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**Intercultural communication and hands-on training in american  
journalism  
(resume of the Fulbright Faculty Development Program experience)**

**Межкультурная коммуникация и практическое обучение в  
американской журналистике (из опыта участия в Программе Фулбрайт  
для преподавателей вузов)**

As assistant professor I have been working for more than six years at School of International Relations, Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University. The disciplines I started teaching several years ago were new and supposed to be wholly connected with the acquired profession. One of them was English in the professional sphere for international journalists, which happened to be a combination of English and Journalism.

Elaborating those disciplines I started gaining a deeper interest in journalism. I had to make a study of American media. I found not only some obvious language

differences between the Russian language and the English language journalism. I found out that they are different cultural phenomena. I went on collecting ideas and materials that I could combine and include into the future course and the manual.

In 2008 to draw my students into a new kind of professional activity I initiated a journalistic project: we launched a professionally orientated journal *JMirror* (*Journalistic Mirror*). It proved to be an edition within the framework of which students could discuss professional matters and get their first publications in English. It is issued annually by the staff made of the senior students. Every student can get his or her own position according to the preferences (editor, proofreader, correspondent, designer, etc.).

In 2011 the students' workbook "*Journalism: Introduction into Profession*" was published. The manual gives the students the basics of creating some winning media products in English.

"At present journalism is a powerful force ever-increasing in its importance. This very obvious fact urges me to take part in any activity which will help to replenish my background knowledge of journalism. It is obvious that linguistics, intercultural communication and international journalism are closely interconnected. The Word is the main journalist's weapon. No one can be a good journalist without mastering the language. The students I teach, apart from mastering English as the language of universal communication, should learn much about international and American journalism and things that form its cultural background". That was the first paragraph of my application for the Fulbright Faculty Development Program I submitted in 2012. I wanted to get an opportunity to go to an American university to study journalism. The application turned out to be a successful one. In a year after a sequence of tests, interviews and an academic paper I became the finalist of the competition.

The Fulbright program started with the workshop in New York City. We (16 finalists from all over Russia) learned the principles of American education system. Having been prepared we left New York for different universities across the country from Alaska to Arizona to study different fields.

My destination was the University of Missouri (MU or Mizzou), which was founded in 1839 in Columbia, MO, as the first public university west of the Mississippi River.

The state's most comprehensive university, MU offers more than 300 degree programs through 19 colleges and schools and is one of only five universities nationwide with law, arts, journalism and a nuclear research reactor on one campus. Mizzou has a diverse enrollment with 35,000 students from every county in Missouri, every state in the USA and 2,000 internationals representing 120 countries [10].

MU's nationally prominent faculty bring discoveries into the classroom, publish more than 1,600 books and scholarly articles each year and spend about \$235 million annually on scientific research. The National Science Foundation has recognized MU as one of the top-10 universities in the USA for research opportunities. In fact, experiential learning is an essential part of an MU degree. Real-world media experience, or the Missouri Method, in journalism is the greatest example [10].

Although colleges had been teaching journalism courses since the late 1800s, Missouri native Walter Williams established the first journalism school in the world that combined academics with practical training. By the end of the very first class day Sept.14, 1908, more than 60 students enrolled, including 8 women and 2 Chinese, published the first issue of the University Missourian, a community newspaper, later renamed to the Columbia Missourian [10].

For more than a century, the Missouri School of Journalism (known on the MU campus as the J-School) has trained many of the world's best reporters, writers, editors, designers, photographers, PR and advertising professionals. The Missouri Method, which is famous for a blend of academic and hands-on training, prepares students to meet the highest demands of the fast growing industry with its multiple media outlets.

The J-School operates several professional media outlets owned by the university, where students work as real journalists. Students get their first real

journalism job before they even graduate. In those newsrooms students can make mistakes without getting fired as well as interview, write or edit articles for a multiplatform newspaper or weekly magazine, report live for TV station, cover breaking news in social media, put together multimedia packages, learn to meet deadlines in the fast growing media environment, build a portfolio of fine work to impress employers.

The Missouri School of Journalism's training platform consists of:

- Columbia Missourian, an online-first community newspaper with two websites, neighborhood e-newsletters and a print edition published five times a week;
- Global Journalist, a quarterly magazine and weekly radio program for international journalists;
- VOX, a weekly city magazine;
- KOMU-TV, mid-Missouri's NBC affiliate;
- KBIA 91.3, an NPR-member radio station;
- NEWSY, a multisource video news analysis service that highlights nuances in reporting from media outlets around the world;
- Adzou, Mojo Ad and #YAYAcconnection, strategic communication capstone agencies specializing in the youth audience that provide clients with media/public relations survey and solutions [10].

Even before the advent of social media, journalism had and has always been one of the most competitive professions where everybody does their best to be the first to break a story with the finest piece of news possible. The same is true with the Missouri School of Journalism, the world's first journalism school and widely recognized as one of the top U.S. journalism programs today.

As for the visiting professionals program my primary objective was to get into the linguistic environment of the US university which enabled me, firstly, to familiarize myself with the courses for journalists taught in America and to explore the principles of teaching journalists who were native speakers of English; secondly, when staying in America I observed the American media function

linguistically, culturally and informatively. The latter also provided an opportunity to collect necessary material for a new course. In order to do research into American mass media I gained access to libraries and communicated with appropriate experts to explore in greater detail the basics of the American journalism tradecraft: researching, reporting, writing, and editing.

I also had an exceptional opportunity to meet the most outstanding USA and international journalists such as Michael Golden (a director of the *New York Times*), Carol Guzy (a *Pulitzer prize* winning photojournalist), Charles Lewis (a famous international journalist, started his career in *60 Minutes*), Aye Aye Win (a Burmanese reporter for *Associated press*) and others at the Missouri Honor Medal reception. The Missouri School of Journalism has awarded its Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism since 1930. The award is considered one of journalism's most prestigious honors for career-long and outstanding service to journalism. Among the distinguished journalists, advertising and public relations practitioners, business leaders, institutions and media organizations that have received the medal are Tom Brokaw, Christiane Amanpour, Sir Winston Churchill, Gloria Steinem, Deborah Howell, David Granger and Gordon Parks [7; 4].

Being a visiting scholar and researcher at the Missouri School of Journalism I also attended several classes (international and global journalism, TV/radio journalism, semantics of writing in newspaper, convergence journalism, capstone advertising research, writing program), master classes performed by invited professionals, international and teaching seminars, made connections with highly qualified journalism professors and various professionals from around the world, got the access to an extremely rich professional library, studied the operation of different platform media newsrooms, observed them working in real time, learned the professional media and journalism language as well as the basics of American style journalism.

I was overwhelmed with the scale of hands-on training and depth of convergence journalism teaching, students' responsibility for their own studies,

their awareness of current professional issues, multimedia skills and initiative in acquiring new knowledge as digital natives.

Summing up the experience of the Fulbright program we have also to formulate the main challenges and changes journalism education is undergoing in America and all over the world.

In discussing global journalism education Mark Deuze [5; 137] is sure that the ways of teaching and training journalism depend on culture. Thus journalism cannot exist without society. This is a profession that interacts with the community. Though proliferation of technologies has led to globalization of media and brought international news to everyone's doorstep. There is a variety of views on the universal standards of journalism and their importance in country specific circumstances and different cultural contexts. As stated in the book *Global Journalism* by A.S. De Beer and J.C. Merrill [3; 129] on international journalism training: "Indeed, whatever the geographic area or sociopolitical context, journalism educators and media professionals have had to come to terms with the same problems".

According to Mark Deuze [6; 5] the four main challenges facing education programs in journalism worldwide are as follows:

- increasing cultural diversity,
- prevailing entertainment in media formats,
- development of digital and multimedia technologies,
- internationalization of news flow and media.

The influence of multiculturalism is felt at all levels of editorial decision-making process. It challenges journalism to be more "international" in its outlook. Tomorrow's journalist should be able to connect the local to the global. This process is often called "glocalization" [5; 142].

Concerning multiculturalism there are three essential elements: the knowledge of journalists about different cultures, a great number of cultures or diversity, and the social responsibility of journalists [4; 130]. Then a society is seen as a melting pot of supposedly different cultures which determines the focus and news value.

One of the most powerful forces in media is commercialism or the emerging worldwide media monopoly of culture and entertainment industries [1; 27]. Media conglomeration and rise of infotainment show that further commercialization will have an impact on the methods both in journalism and journalism education [9; 283].

Computerization and proliferation of the World Wide Web determine the necessity of mastering news-gathering and storytelling techniques in all media formats, which is called “multi-skilling”, and rethinking of the journalist-consumer relationship. They are also regarded as the biggest challenges facing journalism and media education [8; 480].

Traditionally journalism education in most countries all over the world has covered practical skills and general contextual education courses. Although the specific needs and demands of the media system differ from region to region and are mostly determined by the particular culture. The subtle balance between contextual and practical knowledge has always been in the focus of attention of journalism educators [2; 41].

The following general conclusions can be drawn. Journalism training takes place in various national contexts – in contrast to contemporary media developments which are definitely international. Immediacy in journalism is a sign of the times and it brings us to the implementation of new media strategies and importance of multimedia platforms training. Thus, the factors to be taken into consideration in American journalism training and globally are new media technologies, globalization, convergence and intercultural communication.

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