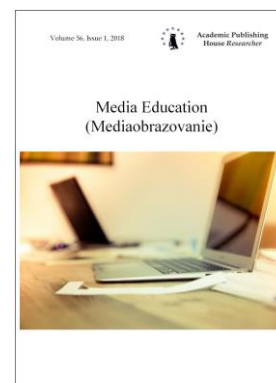




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Linguistic Aspect of the Technology for the Use of Video Content in the Process of Adaptation of Foreign Students at Higher Education Institutions of the United States of America

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to determine the structure of technology for the use of video content for linguistic and cultural adaptation of foreign students at higher education institutions of the USA from psycholinguistic point of view. The article is concerned with the analysis of practical measures aimed at forming and developing communication and socio-cultural competence when using video content, including professionally-oriented video content. In the course of the research, the level of influence of video content on the development of foreign students' linguistic and social skills, which are necessary for a comprehensive communication with cultural elements, was determined using the descriptive method. Comparative historical and typological methods allowed to determine whether foreign students could identify any historical and linguistic changes in the language they learned, as well as make a comparative analysis of native and foreign languages. The impact of video content used during adaptation activities was analyzed using sociolinguistic methods, namely the field research method aimed at the identification of a direct correlation between film screenings and the development of the ability to use linguistic and cultural patterns in foreign students, as well as the method of sociolinguistic research which helped to conduct a more detailed study of the socio-communicative elements formed and the impact that the cultural specifics of the society had on them. The applied linguistic method helped to conduct a more detailed study of the impact of video text on the communication skills of a person. Linguistic and cultural patterns are an important component of successful communication for a foreign student since it provides them with elements that can be put to use when needed in social relations. One of the most widely used methods for forming such patterns at HEI of the USA is the use of video content which involves screenings of American films (for direct acculturation, when a foreign student adapts to the linguistic and cultural specifics of the host country) and films produced in the countries from which students came (for reverse acculturation, when local students adapt to the socio-cultural specifics of foreign students). The use of video content in acculturation activities helps a foreign student develop not only linguistic and cultural patterns that are necessary for academic and social activities in the host country, but also critical thinking, which facilitates analysis of new socio-cultural and linguistic information, thereby preventing the negative effects of culture shock. Moreover, video content can be presented with a twofold purpose, as it may be socioculturally oriented (presenting cultural specifics or social problems of the host country) and professionally oriented (containing specialized vocabulary); it can also provide the opportunity for direct and reverse acculturation.

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1. Introduction

The system of socio-pedagogical support of foreign students must undergo continuous transformation resulting in the expansion of methods used for adaptation and, accordingly, in promotion of positive dynamics of the effectiveness of acculturation activities. Nowadays, the use of media in the educational process is becoming increasingly important, and, in particular, they can be actively used in adaptation activities for the development of critical thinking competency (Bazalgette et al., 1992). For example, the famous American media education researcher K. Tyner concludes that audiovisual materials can be used to perform analytical actions aimed at understanding the information component (Tyner, 1999: 186-187). This activity allows to critically evaluate a media product regardless of its definition as a literary work or a film. Critical thinking can be developed during classroom group activities when a piece of media is being discussed and specific socio-cultural features inherent in the society of the host country or those that have been apparent in the past but influenced some cultural aspects existing today are being considered; they can also be developed through conducting a personal analysis of media content, when a foreign student has the opportunity to independently analyze some cultural issues highlighted in the piece of media they have watched, listened to or read.

The analysis of studies conducted by some scientists (Hobbs, 1994; Hobbs, Frost, 1999; Piette, Giroux, 1997; Tyner, 2000) allows to identify appropriate methods that can be used in the adaptation of foreign students, such as:

- Theoretical discussion method (consisting of the provision of relevant lecture material to foreign students and of group discussions making it possible to explain certain cultural specifics with the use of specific examples);
- Visual method (aimed at displaying culturally-oriented video content in practical terms);
- Practical method (characterized by the use by the adviser of certain tasks or exercises promoting more detailed analyzing by a foreign student of the piece of media that has been watched, read or listened to);
- Search method (involving conducting of research activity by students, for example, with the purpose to identify some socio-cultural features of the host society in a specific type of media).

It is worth noting that these methods can be used provided that foreign students possess certain skills, which, according to D. Leveranz, should be formed by a counseling center as part of the preparation for media education (Fedorov, Novikova, 2006: 113). For example, the primary skill is the ability of a student to search for the necessary media content (regardless of its type such as audio or video, electronic or printed) to address a certain pressing socio-cultural issue. Foreign students must also have skills of finding cultural elements in numerous media products (Buckingham, 2003) (otherwise, critical analysis is impossible due to the lack of cultural material necessary to perform it). It is also necessary that foreign students have skills of historical accuracy (which implies an ability to realize that cultural patterns indicated in the media may not be relevant in modern society). Finally, students have to be able to create a media product related to their own culture (it can be a short literary work or a short film, a piece of music, etc.), which can be introduced to representatives of academic and social space of the United States, for example, during national themed gatherings that are held at numerous universities and colleges.

Thus, *the purpose of our study* is to determine the structure of technology for the use of video content for foreign students' acculturation at universities and colleges of the USA. To achieve this aim, a few *objectives* have been set: 1) to conduct a study of the elements of media education that contribute to the effective adaptation process of foreign students; 2) to define the role of the use of video content in the system of empirical adaptation; 3) to describe the examples of the practical use of video content method in the acculturation process. *The material for the study of practical implementation of video element of media education in the preparatory adaptation process* was the information data of the US higher education institutions, including Yale University, Eastern Michigan University, University of San Diego, Michigan State University, Loyola Marymount University, University of St. Thomas.

2. Materials and methods

To conduct comprehensive research of the use of video content in the adaptation process of

foreign students' training, *the descriptive method* was primarily used, which helped to determine the impact of screening films on the formation of the students' linguistic and cultural patterns consisting of two main areas, namely: development of linguistic units, which allows for direct communication, as well as culturally oriented elements promoting the application of communication rules existing in a particular society. The descriptive method also helped to reveal, during the preparatory process, that a communication component is divided into separate structural components, each undergoing the process of its formation and development as an independent component, but which can be fully applied in practice only as a unit of a comprehensive structure defined here as linguistic and cultural patterns.

The application of *comparative historical* and *typological* methods was aimed at studying of the use of video content as a presentation of the historical development of a particular language (depending on the country of film production), allowing to focus on differences between the lexical component and that existing in the modern language. In turn, the comparative element of the method helps to conduct the comparative analysis of the language of the film (language being studied) and the student's native language, which is particularly important when analyzing languages belonging to the same linguistic group.

An important role in our study is played by *sociolinguistic methods* (which are characterized by a number of linguosocial elements showing the level of impact of society on the language changes and linguistic properties, on the aspects of social interpersonal relationships) which, in turn, are divided into two groups: field study methods (helped to identify the direct correlation between mass film screenings at the campuses of American higher education institutions and the increased level of development of linguistic and cultural patterns) and sociolinguistic research methods (which involve analytical actions with the data obtained using field study methods, thus providing detailed consideration of the information related to the communicative units of the language that is being studied, as well as their direct correlation with the cultural practices of society).

As part of the study, *information theory* method was also used (that is a component of mathematical methods), helping to identify information provided to foreign students during the presentation of video content that was not determinative for the effectiveness of the acculturation process.

In addition, the analysis of video content used in the adaptation process required application of the psycholinguistic method, which, according to S. Kuranova (Kuranova, 2012: 63), promoted the study of characteristic linguistic properties, as well as the creation of "models and theories of speech generation and perception" and, furthermore, the detailed study of "processes of perception and evaluation of the text" (or, in the context of this study, video text). Since in psycholinguistics, "speech is being studied both as activity and the result thereof", we were able to identify specific features of communicative units formed during the preparatory process and to come to a conclusion regarding their direct impact on communication. It means that these units constitute (in combination with other elements) speech, which, according to S. Kuranova (Kuranova, 2012: 63) can be defined as a component of speech activity. At the same time, communication units are described as the result of the practical application of linguistic and cultural patterns (speech activity).

3. Discussion

It must be taken into account that, in the context of the application of media education, the strategy of socio-pedagogical support of foreign students should be developed depending on the chosen type of media (Baryshpolets, 2008; Brett, 1997; Novikova, 2000), educational process (Dziuban et al., 2018), the presence of a cultural component in personality learning (Smith, 2020). This condition is especially important when different types of media are alternated in practice, so these changes must be reflected in the education strategy. It should be emphasized that the types of media used for the adaptation process can be divided into the categories such as video, audio, printed and electronic media; for example, video content may consist of cultural materials aimed to familiarise foreign students with peculiarities of society where they receive their education. However, it is difficult to analyze such video records due to their insufficient duration and unstructured nature. Therefore, we consider cinema to be the main representative of the video category because it provides information on cultural specifics and social changes in American society that have taken place over the decades, which is more effective than short videos. This is confirmed by the study of J. King (King, 2002), which investigated the practical application of films of a certain genre in EFL education, that is important for foreign students. Moreover, such

researchers as, for example, H. Arndt and R. Woore (Arndt, Woore, 2018) considered the use in the linguistic direction not only movies, but also just videos, for example, in the YouTube platform, that can also be used to create video lectures. That's why, B. Robertson and M. Flowers come to the conclusion, that "student outcomes are higher when written materials are supplemented with video" (Robertson, Flowers, 2020: 35).

The next category is audio content, which, within the context of the education of foreign students, can be an important component from both information and educational (for example, when using audio recording in the process of learning English) perspectives. As for audio recordings, they, in contrast to video, have more educational rather than culturological value, allowing, in particular, to learn about the linguistic specific of native English speakers.

The third type of content that is also an element of media education is represented by printed media. This category can include both classical works of American literature (which had a significant impact on society) and modern works, as well as printed press (newspapers, magazines) that allow to learn about current issues important for the population.

The last type of media education stems from the development of modern technology that has created conditions to provide more opportunities to learn, to review the materials of the leading higher education institutions of the USA and of the whole world. As a result, the questions about the effectiveness of learning with the use of modern technologies (online) or traditional educational process (face-to-face) arise, the answers to which can be found in the study of A.R. Hurlbut (Hurlbut, 2018). Such tools are electronic systems that, firstly, allow to provide high-quality distance learning (Goodwyn, 1992; Martin, 2020; Salvo et al.) (in particular, for foreign students) and, secondly, nowadays the Internet provides access to materials of all of the above types of media, so it can be said that electronic media including computers and the Internet is a link combining all the components of modern media education. In addition, social media, according to K. Sutherland, S. Davis, U. Terton and I. Visser (Sutherland et al., 2018: 17) contribute to faster internationalization of the campus of an educational institution because they allow to quickly exchange information and actively communicate without the need to communicate in the traditional manner, when dialogue partners must be next to each other. And despite the fact that «Without face-to-face interaction, students and instructors may feel isolated, disconnected, or invisible to each other» (Ketchum et al., 2020: 85), in the modern conditions of quarantine learning, the electronic systems (learning networks (Boyd, 2019) and MOOCs (Gafaro, 2019) and video communication allow to fulfill the educational curriculum at a certain level.

As a result, the impact of media education on the support of the process of adaptation helps to create certain effect among foreign students, which can have short-term (Potter, 2001: 276) or long-term (Potter, 2001: 278, 296) manifestation shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Characteristics of short-term and long-term manifestation of the effect of media education

Type of effect	Characteristics of short-term manifestation	Characteristics of long-term manifestation
Informative	Types of media used in the adaptation process can form socio-cultural views directly upon receiving the information	Types of media used in the adaptation process can form socio-cultural views after being critically analysed by a person and compared to previously obtained information
Behavioural	A foreign student can form their opinion about a certain issue immediately upon receipt of the information	A foreign student can form their opinion about a certain issue after contacting representatives of other culture, studying of socio-cultural specifics through some media, etc.

The above Table 1 shows significant complexity particularly in the case of the long-term impact of media effects since in this case, a foreign student can (after performing appropriate analytical actions) identify these informational points which had more impact on their emotional component than on the mental one. Therefore, the long-term manifestation of the effects of media impact is more effective for the adaptation process. This conclusion, in turn, creates the conditions helping a foreign student develop self-management skills, that, according to A. Richardson,

S. King, T. Olds, G. Parfitt directly affects "academic and non-academic" (Richardson et al., 2019: 18) success of a foreign student in various areas of their activity. Thus, in order to use the above means of media education, a student has to form certain elements of time management, otherwise, the adaptation process will not reach the required level of efficiency.

It should be mentioned that video content can be highlighted as one of the basic types of media education listed above because it includes the most effective elements for adaptation processes, namely feature films and television. As for feature films, B. Bokan came to an interesting conclusion that "films captures the dynamics of the era" (Bokan, 2004: 77). This is especially true when working with people from other cultures, as it is possible to visually present cultural principles of a particular historical period of the host country via a film representing the necessary period of time.

The use of cinema as a method of socialization of foreign students and linguistic training is an essential prerequisite, which, according to M. Ismiali (Ismiali, 2013), J. Sherman (Sherman, 2003), D. Yuksel (Yuksel, Tanriverdi, 2009), J. Safranji (Safranji, 2015), B. Bal-Gezegin (Bal-Gezegin, 2014), J. Swaffar (Swaffar, Vlatten, 1997), I. Baltova (Baltova, 1999), K. Hsu (Hsu et al., 2013), should serve as a guide for educational institutions, otherwise, students will lack the skills to carry out an effective communication process. This is due to the fact that textbooks and communication with an instructor, which are often the only source of English-language information during classes, do not provide opportunities to acquire sufficient linguistic and cultural knowledge, as evidenced by the findings of M. Ismaili (Ismaili, 2013), who argues that feature films can be used for listening during conversation classes and that it provides an opportunity for analysis and further discussion by students and an advisor or an instructor on the problems presented in a film.

Furthermore, screening films directly impacts the development of cultural competence of a foreign student (Monastyrsky, 1999), because language learning and exposure to cultural specifics should be carried out simultaneously. For instance, T. Brown notes that "Language is a part of culture, and culture is a part of language" (Brown, 1994: 12), so feature films serve as a reflection of society for foreign students and include some cultural codes that must be decoded by students with direct assistance from an advisor. Otherwise, incomplete identification and clarification of cultural specifics result in a violation of the principle of cultural literacy, which, according to E. Bada, "happens because most students studying a foreign language are unfamiliar with cultural aspects of the host society, which leads to significant communication difficulties associated with transferring of meaning to native speakers" (Bada, 2000: 12). In addition, acculturation when using the video-content can be applied not only in universities and colleges, but also in other socially significant institutions, for example, the role of libraries is very important, especially if a foreign student returns home for a vacation, to the rural place in another country. In this case, the library can play the role of an auxiliary space to support the required socio-cultural level of the student. In such context, the role of libraries can be found in research of S. Strover, B. Whitacre, C. Rhinesmith and A. Schrubbe (Strover et al., 2019).

4. Results

In higher education institutions in the USA, the video component of media education is actively used in the process of foreign students' adaptation to the elements of the new culture and, in fact, in the process of local students' adaptation to the culture of representatives of other countries. An illustrative example of linguistic and cultural training of foreign students is the Movie in the Park program of the Office of International Students and Scholars (Movie..., 2019). The purpose of the event is to create an environment for intercultural interaction, in which the student community of the university can participate at no charge. For instance, on 30 August 2019 (from 19:15 to 22:00), at *Scantlebury Park*, the classics of American animated film, *Beauty and the Beast* (1990), was screened. A special feature of the event should also be noted: the viewers had to come to the venue one hour before the start of the screening, since its purpose was to promote interpersonal communication between the students of the university (both American and foreign ones).

In general, scientists paid a lot of attention to an exploration of the significance of films in view of their authenticity, which, according to the findings of J. Sherman (Sherman, 2003), involved the development of a special personal ability to understand reality. In other words, foreign students who do not possess comprehensive knowledge of the language of the host country and are not familiar with its cultural specifics can be incentivized to study linguistic and cultural aspects more closely (the significance of films for those who study a foreign language was confirmed long

ago by J. Lonergan (Lonergan, 1984), who stated that they are critical to getting access to more information via video content viewing. Such an effect, in the opinion of J. Sherman (Sherman, 2003) cannot be achieved by any other type of learning materials).

According to the findings of S. Stempleski and B. Tomalin (Stempleski, Tomalin, 2001), foreign students focus on feature films, along with literary works, due to numerous cultural aspects presented in them, which can be considered by the students as practical measures when performing an analysis to determine a behavioral strategy in similar cultural situations arising in their lives in a new social environment (Khil'ko, 2001). This aspect motivates students to watch films because they provide a visual presentation of sound and images, which, together with their own theoretical knowledge, ensures more effective socialization (it should be noted that the effectiveness of the adaptation initiative, according to J. Heath (Heath, 2020: 77) must be determined for groups of students. The first group consists of the students taking part in the adaptation process, i.e. its active participants. The second group (late students) has a number of students participating in the process in real time in comparison with the number of students undergoing adaptation since the beginning of a certain program.

This allows to determine the number of persons who quit the acculturation process or do not focus on it enough, which allows to identify the elements of the education process which need improvement and are not sufficiently effective; for example, Eastern University of Michigan hosts weekly screenings for foreign and American students as part of the Friday Night Movies project (Friday..., 2020). As part of this project, current and popular films are screened, which makes it more difficult for representatives of other cultures to understand the principles of American society. For example, such films as *Frozen II* or *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* may not provide sufficient information about the values of the host country. Therefore, according to our findings, we believe that the program of Eastern Michigan University is focused on intercultural communication and interaction rather than on exposure to cultural norms and traditions of the United States.

A similar conclusion may be reached with regard to the Torero Program (a project of the Students' Association for the Coordination of Programs and Activities) of the University of San Diego (Movie..., 2018). For example, the event which was held on 6 September 2018, from 19:00 to 21:30, included a free screening of *Black Panther* in the student pavilion. Irrespective of one's opinion about the film, its only visible value for foreign students undergoing the adaptation process lies in the awareness of the importance of comics culture for Americans, which, certainly, can be used in interpersonal interaction but is not the decisive factor in acculturation to a new society.

It should be noted that there is a specific feature common for the events related to video content presentation at higher education institutions of the USA; it is the provision of free access to the screening, which provides an opportunity for foreign students to choose a film that is most important for their adaptation process and also to ignore a screening that is insignificant for their personal acculturation and linguistic training.

In turn, J. Lonergan (Lonergan, 1984: 4) notes that cinema grants an opportunity to see and hear the participants of a situation (which is impossible when reading). A person learning the language of the film (when watching it in the original or at least with subtitles) is able to observe an interaction between the characters (so this person can repeat it in the future and borrow its certain aspects for further use in interpersonal contact), their actions, mood, etc. A foreign student also has an opportunity to obtain paralinguistic information that may include facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice of the characters used by them in different socio-cultural situations. These features help to form a skill of determining the formality or informality of the situation, the understanding of which allows to determine one's next steps.

However, it must be understood that interpersonal interaction cannot be one-directional (in other words, be undertaken only by a foreign student or a student (a representative) of the host country). Therefore, it is necessary to establish a mutual socio-cultural connection, which is possible with mutual acculturation, when an American student forms the skills of communication and social contact with a representative of some cultural frame. Consequently, some higher education institutions hold screenings of films produced by the countries whose students constitute the most widely represented groups in educational institutions. An illustrative example is an event held by the Asian Studies Centre at Michigan State University which took place on 28 November 2017, from 19:00 to 21:00, and consisted of a screening of the 1998 film *Ring* (Japan..., 2017) as part of the program "Japanese Film and Culture". It should be noted that the horror genre is not

fully relevant for the acculturation process but this very example, which, in our opinion, is iconic for Japanese culture, is able to provide some information about socio-cultural norms specific for Japanese students.

Therefore, it might rightly be said that in modern multimedia educational environment textbooks can no longer be considered the only foreign language teaching tool. According to P. Voller and S. Widdows (Voller, Widdows, 1993: 342), films are also a kind of a "text" since they contain certain messages, tell stories, include characters; they can be used as other textual materials but their visual component makes them more important for students. Although this statement is somewhat controversial since there are no grounds to claim that video content is more valuable than textual learning materials, one cannot deny the positive value of the use of films in educational and adaptive process for foreign students as an aid to the main form of socio-pedagogical support that provides an opportunity to develop better linguistic skills due to the audio component present in films that helps to become acquainted with the modern accent of the target language, to improve the vocabulary (in case of films, it is often everyday vocabulary) and to be given a chance to identify thematic areas of the target language, i.e. to understand communication situations where certain linguistic and cultural patterns can be used. In this category, according to J. Sherman (Sherman, 2003: 2), films have an advantage over printed learning materials or academic activities conducted in the classroom.

However, it must also be mentioned that in addition to the socio-cultural aspect, film screenings may be educational as well. This happens when video content offered to students is professionally oriented, i.e. intended for students obtaining a certain speciality. In this case, this category of media education can be used for foreign students as a basic learning activity. Therefore, it is important to understand the differences between socially and culturally oriented films and films having a professional and educational purpose. An example of such specialized films is the CBA Night at the Movies Series program by the College of Business Administration at Loyola Marymount University (CBA..., 2019). After watching the content, discussions are held with the participation of experts with practical experience in certain business areas. Therefore, this type of films shares some characteristics with linguistic and cultural video screenings, which also include discussions after watching.

However, socio-cultural competence is among the crucial skills required from foreign students for watching films. For example, according to G. Attar (Attar, 2015), one cannot accept other cultures without interculturality, one cannot, just by learning the language of other culture, form a belief in its independence and importance. Therefore, intercultural competence can be developed through a dialogue with representatives of other cultural groups, which is a manifestation of democratic values. As to higher education institutions, such democratic principles can be implemented through the promotion of diversity. For example, University of St. Thomas supports the program Movies that Matter (Movies..., 2020), which includes video content focusing on the study of history and identity of different cultural communities. For example, according to the program schedule, the following films were to be shown (some were cancelled due to the pandemic): *American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs* (scheduled for 24 April 2020 at 17:30), *BlacKkKlansman* (18 February 2020 at 17:30), *The Loving Generation* (12 March 2020 at 17:30). As we can see, these films raise important socio-historical issues, thus promoting discussions and encouraging reflections about one's own culture and values. Therefore, in our opinion, this program is a mean of developing abilities leading to a better understanding of cultural diversity existing in present-day society.

5. Conclusion

In the process of socio-pedagogical support of foreign students, instructors and advisers use a variety of methods aimed at forming the necessary skills contributing to effective interpersonal interaction with representatives of the host country. Having analyzed the experience of adaptive training of foreign students gained by higher education institutions of the United State of America, we come to a conclusion that the vigorous implementation of video content presentation method leads to the following results:

- 1) Development of foreign students' critical thinking on issues concerning linguistic and cultural differences. In turn, the ability to analyze and synthesize specialized video materials will allow to reduce the negative impact of cultural shock on the personality of a student as they will be able to detect diverse linguistic and cultural specifics, so it will help to prevent their "shocking"

effect;

2) Shaping foreign students' ability to personally use the detected linguistic and cultural patterns in their practical interpersonal activities with communication as its main element;

3) Organization of events in educational institutions aimed at the screening of films produced by the countries whose students constitute the most represented groups in a university or a college. Another important component of communication skills development is film discussions held with local students, which will help foreign students reinforce linguistic patterns and support a "reverse acculturation", so that American students can also have the opportunity to adapt themselves to linguistic and cultural specifics of students from certain countries;

4) Screening of American films to foreign students, intended to promote the process of "direct acculturation" which provides for familiarization of a representative of another socio-cultural and linguistic environment with the norms of American society;

5) The use of video content of two types, namely: socio-culturally oriented content (characterized by films which raise pressing social issues important for American society and also present different cultural specifics such as traditions, holidays, sports, etc.) and professionally-oriented content (specialized content with the use of professional vocabulary).

Therefore, the use of video content in the adaptation process promotes the development of socio-cultural and linguistic competencies among foreign students through obtaining a large amount of information and results in the formation of necessary communication and cultural units important for effective interpersonal interaction.

Promising areas for further research of adaptation methods implied in higher education institutions in the USA include the following: the effectiveness of the use of audio, textual and electronic means promoting the formation of the necessary linguistic and cultural skills.

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