

Title: Acculturation Strategies Among Russian University Students in the United States

Author: Victoria Malko, California State University, Fresno

Acculturation is a process of adaptation of individuals socialized in one culture to new contexts that result from immigration. It is a dynamic process that constantly changes under the influence of multiple factors. Understanding various outcomes of acculturation may facilitate development of students' language proficiency and provide a sense of grounding and identity while living "on the borders."

This paper examines the strategies Russian-speaking university students use in the process of acculturation, their language preference, and their contact and participation with the host culture and other ethnic groups. Participants in this ethnographic study were Russian-speaking students in a large public university and a private Christian university in the western United States. All participants were born in the former Soviet Union and have been to the United States from several months to more than five years.

The analysis of survey and interview data within the critical theory framework revealed that the acculturation strategies as defined by Berry (1997) varied. Most of the students pursued the strategy of assimilation, which involves ethnic culture shedding, often voluntary. Some opted for separation, rejecting the dominant culture. The most successful students pursued the strategy of integration, relying on social support from the dominant and ethnic communities. Russian students' difficulties with adjustment will be further discussed in light of different practices of school socialization in the country of origin and the society of settlement. In addition to group-level factors, such individual-level factors as age, gender, education, personality, migration motivation and expectations, and cultural distance (language and religion) will also be explored.

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46(1), 5-34.