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Maria Abramova

Institute of Philosophy and Law SB RAS, Russia

The Influence of an Information Environment on the Socio-cultural Adaptation of Youth

Abstract

The article reveals interconnection of the formation of psychosemantic space of the personality and mass media. There is given an example of socio-psychological investigation of the students and pupils from Yakutia (RGNF grant No 12-03-00546a) in which we analyze their attitude to major information sources: broadcast media, print media and Internet media and their impact on the process of the socio-cultural adaptation of the youth. In effect the author comes to the conclusion that at present media does not provide for opportunities of the individual's positive socio-cultural adaptation. It is sets for prior perception of simple semantic textures that are being formed but they do not form the individual's reflexive thinking.

Key words: information, environment, socio-cultural adaptation, mass media, semantic space, picture of the world

Approaches to investigations into socio-cultural adaptation

Within the framework of a sociological approach socio-cultural adaptation includes socialization and an individual's enculturation process which conditions the mastering and creative enrichment of the social experience made up by previous generations (M. Weber, G. Zimmel, F. Tonnies, G.A. Andreeva, I.S. Kon, L.S. Yakovlev). With a culturalogical approach socialization and enculturation are considered to be a process of translating culture from one generation to another, a general mechanism of social legacy that embraces both an environment's spontaneous effects and those which are organized – upbringing, teaching (A. Bandura, U. Bronfenbrenner, W.M. Wentworth, M. Mid, I.S. Kon, A.I. Kovaleva). The factor-institutional approach (Teslenko 2009, p. 19) makes it possible to define socialization and enculturation as the totality of the multi-factor effect of institutions and agents of socialization and enculturation (O. Brim, R. Linton, R. Merton, T. Parsons, B.D. Paryguin, A.V. Petrovsky). An interaction approach is used to consider socialization and enculturation as a significant determinant of interpersonal interaction and

communication without which it is impossible to become a personality that can perceive the picture of the world (J. Mid, Ch. Coolye, L. Kohlberg, R. Hofschtetter, A. Haller, T. Shibutani).

Mechanisms of socialization and enculturation of the person

The main mechanisms of socialization and enculturation of youth are as follows: traditional (by virtue of family and micro-social environment), institutional (by virtue of education and other institutions of society), stylized (by virtue of sub-culture), interpersonal (by virtue of authority figures), reflexive (by virtue of individual experience and realization).

Determination of the person goes on by means of assimilating the system of public values during the process of socialization but in a dynamic competition with its organizer – archetypical system of values (Yazykov 2006, p. 115–118) that is represented in the culture of the society. Thus, having been in a certain semantic space since his birth, a person is continuously under the impact of various signs and symbols that reflect the different value systems of particular social groups, of the society as a whole and as well as those demanding a persistent learning, assimilation and interpretation in order to correct and choose the most rational pattern of behaviour in a specific situation. A person forms his individual psychosemantic space by means of comparing and extending his ideas of the surrounding world and by means of perfecting the process of reality reflection. This space of his is dynamic and under the impact of the changing system of public values that are translated via various mass media, education and family, with the latter forming its individual psychosemantic space.

Formation of psychosemantic space

C. Geertz uses a concept of culture in different senses: 'historically stable image of knowledge embodied in symbols', 'a set of control mechanisms' – a peculiar programme to control human behaviour that is extremely easy to change. 'The concept of culture I have' – Geertz wrote – 'is semiotic by its essence. Sharing Max Weber's opinion according to which man is an animal hanging at the cobweb of senses he himself woven, I see culture as this very cobweb, and its analysis is the matter of not experimental science that is engaged in pursuit of laws but interpretive science engaged in pursuit of meanings (Geertz 2004, p. 110).

Under current conditions the given cobweb is being made up by many persons and communities interested in it, and the regulation of this process is a rather complicated problem. We will deal with a consideration of information technologies and in particular with the mass media as a mesofactor of the formation of the youth adaptive behaviour, B. Anderson's views on the role of print media in the formation of nation as an imaginary political community and on Pierre Bourdieu's thesis that each use of the language is authority relations. Understanding of the language as a system that does not depend on reality originates from F. de Saussure. The Marxist L. Althusser, a structuralism adherent, associates the subject with ideology (S. Hall,

Van Dijk, J. Tompson). M. Foucault considers mechanisms of the subject formation. The discourse theory by E. Laclau and Ch. Mouffe is based on the post-structuralism idea that discourse forms the social world with the help of meanings. The critical discourse-analysis by N. Fairclough shows that discourse is only one of plenty of aspects of any social practice (Belyakova 2007, p. 16–17). Within the framework of the given approach we may conclude that the formation of the psychosemantic environment influences not only the language but behaviour patterns that are fixed in consciousness and subconsciousness, value systems, perception stereotypes, that are translated by mass media. Thus, one of the mechanisms used by publicity to solve such problems so as to surprise, to stop the recipient, to make him forget all other things, to draw his attention to the product advertised, is a shock, stipulated by cognitive and axiological dissonance owing to the vision of a sudden denouement of familiar plots and situations, listening to answers to trite questions. Efficiency of the given mechanism is conditioned by breaking stereotypes, strongly fixed behaviour patterns, public norms. Publicity successfully uses such specific socio-psychological mechanisms as suggestions and imitation. Attractiveness for an individual to go beyond the limits of the available discourse that has been revealed by psychologists contains both a potential for the development of the personality and a danger to form a desadaptive behaviour pattern and different forms of pathologies. However, a solution of the given problem is possible only after discovering the priority of mass media channels relevant to different ages, ethnoses, gender groups and after the analysis of the information presented.

Mass media functions and age groups

First and foremost it is necessary to specify those functions that mass media carries out at various age periods of the person's development. So at the age of five to fifteen a child turns out to be under a stronger influence of such enculturation factors as fellowship with his peers, school, television, the Internet, contacts with earlier unfamiliar persons (teachers, educators, physicians, hobby-group leaders, etc.) besides the influence of his family. It is the time when children have the image of the world formed and which later transforms into the picture of the world. At this age they become acquainted with signs and symbols and later with notions, they master abstract thinking, learn to create abstractions and idealizations thereby they accept the world and identify themselves in it. The mass media at this age fulfills the function of the organizer of some semantic space in which the child is being formed.

At the older age information provided by the mass media makes it possible to complicate, strengthen and put into a certain order new sense chains in the picture of the world that is being formed by the person. Those chains are stipulated by the person's ethnic *Weltanschauung* and national mindset. The core of the picture is 'a national language picture of the world' (Kornilov). According to G.S. Batyguin multimedia text versions bring the written speech to its oral and iconographic sources. The written culture goes back to images, audile and written forms of the text represent two levels of the latter as a semiotic system that functions in different contexts (Batyguin 2001, p. 177).

Types of semantic textures and mass media

The semantic space analysis conducted by E.V. Ulybina (Ulybina 1993, p. 16) made it possible to point out two types of semantic textures. In accordance with one of them simple harmonious images are formed and in accordance with the other one there are complicated contradictory images formed. The simple images are mainly connected with the values of the group (the society as a whole), with values of stabilization and maintaining the status quo; whereas the complicated ones are connected with values of personal development, destruction and overcoming the state of the art (Ulybina 2001, p. 136). The simple harmonious image of the world enables one to keep values of stability, of belonging to a group, it works for intra-group integration – our people are good, alien ones are bad. The contradictory ambivalent image of the world to a greater extent corresponds to the individual's system of values that has outskirts marginal position by their relation to the tribal group – in particular to the values of individual success. Auto-communication aka a mechanism generating senses is a process of bringing into agreement images that are situated in semantic spaces and they are distinguished by the degree of representation in the language and fixation in the discourse (Ulybina 2001, p. 138).

The human psychics development takes place at the boundaries between 'sensible issue of consciousness' and 'public word meanings', it consists of balancing, straining and overcoming the boundary. A.G. Shmelyev (Shmelyev 1994, p. 16) shows that a bigger part of personal attributes in all languages characterizes the adaptivity level of the person which predetermines thereby the behaviour strategies of the individual in his idealized pattern. Since mechanisms of enculturation and, as a consequence, that of adaptation are imitation and identification, senses of shame and guilt, the analysis of channels of incoming information, channels that form the picture of the world, drawn by the person undergoing adaptation, should be carried out while taking into account the behaviour patterns he is offered. Imitation and identification in the given process are positive mechanisms that promote the formation of a certain pattern of behaviour whereas shame and guilt will be mechanisms of prohibition and suppression of the 'abnormal' actions of the child. In examining the content of visual verbal and nonverbal information provided by the mass media we could further describe and analyze the peculiarities of the formation of the youth semantic space and, as a consequence, show both the adaptive and deadaptive patterns of behaviour that are offered for assimilation by various information channels. One should also take into account that in works by A.V. Petrovsky the moment of overcoming the adaptivity is considered as one of the personality's development factors in the process of oversituational activity (Petrovsky 1992).

Description of the study base

Within the framework of the investigation carried out in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) from 2006 to 2010 in accordance with the projects: "The Youth of the Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples of the Republic of Sakha under the Conditions of the Modern Industrial City: Problems of Socio-cultural Adaptation" (RGNF No 07-06-18025e); "Models of Ethnocultural Adaptation of Youth under Conditions of the

Intensification of the Industrial Opening Up of the North (exemplified by the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia))” (RGNF No 08-06-00613a) 3843 people were asked, among them 2235 people at the age of 14 to 18, 1251 people aged 19 to 29, 191 people older than 29 and 166 people who did not indicate their age. Among them there were 1208 Russians, 1943 Sakhas, 319 members of Northern indigenous numerically small peoples, 335 ‘other peoples’ and 38 people who did not indicate their nationality. According to the aim of the investigation the survey was conducted in such cities as Yakutsk, Mirnyi, Nyurengrie and in the countryside of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). All in all the sampling covers the population of 34 *uluses* of the Republic and urban centres. Yakutsk is the capital of the Republic and its cultural and political centre. Mirnyi and Nyurengrie are centers of major industrial regions, both are young.

The surveys were carried out at 26 secondary educational institutions, 16 institutions of junior and secondary vocational education, at colleges and at 13 higher educational institutions and their subsidiaries.

The empirical material of the socio-psychological investigation allows one to further generalize and detect socio-cultural types of the youth with the help of methods of mathematical simulation and statistics within the framework of the grant of the RGNF No 12-03-00546 a “Socio-cultural Types of Youth in Present Day Russia: Ethnic and Regional Determination”. In the article in question we focus our attention on analysing the outcomes of the opinion poll of the auditorium of the young respondents.

Analysis of various prevailing information sources

Answers to the question about the domination of various information sources: TV, the Internet, literature – unequivocally showed that the respondents were in favour of TV domination, this major time-consumer and therefore a leading information channel in the formation of the youth semantic space. Moreover, the survey showed that with the increase of the respondents’ age the share of those in favour of TV did not decrease. The computer appeared to take the second place, therefore the following tendency was observed: the group of those who spend 1–2 hours a day at the computer decreased and the number of respondents who spend more than 4 hours a day increased. This fact is likely to account for the computerization of jobs as a result of which a man turns out to be latently connected with the computer all day long. The most demoralizing fact is the time young people spend on reading (books, magazines, newspapers). Two hours a day is what respondents of all age groups spend. However, it is necessary to mention another peculiarity in the perception of different information sources. So, reading, which has the lowest indices of time spent, turns out to have a higher index of use frequency, 89% (the percentage was calculated on the basis of the encounter frequency of the respondents’ answers as to their use of this information source). Almost the same result was obtained from the analysis of the TV use frequency, 92%, the computer coming in second, with 79%.

It is necessary to note that the print production use frequency increases with the age which, nevertheless, does not result in an increase in the time use amount (Fig. 1). However, at the age of 17–24 years the computer use frequency somewhat decreases (76% in comparison with 91% of senior school students).

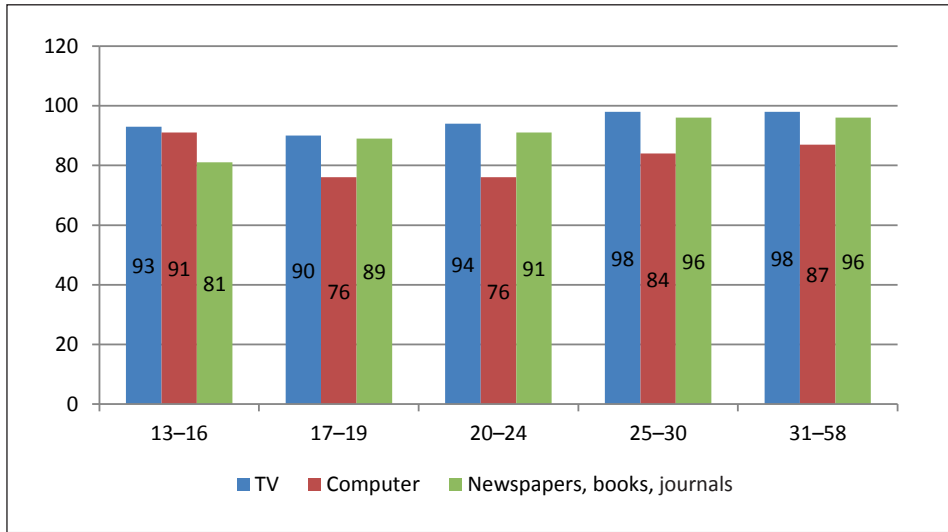


Fig. 1. Studying youth's use frequency of different information sources and its dependence on age (%)

This result can account for a number of students from country areas, those who study at universities and vocational schools and live during this period in dormitories where the use of the computer is limited. But it is necessary to note that on the whole the index of computer use frequency (its use being not only that of an information source) is significantly lower than the use of other sources.

Methods of determining the degree of respondents' socio-cultural adaptedness

Within the frame of the investigation aims we paid much attention to studying the adaptation problem and degree of youth adaptedness *per se*. Social self-feeling (the term is used in its socio-psychological interpretation) serves as a generalized criterion to determine the adaptedness level as a result of the adaptation process. It is determined by integrating two indices: that of being satisfied with life and that of optimism, there was assessed the positive character of the perception:

- of a person himself (including his social and ethnic identity), his life state-of-the-art and their future;
- of the close surrounding;
- of the future of the ethnos and of the country.

A subjective estimation of life satisfaction was fixed by four positions: yes; sooner yes than no; sooner no than yes; no. The vision of their future was determined by five levels: very optimistic; optimistic; middle; pessimistic; very pessimistic.

Those respondents who simultaneously marked their life satisfaction with 'yes' and 'sooner yes than no' and the optimism degree – with 'very optimistic' were characterized as 'well adapted'. Those who chose the same responses for life satisfaction but whose vision of the future was 'good', which testified to a decrease in the respondents' optimism level, were placed together in the group of 'mildly adapted'.

All other combinations of responses – of those who perceived their future in a pessimistic way – independent of whether they were satisfied with their life at the time or not – were determined as badly adapted.

The major indices of the process of socio-cultural adaptation are: social optimism, established social and cultural identity, positive 'I-concept', values, tolerance, striving for integration acculturation model, potential migration. Together with the analysis of social self-feeling these indices give, as we think, a complete idea of the process and state of socio-cultural adaptation both of individuals and groups.

Degree of adaptedness and time of media use

While studying the information source effect on the degree of the youth adaptedness we noticed that the indices of school children adaptedness increased with a decrease in the time amount that was spent on watching TV. So, among those who do not watch TV at all there appeared 52% of those who were well adapted. This tendency remains evident until the age of 24. For instance, among those who do not watch TV 48% were well adapted, while among those who watch TV for four and more hours a day this figure was 38%.

As to computer use the picture is somewhat different. Those school students who do not generally work with the computer feel uncomfortable (25% of those being well adapted). Even work for less than an hour a day increases the degree of socio-cultural adaptation (57% of those being well adapted). But with the increase of time spent at the computer the number of well adapted school students begins to decrease. So, among those who work for four and more hours a day there are 40% of those who are well adapted. Among first-year students (19 years old) of higher educational institutions and colleges those who spend more than two hours a day at the computer are worse adapted. But during the subsequent years of a degree course the situation changes, which may mainly be accounted for by the increase in the quantity of work, both studying and professional, that is connected with a computer. This tendency continues in the group of older age students which would rather testify for the fact that people professionally connected with the computer better adjust themselves in principle to the modern world.

As to reading books, among school students those who read more than 4 hours a day prove unequivocally to be better adapted (59%). This tendency changes only by the age of 20. At this age better adapted students are represented by those students who spend 1–2 hours a day on reading (43% of those being well adapted and 19% of badly adapted). It is a pity but book-worms pack the rows of the badly adapted (41%). With the passing of the years the tendency becomes less apparent and by the age of 30 the number of hours spent on reading does not become a determining factor in an individual's adaptedness.

Gender specificity

In considering gender peculiarities of the respondents who prefer watching TV, Internet search and reading books we found that men's being fond of using the

computer more than women's appeared to be the only difference. So, 61% of young men responded that they used the computer for three hours a day and more. At the same time for representatives of the fair sex 38% were of the same inclination and 26% of the female respondents did not use it at all.

As for reading books, women read more than men. So, there are 48% of men and 36% of women who read for less than an hour a day and there are 35% of men and 58% of women who read for two hours a day and more. No conspicuous distinctions by time spent in watching TV were found. The results obtained also indirectly confirm the data on the use frequency of the information channel depending on the sex of the respondent (Fig. 2).

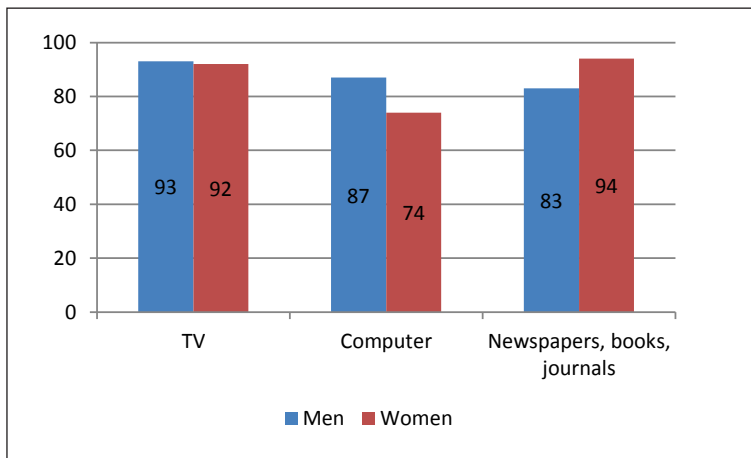


Fig. 2. Frequency of working youth's use of information sources depending on sex (%)

Town – country-side correlation

We assumed that the obtained results could be to a certain extent conditioned by the respondents' place of residence. Among those who responded to our questions there were not only urban but rural inhabitants for whom a computer, perhaps, was not so typical as for those who live in town. There is a possibility that in the country the access to the computer is but embarrassed. The analysis by residence place (in town – in the country) showed that the majority of both rural and urban inhabitants watched TV for 2–4 hours a day, neither they differ in the time spent for reading. A significant difference is only in determining the time spent on using the computer. Urban students and pupils spend more time on the computer.

The time spent for reading books is equally insufficient for both rural and urban youth. Therefore, pupils who chose the answer of not reading at all are numerous both in the urban group and rural group: 18% and 24% respectively. Their share decreases with age but the number of those who read books does not increase.

A primary analysis of the evidence of the investigation showed that for boys aged 13–16 it is most typical to spend more than 4 hours a day at the computer. For urban girls of the same age a shorter period of 2–3 hours a day is typical. Young men from the countryside (47%) have a preference of using the computer for more than 4 hours a day. At the same time 17% of rural girls aged 16 do not use the computer at all. It becomes typical to use computer for more than 4 hours a day both for urban and rural young men. However, the share of rural women who do not use the computer increases in comparison with the previous age group (41%). For the group of those who are 25 years old and older all urban and rural respondents showed an obvious inclination for using the computer for longer hours. The number of rural women who do not use a computer decreases (24%).

The analysis of the frequency of various information source uses (Fig. 3) also displayed much fewer computer uses amongst the rural youth.

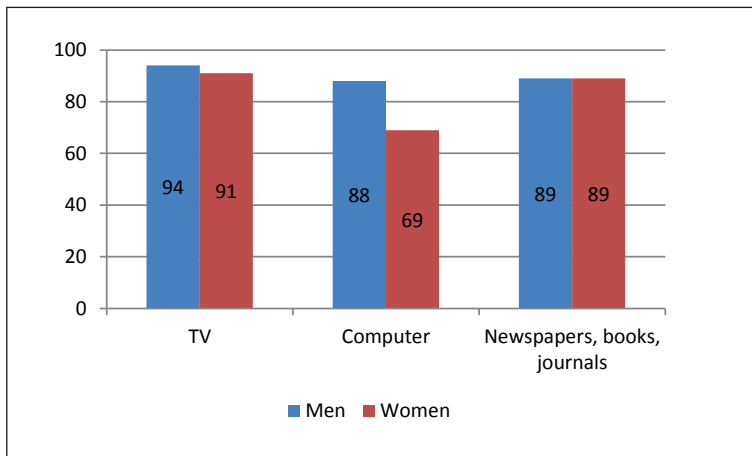


Fig. 3. Sources of receiving information by students depending on permanent place of residence (%)

The analysis of the influence of the time spent taking in information from a certain broadcasting channel in terms of gender showed that only for those men who do not use the computer this fact constitutes one of the indices of the causes of bad adaptedness (38%). The factor of poor adaptedness for rural women is a lack of their wish to read (44% of those badly adapted). In all other cases gender, residence type and the amount of time spent on this or that information source showed no interdependence.

Social environment, choice of mass media source and adaptation

Besides generalized and rather large groups one can consider the influence of the social environment of a particular city on the formation of youth’s temporary preferences for this or that information source (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1. Influence of socio-cultural environment on youth's preferences for information sources (% in group)

Information sources	Time amount per day	Yakutsk		Nyurengri		Mirnyi	
		Age groups					
		13–18	19–29	13–18	19–29	13–18	19–29
TV	Less than an hour	14	13	17	12	19	19
	1–2 hours	25	27	23	19	24	25
	2–4 hours	34	37	29	38	29	25
	More than 4 hours	17	19	20	21	21	21
	I do not watch TV	9	5	12	10	7	11
Computer	Less than an hour	17	14	15	8	15	9
	1–2 hours	17	17	17	19	19	20
	2–4 hours	23	18	29	37	32	33
	More than 4 hours	19	24	24	20	26	25
	I do not use a computer	25	26	15	17	8	13
Newspapers, books, magazines	Less than an hour	42	43	36	40	39	45
	1–2 hours	29	33	27	32	25	29
	2–4 hours	13	13	15	10	12	6
	More than 4 hours	6	5	4	3	4	2
	I do not read them	9	7	19	14	19	18

Source: own research

The outcomes of the analysis showed that watching TV, as a time-consumer, was preferred by the majority of the youth of the city of Yakutsk, and with the age growth the share of those watching TV for 2–4 hours a day increased sharply. In the city of Nyurengri the share of TV adherents watching it for a long time also sharply increased with age. However, in the city of Mirnyi this share decreased with the age growth of the respondents.

There was a wonderful fact observed in the city of Yakutsk, where a quarter of the youth answered that they did not use the computer at all. While in the city of Mirnyi the share of those who chose that answer at the age of 18 was 8%, at the age of 19–29 it was 13%. It is also possible to see that in the city of Mirnyi one third of the youth use computer up to 4 hours a day, these are both pupils and students. In the city of Nyurengri a little fewer than one third of pupils and students at the age of 18 spend the same amount of time on the computer, however, since the age of 19 the share of such students abruptly increases up to 37%. Perhaps, this fact accounts for the organization of the youth's leisure time in these cities, in this connection young people prefer fellowship with friends on the Internet or just cannot find any other pastime in their actual life. While the youth from the city of Yakutsk are provided for more facilities for their spare time activities without using the computer.

It is a pity but as to reading the situation in all cities is complicated. Of most interest there is a fact that it is the non-reading youth in the city of Yakutsk, making up the smallest share, that feels much worse with regard to the adaptation prospect; with 38% of them being well adapted and 32% badly adapted. At the time when 16.5% of respondents in Nyurengri said that they did not read at all, the percentage

of those well adapted was 43. In Mirnyi there was a high percentage of those badly adapted among this youth category (41%), with 33% being well adapted. Thus, we have got a chance to be graphically convinced that the degree of adaptedness is determined not only by realization or non-realization of the individual's needs but also by the hierarchy of values that is being imposed on them by their social environment.

Ethnos and mass media

Distribution of respondents by ethnic markers showed that representatives of ingenious numerically small peoples preferred to spend a longer time at the screens of TV sets while computer use and reading books took them about the same time as it took the representatives of other ethnic groups. In comparing the respondents' answers with their degree of adaptedness it was shown that the degree of Sakha youth adaptedness was negatively impacted by their computer use for more than 4 hours a day (30% of those badly adapted) (Tab. 2).

Tab. 2. Distribution of respondents' answers on time spent using information sources (ethnic groups, %)

Information sources	Time spent daily	Sakhas				Russians			
		13–18 years		19–29 years		13–18 years		19–29 years	
		Degree of adaptedness							
		WA*	BA*	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA
TV	Less than an hour	41	21	43	26	36	28	36	19
	1–2 hours	46	20	44	22	46	25	48	23
	2–4 hours	43	22	40	20	43	22	39	24
	More than 4 hours	35	29	34	27	45	24	38	32
	I do not watch TV	38	16	46	25	53	23	44	36
Computer	Less than an hour	54	19	47	17	51	26	39	30
	1–2 hours	40	18	33	22	45	22	38	26
	2–4 hours	35	20	41	20	40	27	45	27
	More than 4 hours	41	30	44	22	40	25	47	23
	I do not use a computer	40	23	39	30	49	20	31	27
Newspapers, books, magazines	Less than an hour	38	21	41	23	40	22	41	26
	1–2 hours	46	17	38	20	45	26	51	22
	2–4 hours	47	24	43	24	49	20	33	33
	More than 4 hours	45	18	46	26	52	19	...	...
	I do not read them	33	39	40	38	42	31	27	30

* WA – well adapted; BA – badly adapted

Source: own research

At the older age the adaptedness is negatively impacted by the absence of computer use, which is typical both of Sakhas and Russians. But for the indigenous numerically small peoples of the North and for representatives of the 'other people' groups this inference is not true. So, in the group of the indigenous numerically small peoples of the North who do not use computer and whose age is from 19 to 29 years there were about 50% of the well adapted, 17% of the badly adapted, but at the age of 13–18 years, on the contrary, there were 30% and 44% respectively. This sooner testifies to the fact that the transformation tendencies typical of the central areas of Yakutia had not yet affected very much the territories of the primordial residence of these indigenous numerically small peoples of the North, which, in effect, actualized the computer impact on the process of youth adaptation to a smaller degree. As to reading there remains some interconnection – independent on respondents' ethnicity – between the time spent on reading daily and the degree of the respondents' adaptedness: the longer the time pupils spend on reading the better adapted they are.

Video preferences

It should be noted that the form of information reflection that is represented by TV as well as its ability to affect visual and auditory receptors of respondents mainly condition the domination of the given information source in creating the youth's semantic space. And as a result it stipulated peculiarities of the psychosemantic environment in which the youth are being brought up.

Tab. 3. Distribution of respondents' answers on the TV programmes they prefer (%)

Types of video production	Age					Sex		Residence		Ethnic groups			
	13–16	17–19	20–24	25–30	31–58	Male	Female	Town	Country-side	Sakhas	Russians	Indigenous peoples of the North	Other peoples
News	12	15	19	24	27	20	15	18	17	18	16	13	16
Feature films	15	20	23	26	24	21	20	20	21	22	19	14	18
Programmes on history and culture	3	5	7	11	12	6	6	7	6	7	5	6	6
Films about the lives of famous people	10	9	10	11	14	6	13	10	10	10	8	13	11
Shows	20	15	14	7	7	13	16	15	13	12	18	13	15
Documentaries	15	14	12	13	11	17	11	13	14	13	14	16	14
Music broadcasts	19	17	12	5	3	12	15	13	15	13	14	17	15
Others	6	5	4	2	3	5	4	5	5	4	5	6	5

The evidence of the survey confirmed our suppositions. Thus, the pupils prefer shows and music broadcasts, students of secondary special educational institutions and the first year students of higher educational institutions prefer feature films. With age the significance of news broadcasts grows. Therefore, we noticed that the degree of adaptedness of secondary special educational institution students and the first year students of higher educational institutions in the city of Yakutsk who indicated that they preferred to see films about biographies of well-known people was essentially higher. As to men, they happened to have a dominating interest in adventure and historical films, while women were certain to be prioritised on romance. Country inhabitants displayed an increased interest in adventure and melodrama genre, which is also confirmed by the ethnic population section. So, representatives of the Sakha people and indigenous numerically small peoples of the North have a pronounced inclination to see films of these genres unlike Russians and the group of 'other peoples'.

Consequently it is possible to suppose, with the interest rating of the respondents taken into account, that the channel is strictly oriented not at the diversity of genres, at meaningful television productions of different levels, but at taste simplicity and at a fairly low level of abstract delivery of symbolic means. All this creates a simple semantic space and makes it possible for the target audience to develop a sense of community in fact by establishing the basis of identification criteria for a particular group. And even after becoming mature and paying attention to more complicated and diverse styles, genres and contents a young person who had assimilated this simple audiovisual code arranges new meaningful chains on the basis of audiovisual means provided for them in his youth.

The analysis of film genre preferences showed that biographical films enhance youth adaptedness and adherence to historical and fantasy films on the contrary makes youth's adaptedness worse which with all probability testified to some retreat from the real world and stipulates some consequences in the form of desadaptedness for the respondent. This effect of this retreat from the real world has been noted by many psychiatrists and psychologists as a new type of drug addiction in their investigations¹.

Hierarchy of computer use types

We also considered the issue of computer types young people use. The analysis showed that the hierarchical arrangement of computer use types for respondents of the group aged 13–16 years was as follows: music – the first place, games – the second place, the Internet search – the third place. On becoming students of a higher educational institution respondents almost do not change their preferences but the share of those who use word processing programmes increases. Since

¹ See e.g. *Humanitarian investigations in the Internet*, ed. A.E. Voiskunovsky. Moscow: "Mozhaisk-Terra", 2000, 432P.; EV Zmanovskaya, *Devianthology (physiology of deviating behaviour)*. Moscow: Akademia, 2003; K.S. Young, R.C. Rodgers, *International Addiction: Personality traits associated with its development*//Paper presented at the 69th annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, 1998, www.netaddiction.com/articles/personalitycorrelates.htm

the age of twenty the programme hierarchy changes essentially: word processing programmes turn out to take the first place, games remain in the second place, and the Internet is in the third. At the age of 25 the preferences shift towards using word processing programmes (1st place), the second place goes to visiting web-sites and the third – to games. There are gender and territory specificities: if for men it is more typical to work with programmes of an interactive milieu, for women – word processing programmes predominate. For the urban youth the computer use consists first of all in listening to music (25%), secondly, website information searches (22%) and thirdly, games (21%); 18% of respondents work with texts. As to the rural youth the first place is taken by games (26% of the responses), music comes second (24%), and word processing programmes occupy the third place (21%) with 17% of the respondents engaged in site browsing.

We considered how the use of various programmes and a certain type of computer work affected the degree of adaptedness (Tab. 4).

Tab. 4. Influence of computer programmes use on the degree of youth adaptedness (% in group)

Age groups	Work at the computer is mainly connected with															
	Graphics		Animation		Music		Games		Word processing programmes		Writing one's own programme		Internet		Others	
	Adaptedness degree															
	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA
13–18	38	29	41	20	44	23	41	24	46	21	42	25	44	23	43	31
19–29	51	21	57	23	37	22	37	23	41	23	31	29	43	25	38	30

Source: own research

So, we can see that musical programmes (chiefly non-professional programmes for listening to music) become with age a factor negatively influencing the youth adaptation. Equally computer games begin to influence adaptation in a negative way and so partially does writing one's own programmes, which most probably condition decreases in the communicative qualities of the respondents, and this fact may be qualified as a negative professional effect.

Animation and graphics programmes make for adaptedness, which accounts both for the professional requirements in as far as designers should know how to deal with customers and the creative nature of this kind of activity.

The Internet

The revealed specificity of the Internet milieu use showed that its most important function is an informative function. Independent on age, sex, and the residence place of the respondents the first place was taken by the activity of information search in the Internet. The second and third places changed in accordance with the age dynamics of the respondents. If for the respondents aged 13–16 years the first

place is taken by downloading music and films, then for those aged 25 and older the second place turned out to belong to Internet communication.

In determining the gender specificity the Internet communication was shown to take the second place with women and the third place with regard to men. While for men the process of downloading films and music from the Internet still remains second. The growth of interest in the Internet as a source of information becomes more vividly expressed with age. At the same time communication needs and the downloading of films and music gradually decrease both for men and women, both rural and urban ones.

It is a practically unanimous respondents' preference of fellowship with real people rather than with virtual friends, which is gratifying. At the same time taking into account that almost half teenagers indicated that they used the computer for more than 4 hours a day there appeared some doubt whether they had enough time left for communication in their actual lives. Substitution of the communication type is likely to proceed in an imperceptible way, with transition to systems of chats, ICQ and other versions of 'real' contact. At the same time the need for contact by means of the Internet is emphasized most often by those respondents whose job requires information technologies.

We also considered the connection of our respondents' activity kind in the Internet with their age category and adaptedness degree (Tab. 5).

The revealed data enable us to draw the conclusion that for the age group of 20–24 years a desire to communicate on the Internet fatally affects their degree of adaptedness so far as it is that very boundary when young people are to realize themselves in the socium for them to come to be both professionals and to find their 'second half'. With age the opposite is the case as communication on the Internet enables people to adapt themselves better.

Tab. 5. Interdependence of Internet activity kind, age group and degree of youth adaptedness (% in the group)

Internet activity kind	Age groups									
	13–16		17–19		20–24		25–30		31–58	
	Degree of adaptedness									
	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA	WA	BA
Information searches	48	23	43	23	43	22	45	22	46	20
Communication	46	22	42	24	39	25	44	16	54	17
Book downloading	...	...	47	22	41	29	...	...	...	...
Music and film downloading	46	20	40	24	37	24	40	10	...	...

Source: own research

Books

It should be noted that the outcomes of the survey on reading time proved to be about the same for all the ethnic groups. We were interested in the youth preference for those few hours they spend on reading (Tab. 6).

Tab. 6. Distribution of the respondents' answers on printed matter preference (%)

Printed matter kind	Age					Sex		Residence		Ethnic groups			
	13–16	17–19	20–24	25–30	31–58	Male	Female	Town	Countryside	Sakhas	Russians	Indigenous peoples of the North	Other peoples
Newspapers	18	28	40	52	55	40	29	33	35	40	26	22	29
Books	29	31	26	20	20	23	31	29	25	25	31	32	30
Magazines	53	41	34	28	25	37	40	38	39	35	43	46	41

Source: own research

With the age increase of the respondents there emerges an explicit trend to prefer information provided for in the newspaper format. Magazines are of a bigger interest for teenagers. In considering the gender aspect of the data expense in question it should be noted that the women's auditorium is characterized by a smaller preference for magazines and books when compared to men. The latter prefer reading newspapers. It can be also noted that with age the interest in books significantly decreases. The preference of this or that type of printed reading material does not account for the place of residence. Books are in smaller demand than newspapers and magazines.

The given fact can be explained by an acute need in fresh news and by a certain interest of the respondents in feeling to be a participant of events both in the country and abroad. At the same time it is possible to suppose that the content of newspapers has recently become less informative. The number of articles of a clearly advertising nature increases as well as the volume of information that can be labelled 'tabloid'. The same holds true for both paper information carriers and electronic newspaper sites. An increasing number of publications on various asocial patterns of people's behaviour eventually becomes one of the factors in washing off the boundaries between the notions of 'social norm' and 'anomie'. Thus, taking into account the above mentioned mechanisms of a person's socio-cultural adaptation we can conclude that the content of the press as well as TV broadcasts in an electronic form cannot be unambiguously referred to factors having a positive impact on enculturation. Moreover, it is possible to suppose that by taking into account a trite interpretation of events which results in washing off norms and rules of behaviour and as a consequence ideas of the moral and morality, the mass media greatly affects the formation of a semantically simplified space, which leads to the formation of youth mob-culture.

Media space: TV – Internet (computer) – Books

On calculating the average time that our respondents spend on using all these kinds of information sources daily we obtained a figure of 7 hours. The second place is taken by those who use only the computer and watch TV for 6 hours a day and in the third place there were respondents who imbibe information either from TV

broadcasts and reading books or from the Internet (computer): five hours is the time they spend on familiarizing themselves with these communication channels.

Conclusions

In summary it would be good to make an inference as one of the results of the investigation that both the rural and urban youth of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) have an obvious aspiration to use all possible capacities of information technologies in their daily life. There is only one group that is excluded from this process, this is a group of rural women for whom the computer does not have such an important function as it does for professional adaptation in a modern society. The primary analysis of the qualitative parameters of the information apprehended by the respondents showed that the students were prone to a pragmatic approach to the selection of available sources, with the selection stipulated by learning and professional tasks. It is a pity but it was necessary to admit that one of the source selection criteria was not its meaningful comprehensiveness but the brilliance of the applied audiovisual means which enhanced the formation of the simple semantic space and the assimilation of formalized behaviour patterns that conditioned the formation of youth mob-culture. The given situation is to some extent neutral for accomplishing the process of the person's adaptation so far as the use and interpretation of materials offered by the mass media will in many aspects depend on values and ethical norms of the individual. Nevertheless, one should pay attention to the mosaic character of the material offered by diverse information channels to the contemporary person for formalization and to washing off norms and ideas of morals and morality as the basis of moral behaviour pattern of the person which undoubtedly affects the mechanisms of the adaptation process such as imitation, identification and senses of guilt and shame.

We can also note that an increase of time spent on watching TV does not assist the adaptation of the individual, neither does the enthusiasm of virtual fellowship at the age under 25. Time reduction spent on reading and submerging into the professional world of computer program designers have a negative effect on you as demonstrated. The specificity of the socio-cultural milieu of the city of Mirnyi and the city of Nyurengri to a certain degree stipulates the formation of an information source hierarchy as well as the choice of this or that TV channel and this or that broadcast. The social milieu of the city of Yakutsk, being more complicated with respect to its semantic aspect, presupposes the formation of youth groups on the basis of their interests and mode of life. This strategy eventually brings about a decrease in the social milieu of the town as a whole by its effect degree and it also stipulates a significant impact of the subcultures in which the individual is being in the making. On the one hand, the situation in question does not allow one to assess the adapting effect of significant factors within the adaptation process such as TV, the Internet, and education as a whole, because each microgroup has priorities of its own. On the other hand, this strategy makes it possible to draw the conclusion that the socio-cultural milieu of the city of Yakutsk with its more complicated semantic structure conditions a growth in the significance of the individual's personal choice and the individual's responsibility for the process of socio-cultural adaptation.

The evidence of the given investigation makes it possible to draw the conclusion that the mass media means of the life space formation take a special place in the life of the person. The role of the media has been so prominent that the modern society is already referred to not as 'informatized' but as 'mediatized', i.e. dependent on media effect. The increasingly expanding media-space affects the formation of life goals and attitudes, value hierarchies, behaviour patterns of the youth nowadays. And in this connection the development of the critical thinking of recipients, the development of their tastes and the formation of a motivated analytic apprehension of the available media information are becoming all the more pressing.

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Wpływ środowiska informacyjnego na socjo-kulturową adaptację młodzieży

Streszczenie

Artykuł ujawnia połączenia między tworzeniem psychosemnacyjnej osobowości a środkami masowego przekazu. Podano przykład społeczno-psychologicznych badań nad studentami i uczniami z Jakucji (RGNF, numer dotacji 12-03-00546a), w których analizujemy ich stosunek do źródeł informacyjnych: telewizji, prasy i Internetu, i ich wpływu na proces adaptacji społeczno-kulturowej młodzieży. W efekcie autor dochodzi do wniosku, że we współczesnych mediach nie ma miejsca na ich pozytywny wpływ w tej sferze. Media tworzą bowiem proste semantyczne struktury, ale nie kształtują osób myślących refleksyjnie.