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### **THE CONCEPT OF 'INTERNATIONAL STUDENT' IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION (MEDIA DISCOURSE ANALYSIS BASED ON THE NEWSPAPER "THE GUARDIAN")**

**Keywords:** globalization, concept, international student, content-analysis, media discourse.

Nowadays, the media are an essential influential element of the society. The main global media are the news agencies. Their rise took

place in the middle of the nineteenth century with the main goal of supplying newspapers with news items from across the world [Machin, Van Leeuwen, 2007]. Thus, in science there is a need for a detailed description of the features of the communication phenomenon, carried out by means of media. It is important to understand what kind of impact the media has on the perception of international students in the society in the context of globalisation.

In general, according to Michael M. Weinstein globalisation refers to “a process — an evolution or closer economic integration by way of increased trade, foreign investment, and immigration” [Weinstein 2005, 2]. Globalisation covers all areas of human life, and educational policy and practices are not an exception. For centuries, students travelled to other countries in order to broaden their knowledge and widen their cultural horizons. Therefore, the object of this research is to reflect and explore the interconnections between globalisation of higher education and media in regard to international students.

Media interactions in their wide range create their own discourse. Anne O’Keeffe outlines that *media discourse* is “a broad term which can refer to a totality of how reality is represented in broadcast and printed media from television to newspaper” [O’Keeffe 2006, 1]. All things considered, media in the context of globalisation not only entertain, they also transmit views about the way the world works, about people’s behaviour and ethic norms. They influence readers’ or viewers’ opinions, and this impact might be either good or bad and it is highly important in the case of studying how international students are perceived and conceptualised.

The idea of “concept” and “conceptualisation” is the basic one in cognitive science for the study of the linguistic images. Concepts can be encoded in a language-specific format known as the *lexical concept* that is “a unit of semantic structure. Together a lexical concept and a form make up a linguistic unit: a conventional form-meaning pairing” [Evans 2007, 123]. Regarding the conceptualisation of international students in the context of globalisation, lexical concepts reveal important facts about students’ role in social interactions and their image in a variety of real-world contexts.

Content analysis is the fastest-growing technique in quantitative research in the field of mass communication. *Content analysis* may be defined as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication” [Berelson 1952, 18]. It is based on the statistical calculation of specially selected text units. It allows you to identify hidden aspects, as well as analyse them using charts and tables.

In this research, we concentrate on the news articles in the “International students” section of “The Guardian” newspaper (online UK edition) published between January 2015 and 31 December 2016. The corpus on which this analysis is based consists of 64 news stories different in size and type of texts (letters, editorials, news reports). Therefore, they cover numerous topics regarding international students’ life, real people’s opinions, political issues, and government’s attitude. We chose these articles in order to describe the complete image of the “international student” concept in the British media discourse.

To start with, we divided all chosen articles into the groups regarding the main role of international students and the background information given, and derived three main categories: British students abroad, Overseas students in the UK, and texts representing both: British and overseas students. The number of publications was different. The results are presented in Diagram 1.



Diagram 1. The main categories of the “international student” concept

The number of articles referring to British students is 13 (21%), while publications about their overseas partners prevail in number of 39 (62%). Texts describing topics concerning both British and international students are the least numerous- 11 (17%).

The next step was to identify relevant subcategories and investigate their peculiarities. Table 1 presents the coding frame for the “British students abroad” category. Most texts are real people’s letters describing their experience of the year abroad or giving advice to students who are only planning their educational trip. The articles analyse all aspects of the student’s life: study, work, and travelling, personal experience. From the positive point of view, students consider the valuable eye-opening life lessons and feeling of independence being far from their home country. Moreover, the opportunity to explore new cultures and improve professional and language skills is an essential part of students’ personal development according to the articles analysed. The negative role here is played by culture shock and language barrier in terms of lack of vocabulary, as well as such feelings as loneliness, stress, and disconnection from the world. Some students go abroad for studies, for instance, the Third Year Abroad or getting the full qualification in a foreign country. However, there are people who travel for their internship or teaching English, some combine both, studying and work. “The Guardian” publications in this category depict an optimistic view on the “international student” concept, providing tips and advice, and sharing real people’s stories and experience. Here international students are broad-minded ambitious people travelling abroad for international learning experience and immersing into new cultures, expanding friendship circles and developing language skills. The complete coding frame with all categories and subcategories is characterised in Table 1.

The second category “Overseas students in the United Kingdom” is illustrated in Table 2. It covers a wider spectrum of subcategories. The most developed and represented part is political issues. It combines positive and negative aspects, such as internationalisation and its consequences, the effect of Brexit, education export, and immigration regulations. The problem with immigrants is the most urgent in this subcategory. Moreover, it is the main factor of government’s mistreating of international students in the UK. As a result of the anti-immigration rhetoric, overseas students are forced to leave the country after the graduation and are threatened with potential deportation. From the economical point of view, international students make a valuable financial

contribution, while education fees for them are twice or even sometimes three times higher than for home students.

Table 1

**“British students abroad” category**

British students abroad											
Tips and Advice					Student life						
Food		Study		Accommodation	Travelling	Travelling	Study	Work	Students experience		
Savvy shopping	Dietary requirements	Language development	Motivation				Teaching English	Internship	Positive	Negative	
									exploring new cultures	achieved skills	sense of community
									independence	culture shock	language barrier
									Feelings		
									Loneliness	Leaving comfort zone	High stress level
									Disconnection from the world		

The phrase “cash cows” was used frequently in the articles of this category to describe government’s hypocritical treatment. Despite the cultural and economic benefits brought by overseas students, the government toughens visa controls and places numerous barriers in the application process. This situation damages the attractiveness of the UK’s universities and creates a humanitarian crisis in the higher education sector. There is an opinion presented in the articles under analysis that the UK is losing generation of talent and the best and brightest students because of this. International students who came from Europe and non-EU countries to get cutting-edge training and broaden their horizons suffer from cultural shock and mutual misunderstanding apart from legal hurdles. Furthermore, the minority ethnic students are afraid of facing racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and Islamophobia as consequences of the government’s policies. They do not feel safe and welcome in this country besides homesickness and the loneliness, which were part of British students’ experience as well.

On the other hand, overseas students develop their language skills and acquire world-class high standard education in the UK, as a part of which they gain valuable intercultural experience and cooperate with their British counterparts. This category outlines the most controversial topics such as immigration policy and cultural diversity. Moreover, in comparison with the previous category, this one shows a more negative attitude towards the concept of the “international student”. Overseas students are influenced and discriminated by the unfair Home Office policy. They feel unwelcome and struggle with the same problems as British students abroad, such as culture shock, lack of proficiency in English and homesickness. The complete coding frame with all categories and subcategories is illustrated in Table 2.

The category “Both: British and Overseas students” in Table 3 combines more general information, for instance, taken the ranking of the best student cities in the world and the criteria why they were chosen, ways of British and overseas students cooperation, as well as political issues concerning these two types of students. Nowadays, students are known as the most politically active part of the population, they participate in various demonstrations and protests.

“Overseas students in the United Kingdom” category

Overseas students in the United Kingdom		
Student experience	Politics	Economy
<p><b>Feelings</b></p> <p>Unsafe Homesickness Loneliness Unwelcome</p>	<p><b>Internationalisation</b></p> <p>Government’s hypocritical treatment Brexit</p>	<p><b>Ban on students loan</b> <b>Valuable financial contribution (“cash cows”)</b></p>
<p><b>Study</b></p> <p>Cutting-edge training Language skills improvement Mutual misunderstanding</p>	<p><b>Education export</b></p>	<p><b>Exchange schemes</b></p>
<p><b>Cultural diversity</b></p> <p>Cultural shock International friendship Minority ethnic students</p>	<p><b>Humanitarian crisis</b></p> <p>Losing generation of talent Damage the UK’s attractiveness Tough visa controls Force to return home after graduation Anti-immigration rhetoric</p>	<p><b>Immigration regulations</b></p>
		<p><b>Potential deportation</b></p>
		<p>Cara (Council for at Risk Academics) Grants</p>

However, being an international student can be dangerous for taking part in such public actions. That is why overseas students are not very active compared with their British peers, also partially because of the lack of language knowledge and lack of understanding of the laws. Nonetheless, British students try to support them and protest against the refugees crisis and mistreatment of international students. In addition,

cooperation of these two student groups can bring benefits from working and socialising together. There are various exchange programmes that encourage internationalisation and global contacts. Texts of this category show international students as passive and reserved in comparison to their politically active and energetic British counterparts, but both of them are interested in multicultural experience of studying abroad. The coding frame for this category with all subcategories is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

**“Both: British and Overseas students” category**

Both: British and Overseas students									
Politics			Cooperation				Best student cities in the world		
Refugees crisis	Protests	Charity and fundraising Fear of deportation	Brexit effect	Negative	Positive	Quality of the universities Affordability Graduation employment Quality of life Multiculturalism	Lack of knowledge Language barrier Global contacts Internationalisation Integration Exchange schemes Learning cultures	Language skills improvement	Mistreat of international students



The phenomenon of the globalisation in the higher education sector is widespread nowadays. In the case of international students, it is highly important, while there is an increase in the number of students who spend the whole or a part of their higher educational formation studying abroad. However, the flows are concentrated in relatively few countries and are of significant financial interest to their universities. In this research we considered the example of the United Kingdom universities, which are known as attractive to international students. Therefore, the rapid growth in the number of international students involves the political scandal and anti-immigration rhetoric in mass media. The concept of the “international student” in the British press splits into two basic representations: British students abroad and overseas students in the United Kingdom. The image of these two is absolutely different, as well as the topics and the context. International students who come to the UK are depicted with the negative colouring, as oppressed by the government, struggling with misunderstanding, and feeling unwelcome and unsafe. Meanwhile, British students in the articles under analysis face more common cultural and language problems. They are seen as adventurous, open-minded and communicative people. These two different representations show the complexity of the “international student” concept in the British media discourse.

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