 Research Article

Identity construction and self-identification of the protagonist in the film media discourse: Multi-modal linguo-semiotic approach

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to identity construction and self-identification of the protagonist in the film media discourse. Many aspects of our life are influenced by modern media, among which feature films play a significant role. The convergence of visual and auditory channels of perception determines the multi-modal nature of the film media discourse, which in turn contributes to the successful dissemination of the ideas embodied on the screen. The main purpose of the paper is to identify special tactics that are used in film media discourse to demonstrate the stages of the protagonist's self-identification and identity construction. The research is conducted on the basis of films "Chronicle of amorous accidents" and "Courier". The multi-modal linguo-semiotic approach is interpreted in the work as a set of linguo-semiotic techniques used in order to study the integrative influence on the viewer's perception process. It implies the consolidation of functions of human first and second signal systems to construct specific meaning and thus to intervene into the viewers' cognitive activity. The linguo-semiotic analysis of the data obtained in the study has resulted in the development of an innovative and effective model that demonstrates the existence of a coherent merger of the five tactics and three modes in linguo-cultures. The perspective is a contrasting linguo-semiotic study of the communicative behavior of the protagonists in the modern film media discourse with an emphasis on intercultural differences.

Keywords: film media discourse, protagonist, adolescent, self-identification, identity construction, multi-modal linguo-semiotic approach, visual (images) mode, auditory (verbal) mode, cognitive (mental) mode, linguo-culture

INTRODUCTION

The study of screen-mediated communication has gained an increased interest and attention in recent years in different cultures. Its research vectors have extended over different scientific fields including linguistics, cognitive science, psycho- and sociolinguistics to name just a few.

Some objects of study require a multi-disciplinary approach to their investigation. Among them there are such phenomena as adolescents' self-identification and identity construction. The stages of these complex processes can be traced on multimodal film media discourse material, which allows observing the development of an adolescents' view of themselves by analyzing their life experiences, relationships with other people (characters) and their worldview formed under specific historical and social context. It is fundamental to consider that film media discourse provides quite faithful and accurate representation of natural communication–symbiosis of verbal and non-verbal elements: texts (dialogues, monologs), gestures and postures of actors, setting, etc.

To underline the significance of the object of the study we will emphasize the importance of the positive influence of mass (media) communication (Kjærgaard et al., 2011; Nurutdinova et al., 2020; Protassova, 2021; Zheltukhina et al., 2017) in general and films on the development and formation of a happy, open-minded people, empathetic and at the same time successful and productive members of society.

Thus, there is a clear need for theoretical insights into the mechanisms involved in the adolescents' self-identification and identity construction processes, as well as the grounds for self-efficacy and self-esteem.

The aim of the research is to reveal and describe a set of linguo-semiotic tactics realized in multimodal film media discourse demonstrating the process of protagonists' (adolescents') self-identification and identity correction or construction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The principles of modern study of self-identification and the dynamics of its formation (Bamberg et al., 2011), the specificity of adolescents' ethnic self-identification (Abramova et al., 2020; Behtoui, 2021; Curry & Lee, 2021; Jugert et al., 2018; Tameryan et al., 2019), the peculiarity of the current and future self-conceptualization (Koen et al., 2016), professional (Nanyangwe et al., 2021; Yang & Bacouel-Jentjensm, 2019), religious (Lipnicka & Peciakowski, 2021; Smith et al., 2018), social self-identification (Galupo et al., 2015; Jung, 2020) as well as identity construction (Lawless, 2014; Luyckx et al., 2006; Qazi & Shah, 2017; Slay et al., 2011; Vignoles et al., 2006) are rooted in the domains of philosophy, psychology and sociology. The paper includes a brief overview of the basic concepts of self-identification and identity construction presented in the listed fields.

Self-identification as a social categorization of oneself and identity construction as the process of developing a vision of oneself are viewed in the paper in two perspectives:

(1) as the development of the film character (the protagonist), the formation of his/her personality through the communication with the other characters, the engagement in socio-discursive practices, and the necessity to make vital decisions and

(2) as a possible effect the multimodal film discourse might have on the viewers (Jewitt, 2009).

Multidisciplinary Theoretical Fundamentals for the Study of Self-Identification and Identity Construction

The study of self-identification and identity construction we will begin with a brief analytical review of some theoretical principles developed in the fields of different sciences but forming the basis of the identity study and focusing on either individual or collective–"individual-specific and universal" (Stadnik, 2015).

Philosophical concept of personality consists in determining the relationship of a person with the world and with himself/herself. Despite the fact that personality is formed in the process of interaction with other community members (Boeva-Omelechko et al., 2018; Chupryna et al., 2018), the significant point of the philosophical approach to the concept of identity is the consideration of a person as an autonomous unity of certain qualities that allow an individual to be a socially significant being. The important feature of the

philosophical approach to identity construction is the focus on an adult person who has already been formed and possesses a particular moral integrity and a sense of the self. Among the most significant components of personality structure, according to Romanova (2015), the following components should be mentioned:

(1) social consciousness (morality, experience, knowledge, skills, and habits),

(2) 2) individual consciousness (character, habits, interests, and behavior), and

(3) 3) self-awareness and worldview.

Psychologists consider a person primarily as a set of psychological properties of an individual (character features, temperament, intellect, worldview), which distinguish one person from another. It is easy to notice the similarity between the listed psychological properties of an individual and the above-mentioned components of personality structure from the philosophical standpoint. The difference is that the philosophical approach emphasizes social consciousness while the psychological approach focuses on personal characteristics and properties. Some of these properties are genetically embedded in a person (temperament), while others depend to a large degree on the personal experience acquired in the process of socialization (worldview). The latter is the most vulnerable for the convergent impact of the mass media.

Another important difference between the psychological and philosophical approaches to the study of personality is the great attention psychologists pay to each period of personality development: from birth to death, although different specialists prioritize various stages of personality formation. To illustrate this statement, we will give a comparative overview of the most significant works on personality psychology and individual psychology, developed within the framework of the classical schools of Freud (2013) and his followers–Adler (2009) and Jung (1961).

Freud (2013) focused his attention on the importance of the unconscious in personality development. Personality was considered by Freud (2013) as a self-sufficient isolated subject, the problems of which were rooted in the past, in childhood; society only contributed to the activation of these problems, imposing on humans certain prohibitions and restrictions. Thus, Freud (2013) opposed personality to the society.

Adler (2009), unlike his teacher, singled out the focusing on a successful future as the main motivating means for self-development. This focus determined the life activity of an individual. The integrity of a man was based, according to Adler (2009), on three components:

(1) heredity,

(2) environment, and

(3) personal creative energy.

They gave an individual a chance to become a sensible, self-reliant person and take his/her place in life. In the aspect of our research, the special value of Adler's (2009) works is that he was one of the first to systematically present the formation of the child's personality, gaining its own sense of value (a sense of personal worth) in the surrounding world of adults. Adler (2009) presented this process as a struggle for children's own holistic "self" (the fullest "self").

One of the merits of Jung's (1961) theory was his reference to the mutual influence of personal and collective unconsciousness as the sources of creative energy, which finally leads to evolution of personality, society and, ultimately, the entire world. Stadnik (2015) states that "the community's conceptual order is negotiated in human interaction, to which individual members contribute their share" (Stadnik, 2015, p. 129).

Early **sociological** research was also aimed at studying the individual, the conditions and factors necessary for the formation of self-identity. Thus, one of the fundamental sociological research projects of identity dates back to the beginning of the XX century when Cooley (1992) in his "Human nature and the social order" scrutinized the problem of identity through the prism of such notions as **heredity** and **instinct**, **society** and **individual**, **I** and **social "self"**, suggesting the concept of "the looking-glass 'self'", and defining three stages important to self-identification (Cooley, 1992, p. 152). Nowadays, the emphasis of studies, which are carried out in the field of personal self-identification shifts from the research of individual toward collective: "Social and national movements of the past three decades have shifted scholarly attention to issues of group agency, <…> identity studies have been relocated to the site of the collective" (Cerulo, 1997, p. 386).

Speaking about **_linguistic_** bases of personality formation, within the framework of the present research, we proceed from three basic principles:

(1) language is one of the most important means for self-identification and identity construction,

(2) analysis of discursive events a person is involved in enables to reveal psychological and ideological characteristics of an individual, and

(3) study of film media discourse in a multimodal aspect allows to minimize ambiguity of verbal and non-verbal messages interpretation.

Linguistic research in the context of self-identification and identity construction theories focuses on multiple questions such as construing reality (Constantinou, 2019; Lovelock, 2017), understanding human cognition and memory (Drager, 2015; Hamilton, 2013), linguistic identity (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Bordia & Bordia, 2015; Higgins, 2011; Miller, 2004; Park, 2020; Sung, 2015), sociocultural identity (Baker, 2015; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Hogg, 2001; Ochs, 1993). All of the above studies assume that there is an inextricable "link between linguistic variation and identity" and that "language and social information are stored in the mind and accessed during the production and perception of speech" (Drager, 2015, p. 1).

Filmic Discourse as a Key Influencer for Self-Identification and Identity Construction

Modern mass media have a considerable influence upon the formation of the collective personality allowing a person to be self-identified by joining into one of the social networks or groups regardless of the geographical position of the individual. Cerulo (1997) posits that "NCTs[1] have changed the backdrop against which identity is constructed" (p. 397). Feature films, being a kind of audio-visual "texts" that deliver information in a very digestible form can structure and categorize the perception of reality by an individual, as well as influence the collective memory and the knowledge of the world: "The understanding and interpretation of discourse is based on activating the knowledge acquired by the addressee, which is organized in the form of cognitive "tasks" to be performed in the course of interpreting the message" (Topa-Bryniarska, 2015, p. 51).

Thus, the need to analyze the mechanisms of the hybrid audio-visual discourse, to understand their influence on an individual is of particular relevance in our time. There are studies that claim the informational dominance of the visual channel over the verbal one (Kreidlin, 2002). Film industry has a significant impact on the formation of society, collective personality and individual. It generates certain communities, highlights their characteristics, considering racial, ethnic, gender, age and ideological affiliation (Shiryaeva et al., 2022). Films or TV series promote the construction or delineation of typical or specific social identities by creating virtual images: "From this perspective, every collective becomes a social artefact–an entirely molded, refabricated, and mobilized in accord with reigning cultural scripts and centers of power" (Cerulo, 1997, p. 387).

Film episodes reflect specific discursive acts, which demonstrate, on the one hand, the film character self-identification and identity development; on the other hand, influence the identity of the viewers, latently suggesting them a model of thinking and behaving or reverse: keeping them from doing something indecent, improper or wrong:

> "The subject's participation in these socio-discursive practices actually constructs the subject. In the dialogical conception of identity construction and language use/learning, the socio-discursive practices in which individuals are engaged both shape their complex identity and constrain their behavior" (Martin-Rubio, 2006, p. 690).

In modern linguistics there are works focused on various aspects of discourse realized within the framework of film production (Bateman & Schmidt, 2012; Bednarek, 2015; Drummond & Wildfeuer, 2020; Tseng, 2009; Wildfeuer, 2012, 2014; Wildfeuer et al., 2015), so it is important to determine the content of the film discourse concept. By the term "film discourse" in most cases we understand texts produced by actors to affect the viewers. Thus, we should recognize the central role of language in the film discourse, though, of course, we do not reject "the paramount importance of non-verbal elements" such as "gestures, gaze, facial

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[1]New communication technologies.

expression, head movements, and body posture", they "can either contribute to expressing meaning along with the speech or can convey meaning *per se*" (Bonsignori, 2016, p. 190).

Zaretskaya (2012) offers the interpretation of the film discourse as a coherent text with verbal and non-verbal (audio-visual series) components of the film and extralinguistic factors significant for the semantic completeness of the film.

Dynel (2011), for her part, interprets the concept of the film discourse as an actor's speech along with non-verbal communication, which can be defined both in a broad and narrow sense: "Filmic discourse is <...> viewed as conflating *monologues, dialogues*, i.e., dyadic interactions and *polylogues*, i.e., exchanges, held by more than two participants, similar to those found in everyday talk" (p. 42).

The most important structural element of the film discourse is the film text in which two semiotic systems are represented: linguistic and non-linguistic. The role and function of natural language as a symbolic system in the intellectual and thinking processes of a person is confirmed by numerous researchers (Gazizov et al., 2020; Święczkowska, 2012, p. 46-47). It has often been argued recently that identity construction is a constant cognitive process closely linked to social factors, thus we read in Berzonsky (2011): "People are viewed as different types of self-theorists who rely on different cognitive processes to encode self-relevant information and to construct and reconstruct or maintain a sense of identity" (p. 71).

Thus, the convergence of linguistic forms, social factors and cognitive structures in the film media discourse allows us to define it as a linguo-socio-cognitive construct.

Multimodality of Film Media Discourse: Convergence of Feelings, Meanings, & Knowledge

The concept of multimodality due to its interdisciplinary nature did not receive an unambiguous definition, which led to the variability of the phenomenon naming (polymodality, multimedia, poly-code, etc.) and semantic intersections of the terms. Thus, the term polymodality seems to be a calque lexeme of multimodality with the only difference that in the first word the Greek prefix **poly**- is used while in the second one the Latin prefix **multi**- functions with the same meaning. The term multimedia emphasizes various possibilities of the technical means involved in communication. Some scholars (Bernatskaya, 2000) prefer to use the term poly-code when operating with the multimodal texts. In this case, the emphasis is done on the interpretation of combinations of signs of different semiotic nature: hybrid texts represent the synthesis of all visually perceived verbal and non-verbal symbols (drawings/symbols/diagrams, etc.), which are treated as different codes.

In the present paper we use the term multimodal, since it focuses on the natural sciences approach to communication, where modes correspond to the channels of perception while modality is interpreted as "a type of external stimulus perceived by one of the senses of a person, primarily by vision and hearing" (Kibrik, 2010, p. 135). Kress (2009) holds a similar opinion treating multimodality as a syncretism of verbal and written texts, static and dynamic images and kinesics. These reflections of the Russian linguist and the British semiotician and educational theorists find convincing evidence in psychophysiological principles, developed by Pavlov (1951), who suggested the first and second signal system theory: "If our feelings and representations related to the world around us are for us the first signals of reality, specific signals, then speech, especially, first of all, kinesthetic impulses going into the cerebral cortex from speech organs, are the second signals, signals of signals. They represent a distraction from reality and allow generalization, which makes our superfluous, particularly human, superior thinking ..." (Pavlov, 1951, p. 232-233).

In the film media discourse visual and auditory signals function synchronously, complementing and confirming the correctness of the received information, optimizing the way information is presented to the viewers and ensuring full knowledge of reality. This psychophysiological process is of great importance for understanding the nature of multimodality and for answering the question: "Why do mass media products, such as films, have a powerful influence on identity construction and self-identification?" Actors' behavior and speech, emotions, gestures and gaze simultaneously convey meaning and transfer particular information, which creates and supports/destroys stereotypes, forms knowledge, transmits mood and feelings. Thus, the content of the term multimodal reflects the unity of visual and aural components that form a semantic whole providing a complex pragmatic impact on the addressee.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology used in the paper represents discourse analysis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Wodak & Meyer, 2015) combined with qualitative data analysis (Tseng & Bateman, 2018; Kress, 2009), multimodal analysis (Bateman & Wildfeuer, 2014; Bednarek, 2015; Brandt, 2004; Drummond & Wildfeuer, 2020) and film transcription methodology (Baldry & Paul, 2006; Bonsignori, 2009).

Two films were taken for this study: the Polish full-length feature film "Chronicle of amorous accidents", filmed by Wajda (1986), and the Russian full-length feature film "Courier", filmed by Shakhnazarov (1986). They were selected based on several specific criteria: both films were shot the same year, their main theme was devoted to young people of the same age entering their adulthood, passing through the test of their first love, experiencing a crisis of identity formation and establishing new social contacts. Moreover, the growing up of the key figures takes place without actual participation of their fathers. Another important common point for both protagonists is the "transition from unemployment to employment" status (Koen et al., 2016, p. 658). These extralinguistic criteria had formed a **tertium comparationis**.

The duration of the "Chronicle of amorous accidents" is one hour 14 minutes. The total sound time is one hour seven minutes. Thus, pauses in the communication of the characters make up around seven minutes (10% of the total film time): mainly it is the demonstration of military maneuvers around the town (80%), picturesque landscapes, as well as love scenes. The verbal communication in the film is represented in dialogues, polylogues and three monologues of the protagonist. The main plot of the film unfolds around the Polish youth Witek experiencing a sense of first love. Having delivered a telegram to the house of the colonel, he meets his daughter Alina and falls in love at first sight. Neither the impending Second World War nor the preparations for entering the medical university can suppress his deep feelings.

The duration of the "Courier" is one hour 28 minutes. The total sound time is one hour 25 minutes. Thus, there is a relative balance between audio and video components of the film media discourse. Pauses in the communication of the characters make up around three minutes (4% of the total film time): mainly it is the demonstration of modern youth dances, riding on boards, motorcycle races, etc. The verbal communication in "Courier" is represented by two monologues, dialogues and polylogues. The plot of the film unfolds around Ivan Miroshnikov, a 17-year-old boy, who graduates high school. The young man is experiencing his parents' divorce, faces difficulties in communicating with peers and encounters organizational problems when applying to the pedagogical institute. Moreover, he will have to undergo a test of first love for the professor's daughter Katya. The chain of events makes him re-evaluate his relations with the people and change his worldview.

Filmic discourse has been selected as a field of research because it "allows multiple reproduction and playback while studying verbal and non-verbal components" and the actors' professional imitation of the natural communication "makes film discourse a reliable and representative source of language material" (Kislitsyna & Slujbina, 2019, p. 513). Linguo-cognitive analysis is applied to consider the way the adolescents' social and cognitive behavior (Bandura, 1989) is cultivated. It helps to scrutinize the tactics applied in the film media discourse to demonstrate the process of adolescents' self-identification and identity construction. While constructing their identities adolescents "try on" different personae" selecting not only their "ways of dressing, ways of walking" but also "ways of talking", variations of linguistic self-presentation (Drager, 2015, p. 1). Modelling of adolescents' verbal and cognitive behavior is understood as the creation of a *role model* embodied in a film plot, which is latently recommended to the young people for imitation (Kislitsyna & Slujbina, 2019); "role models help us envision what kind of people we want to become and what is possible for us" (Ronkainen et al., 2019, p. 1). The concept of role is closely connected with the concept of identity, some scholars argue that "it has been superseded by issues of identity and subjectivity" (Simpson & Carroll, 2008, p. 29). In the process of analysis some significant scenes were selected from the films, the dialogues were transcribed and analyzed taking into consideration the relevant non-verbal information (setting, character development, role model, problem solving schemes) with the purpose to study the meaning-making mechanisms in the film media discourse. Transcripts of the protagonist's dialogues of the Polish and Russian films are presented in English, thus, English is a metalanguage of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The application of the multimodal approach to the study of self-identification and identity construction strategies is shown through the integral description of the tactics used in the film media discourse.

Tactics to Demonstrate the Adolescents' Self-Identification and Identity Construction in "Chronicle of Amorous Accidents"

The following five basic tactics are applied in "Chronicle of amorous accidents" film media discourse to demonstrate the process of self-identification and identity construction. Each tactic is represented by the merger of three modes: verbal, visual and cognitive.

1. The creation of the specific environment (setting)

Verbal mode: The chatter of a possible outbreak of the Second World War is put in the mouth of some secondary characters devaluating the meaning of the message: "*There will be no war. They'll do a deal*"–Witek's neighbors say, completely immersed in their routine personal problems.

Visual mode: Demonstration of the country's preparation for the Second World War (military maneuvers and training, officers and soldiers are present everywhere–in trains, at the railway stations and streets of the town). Some episodes show the polyethnic environment of Wilno (Vilnius) (Poles, Germans, Russians, and Jews). The houses of Witek and Alina are shown: a small house in which Witek, his mother and Witek's dying grandfather live on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a spacious two-story manor house of the Polish army colonel, demonstrating prosperity, well-being and high social status.

The combination of visual and verbal elements is presented in the form of signs and posters. Thus, at the railway station there is a sign *Kolonia W* (Kolonia Wileńska), which explains the geographical, historical, political and administrative affiliation of the area where the main events of the film take place. A poster with the inscription "*Silne Lotnictwo–to Silna Polska*" (Strong aviation–strong Poland) makes the visual and verbal intervention into the cognitive sphere of the film media discourse addressee in order to shape the collective identity. This slogan serves as a call put forward by a state to consolidate the nation to certain actions: to support the Polish air forces to defend the country.

Cognitive mode: Most of the video fragments correspond with the meaning of the parallel dialogues, but some of them are incongruent in meaning. Thus, characters' cognitive processing of the information results in "ejection" or "blocking" the very thought of the war, but the viewers realize the impending threat and the fragility of the peace. Though the verbal mode and visual mode construct different realities, viewers' conscious cognitive processing balances out what has been seen and heard.

2. The development of charismatic characters

Verbal mode: At the beginning of the film Witek is presented as an obedient son, the one who dreams of entering a medical university. He considers himself to be a support for his mother and a good doctor to his patients. As the film unfolds Witek turns into a loving, noble man who is ready to take responsibility for Alina. He begins to wonder about the meaning of life and death; he asks the question: "*What is waiting for me in life?*" His interactions with the friends, family members and acquaintances mold his sense of "self".

Visual mode: There is a transformation of the protagonist's appearance. At the beginning of the film, Witek wears a dark uniform and student cap, to underline his clear bias toward discipline, order, professional and moral obligation. At the end of the film, Witek appears in white clothing: trousers, a shirt with an open collar and white vest. These external changes agree with his internal changes and emphasize the mental and spiritual development of his identity (Tameryan et al., 2018, 2022).

Cognitive mode: The transformation from a teenager into an adult man result in expanding the roles that an adult person should perform. Witek has changed his worldview and demonstrated some shifts in self-construal (Giacomin & Jordan, 2020; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) towards more independent decision-making.

Witek's desire to help his friends, to find his way in life, to solve urgent problems allows the viewers to associate him with Coelho's (2004) warrior of the light who took the unpredictability of life with dignity and

was worthy of his unique destiny. The protagonist's internal and external changes appeal to emotions and values of the viewers; they favor the direct involvement of the viewers into the film media discourse.

3. The actualization of particular values and behavior models, which can be considered as trendy conduct (role model)

Verbal mode: The dialogues of the protagonist at the beginning of the film demonstrate that he is a delicate, romantic young man. But further on, his emerging masculinity is clearly seen, for example, when he suggests to Alina that he will take responsibility before God for the planned poisoning: "*No, please, I am a man, and I am not dead yet. I think it is better to be me. If it is a sin, I will take it into my soul*".

Visual mode: All of the above-mentioned fragments of the texts are accompanied by the relevant events, corresponding character's actions and congruent behavior: Witek always looks neat, diligent and hardworking. Video episodes in "no comment" format are presented to actualize some historical realia, particular values and behavior models. Among them there are: the Polish school for girls who are engaged in physical training; the scene in the Russian Orthodox Church shot during the burial service; a synagogue–full of children obediently repeating some texts after the old teacher. Generally, the actions of the actors contribute to cohesion of the textual information. The video underscores the significance of the verbal information: what is shown on the screen compliments the meaning of words, strengthening the message.

Cognitive mode: The perception of these video fragments actualizes the cognitive process of dividing the surrounding world into oppositions "one's own-another's", "us-them", "we-they" (Alieva, 2017), which correspond to the concepts "good-bad" or, at least, "strange" and "incomprehensible" in cases when people come across alien cultures.

Thus, for example, the "no comment" video episodes can be associated with the idea that the Polish part of the population takes an active life position; the Russian part of the population is immersed in the past; while the Jewish part of the population is absorbed in learning: the communities seem as if to live in parallel worlds.

4. The creation of the intricate plots

Verbal mode: The following example illustrates the plan of attempted poisoning:

Alina: Let's poison each other! You will poison me, and **I** shall–you! Are you afraid? After all, there will be an eternity before **us**!

Witek: I'm not afraid! I'll be with you! Let's drink together. Yes! It is better to die from love.

Alina: I will arrive tomorrow at the same time. **In a white dress** ("Chronicle of amorous accidents", 1:40:01).

The next day:

Witek: Are you ready?

Alina: Yes.

Witek: **We** can change our mind.

Alina: No, let's take it now. After all, dying will probably be long. Let's go down to the river. **We** will need some water. I have some poison in the rugs.

Witek: And I brought you **a cup of strawberries**. Let's say goodbye first.

Alina: **We** will still **have a lot of time for farewell**.

Witek: Who is the first?

Alina: I can ("Chronicle of amorous accidents", 1:46:30).

Despite the dramatic theme of this dialogue–the plan of fatal poisoning–it contains some inappropriate words and utterances, *viz.* Alina's choice of the white dress associated with the bride's attire, Witek's promise to bring "*a cup of strawberries*" (berry associated with love)*.* These moments create a sense of unreality, wrongness of what is going on. The dialogue evokes compassion and empathy, engages the viewers' attention, involves the audience and makes it review the values and relationships crucial to their sense of "*self*".

Visual mode: The gripping storyline is supported by a significant number of thrilling situations such as secret penetration into the colonel's manor house. The viewers are excited: "Will the protagonist be caught by the colonel's Rottweiler dog or not?", "Will the protagonists fall off the window or not?", etc. The intricate plot creates an atmosphere of adventure and makes the audience think of possible endings.

But the most intriguing video episode is connected with the fragment when the protagonists plan their poisoning ("Chronicle of amorous accidents", 1:40:01). The transcript of the dialog is given above in the ***verbal mode.***

Cognitive mode: The open-ended story makes the viewers review the characters' transformation and reconsider who and what they are, how they would act in a similar situation.

5. The demonstration of different ways of problem solving and the direct or indirect assessment of the results

Verbal mode: Some dialogues of young lovers are like seesaws: "I do love you–I do not love you":

Witek: Why are you torturing me?

Alina: Me? You are torturing yourself!

Witek: Can I see you off to the train?

Alina: As you wish. I can explain everything to you.

Witek: Explain?

Alina: Your ambition and, well, your self-indulgence are playing within you. You are trying to imitate what you have read or seen in a film. You take it for …

Witek: For what?

Alina: You do know for what!

Witek: You are afraid to say "love".

Alina: This word is too important! I will never say it in my life!

Witek: You do not see anything. You don't see my broken head! I broke my forehead for you! Because of you!

Alina: Stop talking nonsense! You are losing your sense of humor.

Witek: I can afford it! There are no witnesses!

Alina: Are you afraid to look funny? You will be afraid of it all your life!

Witek: What kind of person are you?

Alina: You know! You were watching me! ("Chronicle of amorous accidents", 0:56: 02).

Such a sharp, sometimes polar change of mood and opinion is typical for adolescents: their identity is formed in the struggle between "I", "me" and "we", "us" while they are gaining experience within gender/sexuality discursive field.

Table 1. A multimodal transcription of "Chronicle of amorous accidents"

Tactics / Modes	Tactic 1: The creation of the specific environment	Tactic 2: The development of charismatic characters	Tactic 3: The actualization of particular values and behavior models	Tactic 4: Intricate plots	Tactic 5: Problem solving & assessment of the results
Verbal mode	Small talks about possible outbreak of the Second World War	Talking about protagonists' future	Witek insists on his responsibility (modality of conversation)	Discussion of attempted poisoning plan	Dialogues of young lovers
Visual mode	Demonstration of military maneuvers, training, officers, & soldiers. Some episodes show polyethnic environment. Houses of protagonists are shown	Internal transformation is reflected in protagonist's appearance, clothing: Witek changes his restrained, dark uniform for beautiful loose white clothing.	Witek always looks neat, diligent, & hardworking. Video episodes in "no comment" format: Polish school for girls; Russian Orthodox Church; a synagogue	Thrilling situations: Secret penetration into the colonel's manor house, Rottweiler dog chasing, falling off window, & poisoning	Getting some big bumps on head & some bruises while secretly watching Alina; unsuccessful poisoning, & disappearing in thunderstorm of bombing that manifests beginning of World War II
Cognitive mode	Incongruence between meaning of video fragments & sense of characters' dialogues: "ejection", "blocking" very thought of the war	Shifts in self-construal towards more independent decision-making	Cognitive processing of surrounding world subdivision into oppositions "one's own-another's", "us-them", "we-they", "good-bad" "war-peace"	Reconsideration & reevaluation of all actions	Association of physical injuries with mental pain while gaining real life experience, a struggle for own holistic "self"

Visual mode: Witek has got some big bumps on the head and some bruises while pursuing and secretly watching Alina, and he blames Alina for this ("Chronicle of amorous accidents", 0:56: 02).

These physical injuries correspond to his mental pain and anguish. There is a persistent association with difficulties in gaining real life experience. Alina and Witek survive after unsuccessful poisoning but disappear in the thunderstorm of bombing that manifests the beginning of the World War II, which can also be associated with metaphor–life is a struggle, or, as Adler (2009) formulated: a struggle for one's own holistic "self".

Cognitive mode: The final shots of the film are intended exclusively for visual perception. On the one hand, the author makes it clear that the dramatic events in the life of the characters have already occurred, on the other hand, he allows the audience to imagine any possible ending of this film depending on the personal perception, life experience and cognitive processing of the information presented in the film. **Table 1** shows the multimodal analysis of the "Chronicle of amorous accidents".

Tactics to Demonstrate the Adolescents' Self-Identification and Identity Construction in "Courier"

The analysis of five basic tactics applied in "Courier" film media discourse is carried out on the analogous pattern.

1. The creation of the specific environment

Verbal mode: The film begins with the scene in the municipal court, where Ivan's parents' divorce hearing is being held. The standard monotonous monologue of the judge is announced. The speech of the judge is very formal and Ivan's father words sound like a mockery: "*Your mother is a saint. I'm really sorry, buddy. Sometimes such things happen. I hope we will see one another as often as possible*". Ivan passively agrees with everything his father says: "*No problem, dad*". "*Sure, dad*" ("Courier", 0:01:31).

Ivan is stunned and overwhelmed by the parents' divorce proceedings: one of the most important bases for the identity building–the family–has collapsed and this key moment has a great impact on Ivan. The youth become aware of his new role in the family and society, but he is not ready for these changes.

Visual mode: The reaction of the court session participants reflects their true emotions.

Ivan's mother looks absolutely lost, she wipes tears, and it seems that she does not hear the court's decision; the father, on the contrary, listens attentively to each judge's word and nods his head in consent; Ivan is staring at the ceiling with a bored look ("Courier", 0:00:10–0:00:36). Ivan's evasive look, during the post-divorce conversation with his father, demonstrates that he does not believe him. But eventually his passiveness will be replaced by passive aggressiveness.

Further events unfold mostly either in the small and gloomy Ivan's apartment or on the waste ground, where Ivan and his friends prefer to spend time. It is strikingly different from Katya's spacious comfortable apartment in which she lives with her mother and father.

Cognitive mode: The parents' divorce divides Ivan's life into "before" and "after". He does not know how to react to what has happened, so he hides his real thoughts and emotions behind a mask of indifference and conformism. In the long run father's false words will provoke Ivan to the monstrous immoral lie about his girl-friend Katya. In this situation we can talk about the destruction of his identity.

2. The development of charismatic characters

Verbal mode: 17-year-old boy graduates from high school and is going to enter the pedagogical institute "*because his mother wants so*" and "*he doesn't want to argue with her*". His mother helps him to find a courier job in the "Questions of Knowledge" magazine. Without any enthusiasm he says about his future: "*I'm going to join the army if I do not enter the institute*". His words indicate that his "self" is under complete control of his mother and/or the state.

Visual mode: Ivan does not care what his clothing looks like, and he wears predominantly grey colors. At the end of the film, he easily gives his new fashionable winter coat (his father has brought from Italy and presented him with) to a friend of his. The coat acts as a symbol of patronage, his father's care, but Ivan does not need it, considering that his father betrayed his mother and him. This action is vividly indicating that Ivan is consciously constructing his identity, that it is more important for him to **be** an independent person, not to **have** some prestigious things.

Cognitive mode: The transformation from the stage of a "mother's son", who does everything his parent wants of him, to a stage of an adult person able to make his own decisions, able to cope with the emotionally charged issues. At the end of the film Ivan's mentality changes; formally appealing both to his friend and to the viewers of the film he asks the questions: "*Listen, Bazin, do you have dreams? Well, what do you dream of in life?*", "*What principles do you follow and obey?*" It is clear that these issues are of great concern to him as he is trying to find the answer to the question: "What am I?" Such reflections indicate that Ivan is striving for a more meaningful existence.

3. The actualization of particular values and behavior models, which can be considered as trendy conduct (role model)

Verbal mode: Ivan is presented as a straightforward person, irresponsible (as he himself declares), without any piety for his parents or other adults. Verbally his attitude comes in disrespectful remarks and expressions. He cannot decide which social group he belongs to, he is a loner: with Bazin they are brought together only by the age; with Katya–by the desire to do something original, to escape from the routine course of events.

Ivan's dialogue with Katya's father can be considered as indicative; it demonstrates the gap between generations and social groups. The way professor Kuznetsov introduces Ivan to his mother Agnese: "*A typical representative of modern youth, a mixture of nihilism with rudeness and a curious specimen*" looks like label and sounds stigmatic. In response, Ivan makes a joking bow as a sign of getting acquainted with the family members.

Professor's speech is expressive and intense, he comments on Ivan's bow: "*Look! Everything is shouted down, just torpedoed! Ridiculing as a principle! We don't need anything! We know everything! I, we, our generation wants to know: For whom we have lived and fought! In whose hands will we pass the building that we have constructed!?*"

> "Well, what do you really worry about?"–asks Ivan steeling himself with indifference.
>
> "I would be happy to learn the principles you are going to adhere to".
>
> "My principles are not complicated: I would like to have a decent salary, a car, an apartment in the center of the city and a summer house in the suburbs. And yet, I do not want to work hard"–retorts Ivan ("Courier", 0:31:09).

Surprisingly enough, this harsh self-characterization does not repel Professor Kuznetsov, on the contrary, he begins to call Ivan "*my young friend*» and the only thing he says in a conciliatory tone is: "*It is necessary to earn material benefits, to make some efforts. It is necessary to work, master some knowledge. Then a beautiful car will be a deserved reward*".

Verbally clash between the generations is expressed through the clear difference in the speech register: professor's pompous and rather formal, on the one hand, and Ivan's very simple and informal, on the other.

Visual mode: All events and actions mentioned above are accompanied by the corresponding actions, gestures and congruent behavior, although it is interesting to note the absence of emotions on the protagonist's face, which rather proves that Ivan hides his true emotions and thoughts behind the mask ("Courier", 0:30:10).

Cognitive mode: The distribution of values according to the oppositions "us-them", "we-they" corresponds to the subdivision into "good-bad", "own-alien". The main character builds his identity by dividing people according to the social and financial criteria and thus forming his notion of "I", which is opposed to "they" and "others". Interestingly, but his opponent, professor Kuznetsov, builds the opposition in the reverse way: "We" and "you".

4. The creation of the intricate plots

Verbal mode: The gripping storyline is mostly built on Ivan's imagination; he invents a story about his imprisonment to impress Katya's friends. At the request of Professor Kuznetsov "*to stop all relations with my daughter*" Ivan thinks up a story about Katya's pregnancy: "*Your daughter and I love each other. I admit it was dishonorable of me to hide the truth from you for so long. But believe me, it happened accidentally. Now, when everything has happily revealed, I entrust our fate to you and ask for your parental blessing. I, as an honorable man, cannot do otherwise but ask for your daughter's hand. Ekaterina Semenovna is pregnant*" ("Courier", 0:54:57).

Ivan's speech style is old-fashioned and resembles a fragment from a historical love novel. But his lie is so monstrous that the professor does not pay attention to the style but perceives only the meaning of the message.

Visual mode: In "Courier" there are no such thrilling situations as in "Chronicle of amorous accidents"**.** One of the most dramatic episodes of the film takes place during the conversation between Professor Kuznetsov and Ivan at the moment when Ivan informs Katya's father about her pregnancy (see the dialog above). In the first clip ("Courier", 0:52:10) Professor Kuznetsov and Ivan are facing each other–professor in a potentially aggressive position of the body, while Ivan–in a protective position: their postures are closed, hands are clenched. At that very moment Professor Kuznetsov forbids Ivan dating his daughter Katya. The kinesthetics and proxemics of the second clip is dramatically different ("Courier", 0:53:45): professor has just learned that his daughter is pregnant, protagonists are standing right next to each other and discussing plans.

Furthermore, the visual intricacy of the film plot is mostly supported by video episodes in "no comment" format. The fun of young people on waste ground, wild motorcycle races show their desire to get out of adults' control, create their own group with their own rules and values, the autonomous group where they can make independent decisions and be able to oppose to others.

In addition, Ivan is haunted by the visions of African wanderers roaming through a desert, this exotic image contrasts with the realities of Ivan's everyday life in the modern city but is clearly associated with his search of "self".

Cognitive mode: The stories invented by Ivan trespass the boundaries of permissible, violate the rules of ethics and morality. His lies appear in the film as a protective reaction and as a kind of permissibility test, peculiar verification of the permissible behavior limits.

Table 2. A multimodal transcription of "Courier"

Tactics / Modes	Tactic 1: The creation of the specific environment	Tactic 2: The development of charismatic characters	Tactic 3: The actualization of particular values and behavior models	Tactic 4: Intricate plots	Tactic 5: Problem solving & assessment of the results
Verbal mode	Divorce hearing, judge's speech, & conversation with parents	Dialog with mother	Disrespectful remarks, indifferent answers, & retorts	False stories; lying & deception	Apologizing
Visual mode	Municipal court, small & gloomy apartment, & waste ground	Indifference to clothing, colors are dark, grey, & somber	Unemotional face, lack of gestures, & hands are hidden in pockets	"No comment" video episodes, motorcycle races, & African wanderers roaming through a desert	Change of clothing style & shift from passive aggressive to submissive behavior
Cognitive mode	Making decisions on the future	Thinking about meaning of life	Identifying himself in society	Trying to find where boundaries are, crossing permissible rules of behavior	Understanding generative power of youth, recognition that young people are driving force of society & that cannot be suppressed by ideas of older generation

5. The demonstration of different ways of problem solving and the direct or indirect assessment of the results

Verbal mode: Ivan apologizes to Katya and her parents: "*I ask you to forgive me for my bad joke*". The word *joke* functions here as a euphemism, mitigating the damage from his lie.

Visual mode: Ivan comes back to the professor's house to apologize to Katya and her parents, he patiently takes part in the party Katya's parents organized for their friends, puts on both his best business suit and the mask of obedience in order to redeem his misdeed, but he looks ridiculous and despicable.

Cognitive mode: The analysis of the film media discourse clearly shows that the youth have their values and ambitions; it is ridiculous to live strictly according to the older generation canons. While Witek and Alina's love story has become the leitmotif of the "Chronicle of amorous accidents", the love story of Ivan and Katya has not become the dominant theme of the film. It is more important for Ivan to find his "self". **Table 2** shows the multimodal analysis of the "Courier".

As can be seen, verbalized information in film media discourse is backed up by visual information, which makes comprehension accurate and precise. The convergence of the verbal and visual-non-verbal components of the feature film creates semantic completeness, on the one hand, and, on the other, demonstrates that multimodality is an integral inherent property of film media discourse, which brings it close to natural communication.

CONCLUSIONS

The present paper highlighted the importance of film media discourse as the reliable source for the study of adolescents' self-identification and identity construction. Filmic discourse is a perfect platform for the transference of ideas to society, for intervention into collective memory, self-identification and identity (re)construction. The multimodal approach to the analysis of film media discourse allowed us to demonstrate integratively the authentic development of the film protagonists, the formation of their personality through the communication with other characters and their engagement in socio-discursive practices.

The use of the multimodal approach to the film media discourse resulted in some interesting findings:

1. Verbal and non-verbal elements used in film media discourse can be congruent and non-congruent. In both cases, idea of the film director is to make the scenes more dramatic, persuasive and expressive.
2. In case when gestures, body movement and film setting match the characters words it meets the standards of psychological perception (auditory and visual ones) and is unmarked, enabling thus the

viewers to percept the ideas/information without any mental strain. In case when gestures, body movement, film setting does not match the characters' words it causes some mental and emotional strain marking the episode and making it more memorable.

Despite the significant coincidence of the plots of both films and the issues the main characters have faced, Witek and Ivan react differently to the challenges of fate. The analysis of the film media discourse reveals the considerable discrepancies in the value preferences and personal characteristics of the main characters. The comparison of protagonists of the Polish and Russian films shows that in the Polish film, the issues of national self-identification dominate, while the leitmotif of the Russian film is the problem of character's social self-identification. These assumptions may suggest that the difference might be of socio-cultural nature, but to make the inferences more reliable we need to use much more of the relevant material.

The next important point is the ratio of the information perceived through the auditory and visual channels: the informational dominance of the visual channel over the verbal one. This statement sounds quite axiomatic in case of video production, but in the case of "Chronicle of amorous accidents" and "Courier" visual-non-verbal information plays a background role, elucidating the meaning of the information presented in verbal form. It clarifies the meaning of what is said by the characters. The combination of dialogues with visual-non-verbal information contributes to proper decoding. A series of events presented in the "Chronicle of amorous accidents" acts as a trigger for launching the emotional and aesthetic evaluation of the events. In the Russian film emotional-ethical and moral evaluation dominate.

The following significant point is the notion of a *role model* embodied in a film plot, which is implicitly recommended (or not) to the viewers of a film. To study this aspect of film media discourse five tactics were suggested:

(1) creation of the specific environment,

(2) development of charismatic characters,

(3) actualization of values and behavior models,

(4) creation of the intricate plots, and

(5) demonstration of different ways of problem solving and the direct or indirect assessment of the results.

Each tactic was analyzed from the perspective of three modes: verbal, visual and cognitive. Analysis of the information presented in film media discourse showed that adolescents' self-identification and identity construction is based on the convergence of the above-mentioned tactics.

In late adolescence the identity construction and self-identification are mostly focused on defining one's own "self" and determining one's belonging to a certain group. Ivan's and Witek's identities are formed within different societies and circumstances, in time of great changes. They experience the stage of identity crises, wondering who they are, facing the necessity to play different roles and make vitally important choices. Witek moves away from social drama. He makes his choice towards love and freedom; this is the choice of his soul. Ivan, being an extremely introvertive and meditative person, on the contrary, goes to extremes; rejecting external world he breaks off relations with everyone and hides his desperate search for his "self" behind the mask of indifference. Ivan and Kate's relations are overshadowed by the problem of social self-identification of the main character. Finally, multimodal linguo-semiotic approach to film media discourse study makes it possible to explore the impact a film can have on the audience, its (de)consolidation, integration, or separation. The further research can be focused on the experimental investigation (for example, ELAN software) of the visual and auditory intersection in film media discourse taking into consideration the suggested tactics and approaches. It is worth to continue the investigation in contrastive perspective with focus on cross-cultural differences.

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