and analysis of a particular epoch in Russia (1919-1930, 1931-1955, 1956-1968, 1969-1985, 1986-1991, 1992-2017), scrutinizes feature films, documentaries, and animation films, examines socio-cultural, ideological, and religious aspects, studies world view, stereotypes, typology of characters, values, problems, setting, etc. It also interprets the structure of a media text, its narrative techniques.

The second book (Fedorov et al., 2019), along with the first one, considers philosophical, anthropological and gender approaches to the subject of school and university portrayed in media texts, discusses Russian films in comparison with foreign ones and offers a structural model of media text content. The model contains: historical period in the media text; country, setting, household objects; techniques of depicting reality; positive characters, their values, ideas, clothes, vocabulary, facial expressions, gestures; negative characters, their values, ideas, clothes, constitution, vocabulary, facial expressions, gestures; significant change in the life of characters; emerged problem; search for problem solution; problem solution (Fedorov et al., 2019: 376).

The model is validated by some case studies when the researchers analyze Soviet, Russian and foreign films produced in different periods, namely, *The Law of Life* (Russia, 1940), *What a Wonderful Game* (Russia, 1995), *Physics or Chemistry* (Russia, 2011), *Sparta* (Russia, 2015), *Les Quatre cents coups* (France, 1959), *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Australia, 1975), *Dead Poets Society* (USA, 1989), *Monsieur Lazhar* (Canada, 2011), and *Love, Simon* (USA, 2018) (Fedorov et al., 2019).

All the papers mentioned above offer a wide filmography of Soviet, Russian and foreign films and serials about school and university, scrutinize them ensuring holistic and accurate comprehension of epochs, people, characters, ideologies, world view, techniques used to forward scriptwriter or producer intention, etc. Given the outcomes and conclusions of previous researches,

we focus on a teacher of a certain discipline, namely, the teacher of English. We consider that such emphasis will help us understand the character, status, role, and image of the teacher meant to be a “linking bridge” with other nations and cultures. The interest to the teacher of English is explained by several facts. Firstly, nowadays in the situation of globalization and internalization English is one of the active ways of communication, so the teacher of English is a person in a rather great request. Secondly, although the above-mentioned studies have analyzed a huge number of films, they did not specify a particular subject teacher trying to follow the changes in his/her image throughout the time. Finally, being teachers of English we are keen to know how the teacher of English has been represented by media, how this image has transformed and what stereotypes it has included. Not to duplicate the research carried out by established researchers we concentrate only on the image of the teacher of English.

In our research, we rely on the structural model (Fedorov et al., 2019: 376) but with a few transformations keeping in mind components of the image (Tkacheva, 2011: 246; Zhazykova, 2014: 59), namely, external, kinetic, verbal, environmental and productive. Thus, the offered model of the character analysis is as follows (Fig.1):

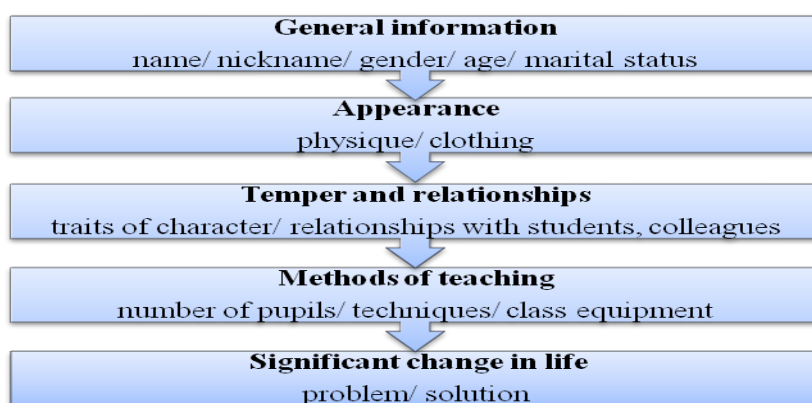


Fig. 1. Model of the character analysis

Due to the fact that the teacher of English acts a supporting role in the majority of studied films, some of the components of the analysis are impossible to be revealed.

4. Results

The research involves seven Soviet and five post-Soviet films where English teachers are presented. The films are organized in chronological order.

Let's live till Monday / Dozhiviyom do ponedelnika (film director: S. Rostotsky, 1968)

Natalia Sergeevna Gorelova is a young girl who comes to school just after graduating from a pedagogical institute. She is slender, attractive, dark-haired with a short fashionable haircut. Natalia wears mostly a short skirt with a dark sweater or a white blouse and a formal suit. Outdoors she puts on a fair overcoat, a scarf, and gloves. There is a briefcase in her hands. Natalia always looks elegant.

Natalia Sergeevna is an intelligent, enthusiastic, polite and reserved person, wishing to be quite close to her pupils. But their love and respect are not so easy to win. To do this, the teacher has to show her best human qualities. Natalia is in love with her former teacher of history and is always waiting for his approval of her actions and behaviour.

English lessons in the 9th grade are conducted in the class of 27 pupils. There is no special equipment in the room, except a blackboard and chalk. English words with transcription are written on the blackboard. One of the assignments at the lesson is to orally translate some words from Russian into English and in case of irregular verbs to pronounce all three forms. If a pupil does the task well, Natalia compliments him/her.

After one incident with a crow at the English lesson pupils start boycotting Natalia Sergeevna. Having no teaching experience, she cannot cope with the discipline in class and makes an attempt to become strict. She throws the crow out of the window, begins to speak in a commanding tone, and expels students from the class. Her phrases are short and offensive: “Silence! Take your places! Stop talking! Shut up! Go out!” Children do not accept such a change in

the teacher's behaviour and refuse to attend English lessons. However, Natalia sincerely apologizes and gains credibility again. "Forgive me, guys. I was wrong", she said to them. The students are delighted, they begin to apologize in response and their good relationships are restored.

Translation from English/ Perevod s anglijskogo (film director: I. Selezneva, 1972)

Violetta L'vovna is a slender woman in her fifties who has no family. Her hairdo is always impeccable; her clothes are elegant and smart. She prefers skirts that she supplements with a blouse with a bow. Outdoors she wears a hat and gloves, even if she goes to the nearest shop.

Violetta L'vovna is kind, sentimental, ailing, dreamy and exalted. She loves Chekhov very much. Violetta devotes all the time to her pupils. She calls them "My friends". The pupils respect, trust and take care of her. When she comes back after illness they ask her not to fall ill anymore.

The English lesson is given to the whole class of the 6th grade. There is special equipment in the room: a tape recorder and headphones at the desks. But the pupils do not use headphones, they listen only to the tape recorder. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher asks a pupil to tell about his day. Violetta L'vovna corrects all the mistakes. While the pupil is talking, nobody in the class is listening to him, they are busy with their own activities. After he finishes the teacher summarizes that his pronunciation is rather poor and offers to listen to a proper English speech – Hamlet's monologue. But after listening they neither reproduce nor discuss it.

As the topic of the lesson is "A Letter to a Foreign Friend", Violetta L'vovna writes it on the blackboard and encourages pupils to write it in their copybooks. Suddenly it becomes evident that one of the pupils got a letter from America. The pupil translates this letter and reads the original. The teacher asks to glance over the letter and understands that the letter is not genuine. Violetta L'vovna decides to conceal the truth and the pupils start discussing their possible help to American children but they do it in Russian. The teacher tells about the war in Spain in 1936 to the class and they are eager to write a letter to the American addresser. Violetta counsels her pupils to pay attention to tenses and articles. In such a way she inspires her pupils to do a practically oriented task.

Diary of a School Director/ Dnevnik direktora shkoly (film director: B. Frumin, 1975)

Tatiana Georgievna, the teacher of English, is a young, slender woman with long wavy hair and a tender voice, wearing glasses. Her clothes are so fashionable that the headteacher advises her to wear more modest clothes at school, otherwise, pupils will look at her clothes rather than listen to her. There is no information about Tatiana Georgievna's family, private life, or friends. Her role is episodic and we see her only in the staffroom. But there are a few ideas that Tatiana shares with her colleagues. Firstly, the teacher discriminates between active and passive language acquisition: if a person reads and understands texts, it is passive knowledge of the language; if s/he can say "How do you do?", it is active. Secondly, she believes that being taught a foreign language free of charge is a real gift for a person and s/he should use every opportunity to do it. Finally, as Tatiana values her own time and knowledge, she refuses to give additional classes to lazy pupils, although she admits additional classes for dunces. In general, Tatiana Georgievna does not love children and is ready to deliver an English class but without any other supplementary work.

This film raises the problem of universal compulsory education. It is good for people to get education free of charge, but not every pupil wants to learn. In this case, teachers have to persuade pupils, ask them not to leave school and educate them in any possible ways. This leads to the loss of prestige of not only the teacher's profession but education in general.

We haven't studied it / Eto my ne prokhodili (film director: Ilia Frez, 1975)

Irina Nikiforovna is a young slender girl with long wavy hair who comes to school for teaching practice. She is wearing trendy clothes that she changes every day and ultrafashionable high heel shoes on the platform. Irina has a stylish bag from London. When she goes out she prefers noticeable clothes: ultramarine jacket, décolleté dress, fair overcoat, and a gauze scarf. Even cooking in the kitchen Irina wears a blouse and a gauze scarf.

The teacher-to-be is cheerful, easy to communicate, independent, she does not bother about household problems. She adores living in hotels and considers a good suitcase to be an ideal home for a modern person. Her hobbies are films, dances, and communication (mostly with men). She likes to be the focus of everyone's attention and often uses the English language in everyday speech. Irina is a generous person – when leaving the teaching practice she gives her bag as a present to the teacher of English. Her relationships with pupils are friendly and supportive.

During her studies at the institute, she visited London as a member of student delegation and had an opportunity to see all the places of interest with her own eyes. This fact makes a great impression on other teachers as trips abroad in the Soviet period were quite rare for ordinary people.

The classroom is specially equipped for English classes: on the wall, there is a stand with cuttings from the Moscow News newspaper, Great Britain's places of interest, a case with English books and a set of posters with grammar rules. On the blackboard, we can see the topic and the date of the lesson. The aim of all the lessons demonstrated in this film is to practise communication skills. The lesson is delivered to the whole class. The pupils are given tasks to make conversation between tourists from England, interpreters, and Russians. The topics of their dialogues are sightseeing and a visit to the famous Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. These tasks arise pupils' interest, they listen to the presenters very attentively and take an active part in the dialogues. The teacher stimulates the curiosity of pupils by helping them with suitable words and correcting mistakes. The image of an English tourist depicted by pupils is characterized by a stereotype of a typical foreigner existing at that time. Pupils represent him as a very impressive and haughty man talking in a singsong voice.

The end of the film shows us a quite different teacher. Irina Nikiforovna says "I have come as an interpreter but I am leaving almost like a teacher". The school teacher confirms it by the words: "Right now I can state that Irina Nikiforovna is a brilliant teacher".

When I become a giant / Kogda ya stanu velikanom (film director: I. Tumanian, 1979)

Julietta Ashotovna differs from English teachers depicted in previous films. She is a short, slender, middle-aged woman wearing glasses. Her hair is red, wavy and of average length. Her makeup is minimal, only pale varnish on the nails and light blue shadows on the eyelids. She is wearing long loose colour clothing and high heels. She has a trendy bag with fringe. At home, she puts on a quilted dressing gown.

Julietta Ashotovna is positive but anxious and absent-minded. It is quite typical for her to forget her glasses or to get in a wrong trolleybus. However, these shortcomings are outweighed by her great love for pupils and passion for the job. She is always ready to support the pupils in all their needs. She is interested in literature, knows a lot of aphorisms, constantly quotes different poets and has a sense of humour. One of her favourite sayings is "The imagination is given to the person as compensation to that that he is not such as he would like to be. And a sense of humour is given to reconcile him to what he really is. Therefore, keep smiling!" That is why her pupils gave her the nickname "Smiling".

In the classroom there is no special equipment for English lessons, we can see only a map of Great Britain and a pack of grammar tables on the wall. At the lesson that is given to the whole 8th class pupils read aloud a dialogue between Romeo and Juliet. Their reading sounds boring and uninteresting, so one of the pupils offers Julietta Ashotovna to play this scene with him. To make the situation authentic he constructs a kind of a balcony out of desks and asks Julietta Ashotovna to climb to the top. After a brief hesitation, she bravely mounts the desks and delivers a speech. While she is reading the dialogue, the pupils get away, but she is not angry with them at all and says: "It is spring, what the hell do you need English for? English is canceled due to spring".

This film gives us some information about the private life of Julietta Ashotovna. She lives together with the niece. Her flat needs repairing, but she is short of money and cannot do it for a long period of time. The ex-husband of her sister is a drunkard, he often comes to Julietta Ashotovna and demands money and food. She is rather afraid of him and cannot fight him back. Flat's furniture helps create a stereotype of a teacher: a lot of books in bookcases, a piano, and many vases. It is explained by the fact that every holiday Julietta is presented a vase by her pupils.

Monomakh Cap / Shapka Monomakha (film director: I. Khamraev, 1982)

Tamara Mikhailovna is a young slender woman. Her long fair hair is usually in a ponytail. She is wearing an elegant colour three-piece suit. To be more serious she is wearing glasses sometimes. Tamara Mikhailovna is cheerful, smiling, positive and patient. At the beginning of the English lesson, she waits with patience when the class calms down. The lesson in the 8th grade takes place in a specially equipped room, actually, it is a language laboratory with TV and headphones on each desk. The teacher tries to speak English at the lesson. One of the pupils aspiring to learn English repeats phrases several times everywhere – in the street going home or doing postman work, at home. The supporting role of Tamara does not allow us to trace other components of the analysis.

A Guest from the future/ Gostya iz budushchego (film director: P. Arsenov, 1984)

Alla Sergeevna is a young tall slim woman. She looks smart and attractive. Her hair with a parting is smoothly brushed and fastened with a hairpin. She is wearing a long colour skirt and a jacket with a white blouse or a brown suit with a white blouse. Alla Sergeevna is kind, gentle and friendly. She is a competent and inspired teacher; her relationships with pupils are friendly.

In the classroom, there is no audio-visual equipment for learning English. Instead of it, we can see a lot of visual aids on the walls: a map of Great Britain, portraits of English writers, sights of Great Britain, a photo of the White House in the USA and some stands with information. There is also a motto printed in big letters: "Language is the dress of thought".

The lesson in the 6th grade when the whole class is present begins with the checking of homework and the teacher asks a pupil to go to the blackboard and tell about London. The pupil is not ready and starts making his time. He waits for other pupils to prompt him. Having failed to get the help he changes the topic and says that his dog is ill. Alla Sergeevna adopts the rules of the game and asks to tell everything about the dog but in English. In this situation, she shows herself as a flexible, clever and resourceful teacher.

The Asthenic Syndrome/ Astenicheskiy sindrom (film director: K. Muratova, 1989)

Nikolay Alekseevitch is a tall, thin, middle-aged teacher of English. He is wearing a white sweater with a long scarf and looks very untidy and ridiculous in his casual clothes. His family life is miserable and unhappy, his wife is always at work trying to earn money for living and his mother-in-law wants him to get more as his salary is very modest. Nikolay's dream is to write a novel but the mother-in-law does not approve it as it is not a profitable business. Nikolay Alekseevitch looks tired and exhausted physically and morally. Due to personal and professional troubles and stress he develops a disease and suffers from the asthenic syndrome. It means that he can fall asleep at any place at any time.

The pupils do not respect the teacher, they do not consider him as a tutor at all. At the English lesson, they do not communicate with the teacher, they are busy with their own activities: some of them are eating fish, others are reading books and watching erotic pictures. Nobody listens to the teacher. Actually, it is not strange as Nikolay Alekseevitch distances himself from his listeners and does not even try to do any efforts to attract pupils' attention. He is just wandering in the class and talking about narrow-mindedness. When one of the pupils says that he does not want to write anything down in his copybook, Nikolay had a fight trying to punish the boy. This fight is watched by other pupils with admiration. The relationships with the colleagues are also far from ideal. When Nikolay is late for classes, he quarrels with the director of studies. At the teacher meeting, he is so indifferent to the school problems that he falls asleep.

The English lesson is given to the whole class. The classroom is not equipped for a language lesson, there are only portraits of famous people on the walls. The teacher applies no techniques; he simply reads a text from a textbook. The text is devoted to the system of school education in Russia. Nikolay monotonous "Our school has achieved great success in its development" and asks pupils to repeat it. According to him the main aim of the study is to get ready for the exam where the pupils will be asked oral topics. So the only thing the pupils have to do is to slog away at the examination questions.

Nikolay Alekseevitch is unable to cope with all his problems and ends up in a hospital for the mentally ill. There he realizes that people inside the hospital are as crazy as outside it.

School / Shkola (film directors: V.G. Germanika, R. Malikov, N. Meshhaninova, 2010)

Elena Grigoryevna Krymova is a young, tall, slender woman of ordinary appearance. She has got green eyes, a big nose and dark long hair swept back in a ponytail. She wears little makeup and it seems she does not look after herself properly. Green, brown and grey colours prevail in her clothes: at school, she is wearing skirts with blouses or pullovers and average heel shoes; outside she is wearing a baggy coat, a scarf, gloves, and a beret.

Elena Grigoryevna is single and feels lonely. Probably because of this loneliness she likes to gossip about other teachers. She envies her pupils to the teacher of Physics and without hesitation rings her husband up to inform him about his wife's unfaithfulness. Miss Krymova likes neither teaching nor children; she is extremely tired of her job and naughty children and just wastes time there. To discipline the children she usually raises her voice.

In the classroom there is no special equipment for the lesson, on the walls, there are only some photos and a picture of Great Britain's flag. At the lesson of English, there is a group of about 15 pupils.

At school, Elena Grigoryevna falls in love with the teacher of History. This love inspires her, she becomes more positive and enthusiastic. Her attitude to life changes. She is in a good mood, greets colleagues in English in the morning and considers an ordinary day to be wonderful and sunny. When Elena learns about her pregnancy she feels fear and shares this feeling with her pupils explaining to them why their parents are so anxious about them and appeals for being more respectful and careful about their parents. So, we can see that besides some events at school the change in private life necessitates changes in worldview and attitude to people.

After School / Posle Shkoly (film directors: A. Boltenko, V. Presnyakov, E. Nikitin, O. Presnyakov, 2012)

Dzhalil Raphailovitch is a tall, thin, middle-aged man. He has got short gray hair with a bald spot, moustache and a beard. He is a man of fashion, his clothes are always trendy and sometimes he looks rather eccentric. At work he is wearing three-piece suits of different colours, his favourite accessories are bow ties and long scarfs. Dzhalil changes suits almost every day and for special occasions he has a Western look and an earring.

Dzhalil Raphailovitch is a man without scruples, he easily changes his opinion depending on the director's point of view. He is a weird person and does not love people, especially, everyone, as he says. One of the pupils remarks that Dzhalil Raphailovitch does not have a heart. The latter responds that it is exactly the reason why he has become a teacher.

At the lesson of English, we can see the whole class. There are flags of the United Kingdom and the United States in the classroom as well as maps, a portrait of Shakespeare and a number of sights of Britain and the USA. All pupils are in the headphones and the teacher reads Hamlet's monologue into the microphone. After that pupils read the same text one after another. We should note that the teacher's English pronunciation is quite awful. His speech is a combination of two languages: Russian and English. Dzhalil Raphailovitch says that teachers should be more advanced and smarter than pupils but at the same time, he asserts that new technologies cannot change teachers.

Teachers / Uchitelya (film director: V. Akopyan, 2014)

Alyona Dmitrievna is a young, tall, slender woman with a short fashionable haircut. Her clothes are always trendy and expensive. At school, she is wearing a bright pink trouser suit or a short leopard skirt and a low-necked blouse. Her outfit includes a short leather jacket, trendy skirts, and trousers. She changes shoes almost every day. She is fond of large earrings and uses makeup.

Alyona Dmitrievna is always haughty in her treatment of other female teachers; she believes that she is more beautiful and cleverer than others. She used to live in New York and could work there as an interpreter, but she got married and returned to Russia. Now she lives in a big house together with her husband and from time to time arranges parties of local beau monde with neighbours. Alyona Dmitrievna is married but is not happy because her husband regards her only as a beautiful thing. As for her, she needs feelings and emotions that is why she flirts and tempts other men.

A Good Boy / Khoroshy Malchik (film director: O. Karas, 2016)

Alisa Denisovna is a well-kept, slender woman in her thirties. Most of the time, her long straight hair is flowing wild and her smile is dazzling. She follows fashion and her clothes are always modern and trendy. At school, she is wearing tight-fitting blouses or turtleneck sweaters and short skirts or sundresses. At home, she prefers to wear jeans and shirts. Alisa Denisovna is kind, tolerant and attentive to her pupils.

On the door of the classroom, there is a doorplate "Foreign Language Study Room". In front of the room, there is a mobile whiteboard with colour markers and magnets. On the wall, we can see a map of Great Britain and a lot of grammar tables. The English class consists of about 20 pupils. The aim of the lesson is grammar tenses in English. The teacher writes a new tense on the whiteboard, explains it, gives examples of its use. While introducing the new material she asks pupils if it is clear to them and if not, explains once again.

After school at home, Alisa conducts additional classes for those who want to master English. Pupils' parents speak of her very well. At the same time at home, Alisa Denisovna is shown as a living person with her own feelings, drawbacks, and troubles. She is single but has relations with a married man as she loves him and patiently waits for him to divorce. Such long waiting makes her very unhappy and she lets herself discuss this problem with her pupil. She invites him to visit her house to take a disc with English lessons but forgets about it, so when he comes she looks really

surprised. Nevertheless, she allows him to enter, suggests drinking a glass of red wine together and asks his advice on her private life. In their conversation, she uses a lot of informal words, licks her fingers while eating, skips from one topic to another, mixes Russian and English phrases. In general, from the traditional point of view, she demonstrates completely wrong teacher's behaviour. The next day, however, Alisa Denisovna understands what happened and tells the pupil: "I am a teacher, you are a pupil. And all the rest is wrong, silly and dangerous".

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the films shot in Russia in the period from 1968 up to 2016 made it possible to follow the transformation of the English teacher image. During the Soviet epoch, this is a single, slender woman with a perfect hairdo or haircut. As for the age of the teacher of English she has recently graduated from the institute or a middle-aged experienced teacher. She follows the fashion, wears trendy suits and is always elegant. The typical English teacher is enthusiastic, kind, cheerful and friendly. We can say that she is intelligent, polite and tolerant. Usually, she loves children and devotes herself and her time to the pupils.

The English lessons are organized for the whole class. In some cases the classroom is well equipped for lessons of a foreign language – there are headphones, tape recorders, supplementary teaching material such as maps, photos, pictures, tables, etc. While in other situations the teacher has nothing but a blackboard and a few visual aids at her disposal. The usual activities at the lesson are reading, listening and checking homework. There are rare attempts to introduce communicative assignments at the lessons but they seem to be factitious.

The problems that the teacher faces are closely connected with the current situation in the country, for instance, the case with the letter from the USA. Anyhow, there are always situations connected with some moral issues or challenges. However, we cannot help but note the changes that have occurred with the image of the English teacher since the late 1980s after the perestroika started. Although this is still an elegant and fashionable person, we see that the teacher of English does have some moral shortcoming, namely, indifference to work and pupils, envy or disdain to colleagues, love affair with a pupil.

Thus, the research allows us to conclude that the image of the English teacher during the studied period retains positive external features, but his/her inner world changes losing traits close to ideal. This conclusion is in line with those about the general situation in the educational system (Fedorov et al., 2019; Shipulina, 2010), exactly, the low prestige of the teaching profession, decrease of the education level at schools, inconsistency between the content of education and requirements of the society, etc.

We believe that the findings of our research will serve as a base for further studies on the image of a particular discipline teacher portrayed by media. Our research suggests that the film-makers should address the needs of society and start creating a different image of the modern teacher, the English teacher in particular, free from the stereotypes of the past and aimed at educating a new generation.

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