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**УНИВЕРСИТЕТСКАЯ ТРАНСКУЛЬТУРНАЯ СРЕДА:  
ПОВСЕДНЕВНЫЕ КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ПРАКТИКИ  
СТУДЕНТОВ-ИНОСТРАНЦЕВ**

**UNIVERSITY TRANSCULTURAL SPACE: EVERYDAY  
CULTURAL PRACTICE OF FOREIGN STUDENTS**

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Показано, что площадкой для отслеживания динамики транскультурных процессов является образовательная среда. Академическая мобильность позволяет интегрировать собственные культурные атрибуты человека в новую среду, распространяя тенденции транскультурности. Мобильность трансформирует мировосприятие, пространственно-временные и культурные границы. Сделан вывод о том, что транскультурная среда стимулирует к осознанию ситуации наличия «своей» и «чужой» культуры, необходимости выбирать оптимальные пути взаимодействия с «Другим», сравнительному анализу культур через повседневные культурные практики, толерантному отношению к представителям других культур и самовосприятию в ином культурном контексте.

**Ключевые слова:**

Транскультура, повседневность, интеркультурализм, культурные практики, мультикультурализм.

Modern analytical researches of transculture reflect interchange and adaptation specific features of one culture in the context of the other. They have occurred on the basis of a constructive dialogue trends between cultures, intensified in the context of globalization processes, and led to creation of intercultural phenomenon. Transcultural investigation allows isolating penetration of a subject into a new cultural space while maintaining its own cultural identity.

On the one hand, transculture is a lens through which it is possible to study the relationships of cultural flows in details. Such flows blur out of borders between regions of the world. The given analytical approach allows us to examine the cultural attributes as discursive constructions. On the other hand, transculture can be considered as a characteristic focusing on which the person seeks to re-configuration of his own culture in accordance with new trends. In this case an alien symbol, sign, tradition or thing acquire an aura of «his own», but it does not become such in real.

A very perspective platform for controlling the dynamics of the transcultural processes is educational sphere in general and the university space in particular. The latter is an active conductor because of the intensive students' academic mobility. They integrate their own cultural attributes into a new space, thus spreading the trend of transculturalism. Their mobility transforms their world-view, mentality, space-time and cultural boundaries.

Academic mobility, which becomes more and more actual in Russia in the connection with the full integration in the Bologna process, stimulates students to awareness of the situation, «their own» and «foreign» cultures. Also it makes them to choose the most optimal way of interaction with «the other», to make cross cultural analysis through everyday cultural practices, to be tolerant towards the members of other cultures and to self-perception in the different cultural context.

Not long time ago it was easy enough to define the cultural environment of a university where foreign students get train, as a multicultural space. In many dictionaries multiculturalism is understood as the preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society, as a state or nation. Moreover, it seemed that the given term described the boundaries of an everyday real-life culture and at the same time – the normative culture. It appears that for actors themselves discourse of multiculturalism could be the basis of the emerging language of self description within a particular cultural sphere [1]. However, it did not happen because of some circumstances. One of many reasons may be marked as an incomplete process in European countries and carrying over of explanatory schemes to the post-Soviet culture space.

Among the culture experts and anthropologists the discourse of multiculturalism was the dominant for a very long period. Quite soon it was replaced by the interculturalism. Both categories – multiculturalism and interculturalism – were oriented to the funded model of description of the culture multipartite, the complexity of the cultural environment or cultural field [2]. Moreover, both terms are weak because they could not describe completely students' participation in the social and cultural practices of a given cultural field.

Frankly speaking, we have some doubts about the term «transculturalism». If it can be developed a proper, correct and valid theory, that never and on no consideration cannot be included in the cultural language of self description because of its main content points? Only transcultural sensitivity which is expressed most clearly in the issues of migration, intermediate, transitional and just defining the existential situation of the subject of this world (who was torn from his/her native culture), let to suggests that the transcultural theory has some explanatory potential.

We attempt to reconstruct the most significant milestones of transcultural theory on the basis of texts of interviews of foreign students of the Tomsk Polytechnic University. Even so, we felt it appropriate to turn to the boundaries of anthropology, developed on fundamentally different historical and cultural material by S. Horuzhy, but essentially close to our approach [3].

In the last decades of the XX c. a sustained commitment to the creation of a fundamental, comprehensive view of the human culture was formed. Coveted synthesis had to repair a torn by analytical procedures integrity of the person's cultural being; to implement reintegration of the systematic structural, socio-cultural, psychological approaches which were isolated in the concrete and specific investigations.

In addition, the experience of a new era revealed the unlimited variability, mobility, flexibility not only certain attributes of a person, but the very human nature. Thanks to the experience of modern time we could see a new image of a man, a new anthropological reality, where is now an immutable essential nucleus. Classical European anthropology was essentials and considers a man as an entity or a system of various entities. This approach to the human and his experience, of course, is related to the center of intuition. Moreover, such approach assumed the presence of the essential core, the center of being and is focused on its study and research [4]. Now we could state a fact that researchers demonstrate the interest not to the center or core but to its periphery, boundary, and limit. But the word «border», «limit» seems not very suitable when we talk about the most important trends and patterns of man [5]. Anthropology of the center entered, as S. Horuzhy noted, in confrontation with the anthropology of the border [3]. This caused, in our opinion, the awakening of the interest to such anthropological approach, where a person is complex, multidimensional, where the most minor, imperceptible manifestations that lead to the most important changes and transformations are recreated; where we could see the reconstruction is not only complete, full of events, acts, actions, but also motives, thoughts, which are planned to realize. An analyst of experience in such case is necessary and sufficient.

We have realized a research among the international students who came to study in Tomsk, Russia. The aim of the research is to highlight problems which students face and to understand how these difficulties interfere students to plunge in the cultural space and feel good in it.

The main difficulty and the major problem which foreign students usually face in Russia is the lack of knowledge of Russian – 48 % of students. For 30 % of students it is problem as well but they put it to the second position.

*«The first problem is a language ... When I came to Russia, I did not know a word, I had no idea how to say "hello", "thank you", "goodbye". That's why even ask something simple was not pos-*

*sible. So ... I was in the train from Moscow to Tomsk in one compartment with two elder men. And I could not talk to them! It was horrible» (Purev Munhgaral, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Mongolia).*

Lack of knowledge of Russian language appreciably complicates the access to student integration into learning and training process. Many students could not understand lectures, they could not write notes or summary of information they have heard, or, even more, if they did it they could not understand their notes.

*«At first, I had a strange feeling – I thought that I cannot speak Russian normally. It was terrible feeling. When other students made notes I did nothing because I could not understand a word, I did not have time to write anything, all the letters flying out of my head. It was hard. I understood only "Brbrbrbr-blablaba..." Just the noise of some sort» (Dao Thi Khanh, 5<sup>th</sup> year, Vietnam).*

*«I thought I would never speak Russian. The first feeling I had was like this. And ... it was a pity that a lot of time I missed while I adopted... » (Lu Chang, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, China).*

The most part of respondents also marked that the unusual climate was also a very important problem for them. The particular acuteness of this problem correlated with the fact that many international students came to Russia in winter period because the pre-university programs begin in November–January.

*«It is very warm in my county. And when I came to Russia and Tomsk it was –18 °C. For us it is horrible» (Saad Hashi, 4<sup>th</sup> year, Pakistan).*

*«Winter produced the first and the strongest impression on me. I've never seen snow. Only on TV. When I arrived it was very cold» (Sunday Adongo, 4<sup>th</sup> year, Nigeria).*

About a third part of students marked the complexity in execution of documents among the major problems of the first days in Russia. Also, many foreign students have pointed out the bureaucracy associated with the paperwork. Despite of the fact that the main burden on the migration registration, visa, and recognition of qualification diplomas is organized by the responsible people from the receiving university, the students also face with some difficulties.

Almost one fifth of the foreign students, who came to continue their education in Russia, point out hostile or malevolent attitude of the local residents as one of the main problems. Another 40 % of foreign students also face sometimes with this kind of problem but marked it as inferior.

*«First, they say: "A-ah, an African ..." Many of them have not seen the black people. Some people were careful and circumspect. They even did not want to talk to me. It was scary, but after two months of studying here, they realized that I was a very good and kind guy» (Sunday Adongo, 4<sup>th</sup> year, Nigeria).*

*«Even in my group there are those who even do not talk to me. They think something like – he is different, strange, barbarian ... Well, there are some people. But there are those with whom we communicate without a difference, "Russian–not Russian". And there are those who are do not talk with me» (Li Van Bo, 1<sup>st</sup> year, China).*

*«More unpleasant that in public transport and on the streets people looks weird. Because of it I have feeling of insecurity. My friends who are now studying in Moscow and St. Petersburg, said that there people do not pay attention to them. They said that people in those cities are all busy with their own affairs, and, moreover, people are accustomed to the foreigners. There are not so many foreigners in Tomsk and people still wonder if they see people of different races» (Shubila Kijugo, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Tanzania).*

Especially hard for students that they meet with malevolent, spiteful, ill-disposed attitudes from the local population. Sometimes it is transformed to the evident aggression.

*«I came here and saw the dirty country with unfriendly and surly people. It was very upsetting when I saw that people were laughing at my friends and me when we took a walk. I heard that some of them called us as "nigger", "blacks", laughed as we were monkeys. It was so unpleasant! Of course, this is not a national trait streak. But about 10...15 % of population behave like this» (Evay Damasus, 4<sup>th</sup> year, Nigeria).*

Also among the minor problems students marked difficulties with the everyday occurrence: complexity of meeting and acquaintance with new people, lack of knowledge of the local laws, rules and regulations which are in force in the country and the university, other cultural traditions of the country, indifference and ill-disposed attitude from the university administration. But the majority of

international students do not meet with such problems as difficulty in communication with other students and financial difficulties.

Another serious problem for foreign students in Russia is the lack of habitual and usual food of their native land. Especially difficult for students who are cannot eat a variety of food because of the religious reasons.

*«As for me, I have here two main problems. These are the weather and the food. For example, I'm a vegetarian and it's hard to look for everything required and necessary here. I mean meal. Moreover, for religious reasons, I cannot eat meat, fish, and eggs. Here in supermarkets all vegetables are frozen but not fresh and choice of necessary products is not wide» (Byeong Gyu Song, 1<sup>st</sup> year, Korea).*

*«And I often have problems with my stomach. ... There are very few fruits and vegetables that I usually eat at home, and I miss of our national dishes» (Fam Thi Hoang Hgan, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Vietnam).*

*«Many times it was that I wanted to buy something to eat, but I could not find it in stores. There is no choice of vegetables and fruits in Russia. And in general I could very rarely find products that eat at home, of course. Firstly it was perceived as a problem, but now I get accustomed to this» (Hguen Thi Ba Kuin, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Vietnam).*

It was difficult to be in contact and communicate with the strangers in supermarkets and stores, when students could not find necessary goods, or in the street or in public places.

*«Well, as for people and conversations in the street, it was very hard because I did not know Russian. If I had difficulties in the store, it was hard to get additional information. I tried to ask people in English, but they know it a little and it's better to say that they did not know it at all. And it was a real problem» (Cavagdam Ganyjatac, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Mongolia).*

*«The main problem is that very few people speak English. When I arrived to Tomsk I found that at the airport only one or two people who spoke English and could understand me. Moreover, it was not easy for them to explain me where I should go and what to do. That means, I got off the plane, and could not understand where to go next, where to get the luggage, and no one could tell me what to do. I was embarrassed by this. Especially because of the fact that no one can talk with me and explain everything» (Li Van Bo, 1<sup>st</sup> year, China).*

*«Firstly, when I went out on the street, to the market or walking, it was awful that I do not understand anything» (Shubila Kijugo, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Tanzania).*

The comparison of living conditions in Tomsk with those of the native land of students is not always go in favor of the place of residence at the present time. A high percentage of students (about 50 %) marked that the home conditions were rather better than these. The opposite point of view, that conditions in Russia are rather better than they were in their native land, takes about a quarter of students who come here to study. The attitude to the place of current residence and its comparison with the native country to be directly connected with next point: the less foreign student like the city (current residence), the worse he/she felt than in the native country. However it is important to note that this comparison is affected not only the perception of the place of residence, but many other factors.

More than a half of the students who came to study in Russia consider that Tomsk is a famous city. The opposite opinion is held by less than a one fifth of students. They mark Tomsk as clear, bright, comfortable, friendly but not famous. Approximately a half of the foreign students call the city safe rather than dangerous. However, at least a quarter of respondents have some doubts about it. Among them the 6 % says directly that life here is dangerous. But there are very different opinions whether the city is polite or rude, modern or ancient, native or alien. Though, the overwhelming majority of the international students consider Tomsk is quite polite, modern, and native.

*«Tomsk has become my second home, I love to walk here, to communicate, to learn. This year I'll be the graduate and come back home. But I think I'll come back more than once to my city and alma mater» (Dao Thi Khanh, 5<sup>th</sup> year, Vietnam).*

However, in the research we met quite a lot of opposite students' opinions about Tomsk.

*«The city is like a big village» (Lu Chang, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, China).*

*«Sometimes we are afraid to have rest with Russian people. They think that you will rest well when everyone starts to drink beer. I don't drink, and Russian people blame me. Sometime we fear to talk, too. I prefer if Russians will be like people in France» (Sunday Adongo, 4<sup>th</sup> year, Nigeria).*

*«But I saw that Tomsk is a type of "closed" city. The people here are closed, proud. What else... I was in St. Petersburg, Moscow and there I was like an ordinary foreigner. People normally react on me; they are not looking at me. But here, every day, when I walk in the street (and I've lived here 4 years) or anywhere people are looking at me as at something unusual» (Duba Muhammed, 4<sup>th</sup> year, Lebanon).*

The most important aspect in this research is that the most distinguishing characteristics were found: friendly/unfriendly, safe/dangerous, friendly/aggressive, polite/rude, as well as cultural/uncultured. This is the evidence that the attitude to the city (and to Russia in general), the image of the city and the country depends, above all, on the population and their attitude to foreigners. There are also significant differences in characteristics among students who like and students who do not like the city, such as comfortable/uncomfortable. Note that these characteristics are correlated and they are in general in the students' responses. However, the analysis of opinions of foreign students, who marked the city as the most inconvenient and uncomfortable, shows that they are different from the whole population of students mainly because of the problems which they have met first in Russia – a negative attitude of the local residents. Thus, the negative attitude of the local population to foreign students was the basis of negative attitude to the city where these students study; students consider it as an uncomfortable, awkward and badly organized. But the integration of these students into the cultural space of Russian cities is necessary, because the most part of the foreign students do not leave Russia after graduation. If we could form a positive attitude towards a particular city and the university it let to solve lots of problems beforehand.

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