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CINEMA AS A VISUAL CLINICAL LABORATORY IN THE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES TO FUTURE PSYCHOLOGISTS

Abstract. The article substantiates the relevance of integrating authentic audiovisual content into the educational process of training future psychologists within the discipline of “English for Specific Purposes”. The author proves that in the era of globalisation of professional education, the use of psychologically driven motion pictures ceases to be an auxiliary tool and becomes a fundamental necessity. Cinematography is seen as a unique linguistic space where professional terminology is intertwined with deep emotional subtext and non-verbal signals, allowing students not only to master vocabulary but also to develop professional intuition and empathy.

It has been determined that feature psychological films serve as a “visual clinical laboratory” for diagnostic observation and critical thinking. Particular attention is paid to the methodological development of the author’s column ‘Psychology in Cinema’ for the future textbook “English for Specific Purposes: Psychology”. The author has selected several iconic films (“The Wife”, “Experimenter”, “Girl, Interrupted”, “Exam”, “Good Will Hunting”) and classified them according to psychological, linguistic, ethical and deontological criteria.

The article focuses on the development of a three-stage methodology for working on the feature film “Coda: Life with Music”. The content of the pre-viewing, viewing and post-viewing stages is described.

The author argues that students should watch the film independently beforehand to reduce emotional tension, adapt linguistically, and free up classroom time for more intensive conversational practice. It has been proven that the proposed approach helps to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real psychological practice, forming the professional communicative competence of future specialists. The conclusions outline prospects for further research, including empirical testing of the effectiveness of the developed textbook and the implementation of artificial intelligence tools to create interactive observation protocols.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, future psychologists, psychologically driven motion pictures, teaching methods, clinical observation, professional communication, three-stage learning model, ethical and deontological analysis.

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КІНО ЯК ВІЗУАЛЬНА КЛІНІЧНА ЛАБОРАТОРІЯ У МЕТОДИЦІ НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЗА ПРОФЕСІЙНИМ СПРЯМУВАННЯМ МАЙБУТНІХ ПСИХОЛОГІВ

Анотація. У статті обґрунтовано актуальність інтеграції автентичного аудіовізуального контенту в освітній процес підготовки майбутніх психологів у межах дисципліни «Англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням». Автором доведено, що в епоху глобалізації професійної освіти використання психологічно орієнтованих кінофільмів перестає бути допоміжним засобом і стає фундаментальною необхідністю. Кінематограф розглядається як унікальний лінгвістичний простір, де професійна термінологія переплітається з глибоким емоційним підтекстом та невербальними сигналами, що дозволяє здобувачам не лише опанувати лексику, а й розвивати професійну інтуїцію та емпатію.

Визначено, що художні психологічні фільми слугують «візуальною клінічною лабораторією» для діагностичного спостереження та критичного мислення. Особливу увагу приділено методологічній розробці авторської рубрики «Психологія в кіно» для майбутнього підручника “English for Specific Purposes: Psychology”. Автором відібрано низку знакових стрічок (“The Wife”, “Experimenter”, “Girl, Interrupted”, “Exam”, “Good Will Hunting”) та класифіковано їх за психологічними, лінгвістичними та етико-деонтологічними критеріями.

Центральну увагу в статті приділено розробці триетапної методики роботи над художнім фільмом “Coda: Life with Music”. Описано зміст допереглядового, переглядового та післяпереглядового етапів.

Автором аргументовано доцільність попереднього самостійного перегляду фільму здобувачами для емоційного розвантаження, лінгвістичної адаптації, економії аудиторного часу для подальшої інтенсивної розмовної практики.

Доведено, що запропонований підхід сприяє подоланню розриву між теоретичними знаннями та реальною психологічною практикою, формуючи професійну комунікативну компетентність майбутніх фахівців. У висновках окреслено перспективи подальших досліджень, що полягають в емпіричній перевірці ефективності створеного підручника та впровадженні інструментів штучного інтелекту для створення інтерактивних протоколів спостереження.

Ключові слова: англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням, майбутні психологи, психологічні кінофільми, методика навчання, клінічне спостереження, професійна комунікація, триетапна модель навчання, етико-деонтологічний аналіз.

Defining the problem and argumentation of the topicality of its consideration. In the era of globalised professional education, the integration of authentic audio-visual content into the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum has shifted from a supportive tool to a fundamental necessity. Psychologically driven motion pictures offer a unique linguistic landscape where professional terminology intersects with complex emotional subtexts and nonverbal cues. By analysing the discourse of psychological thrillers and dramas, students not only master specialised vocabulary but also develop “soft skills” such as empathy, diagnostic intuition, and the ability to interpret subtle communicative nuances. Thus, the synergy between cinematic narratives and language acquisition serves as a powerful catalyst for the development of cross-disciplinary competencies, enabling future specialists to bridge the gap between theoretical linguistic knowledge and real-world psychological practice.

For future psychologists, mastering English through psychologically themed cinema transcends mere language learning, becoming a form of professional simulation. Cinematic masterpieces – ranging from clinical case studies in dramas to the intricate behavioural patterns in psychological thrillers – provide an immersive environment for honing diagnostic observation. By engaging with authentic English discourse, students develop the ability to decode professional terminology in its natural context, while simultaneously cultivating professional empathy. This cross-disciplinary approach ensures that the English language becomes a functional tool for analysing human behaviour and accessing global psychological discourse

Psychology plays a crucial role in communication. We agree with K. Sovach that when students are skilled in English, they enhance their ability to understand human nature in a very broad sense [1].

Previous Research in the Area. We are currently observing sustained interest from the scientific community in the application of cinema across various fields, including psychology.

A. Sanchez, Doctor of Psychology, states that “movies are a powerful vehicle of emotion elicitation, their social impact, and how they can be a helpful supplemental tool in the therapy room” [2]. Additionally, the author, after having analysed a lot of scientific papers, confirms that when watching movies, different brain networks are engaged in processes such as visual perception, memory recall, *language comprehension*, emotional responses, and decision-making. Research indicates that viewers often become fully immersed in the film, feeling as if they are within the story. It implies that understanding the plot and following the storyline requires coordination across the entire brain [2].

Another PhD in Psychology, Raymond J. Green, is sure that movies can be a valuable resource for teaching psychology [3]. Moreover, films offer a tangible way to convey essential information, often in a way that effectively captures the audience’s attention and makes a significant impact! [3]. Many people have a distorted view of what psychology is and how psychologists work, shaped by popular movies. We can

use these films as a reminder that not everything presented on the silver screen is accurate, and thus, students should view portrayals of psychology with a discerning eye. As a result, students are taught to think critically.

G. K. Lampropoulos, N. Kazantzis, and F. P. Deane, seeking to provide preliminary data to help practitioners evaluate and use popular entertainment films in therapy, argue that motion pictures serve as powerful narratives that reflect cultural values and ideas while also functioning as a popular means of communication and expression. They can act as therapeutic metaphors, helping clients engage with sensitive topics that might feel threatening. Characters in films can serve as unofficial co-therapists, guiding clients through their emotional journeys [4, P. 535]. Therapists leverage movies to inspire therapeutic change by fostering hope, deepening emotions, providing positive role models, enhancing client strengths, reframing issues, facilitating better communication, and shifting value priorities. Additionally, films can offer clients emotional support and acceptance, assist them in gathering information, raise awareness of their problems, and prepare them for meaningful action [4, P. 536].

We have repeatedly addressed the issue of learning English through films [5]. At that time, it was the Netflix series “The Crown” [6; 7]. We tried to prove that “The Crown” is an ideal platform for learning and studying English. It is a perfect source for the development of foreign-language communication skills [8]. Furthermore, we have confirmed that the show explores intricate themes and vocabulary, offering students an engaging way to enhance their language skills. By examining the characters and their interactions, students can also gain cultural insights, broadening their understanding of the language in a broader context. Thus, “The Crown” is an excellent option for anyone aiming to improve their English learning journey [8, P. 70].

However, when we began working with students majoring in S4 Psychology, Field of Knowledge S: Social Sciences, Journalism and Information, we realised that we needed to develop a textbook that would meet the American Psychological Association (APA) standards and its goals for students, to be exact. [9]. Among the many tasks that directly align with the APA’s objectives, we decided to create a separate block where students could work with video material (psychological films). Our pedagogical experience with “The Crown” was far from incidental; instead, it provided empirical evidence that authentic cinematic narratives are a potent tool for developing professional communicative competence in psychology students.

The paper aims to develop a methodology for teaching English to future psychologists using reflection on material from feature films with psychological content.

Results and Discussion. At Kherson State Agrarian and Economic University, the Faculty of Economics offers foreign language training as part of the core curriculum for the bachelor’s degree programme in Psychology (Speciality S4, Field of Knowledge S: Social Sciences, Journalism and Information) in accordance with the syllabus for the academic discipline “Foreign Language for Professional Purposes”. The programme’s integral competence lies in the ability to solve complex, specialised

tasks and practical problems in the field of psychology, which involve the application of fundamental psychological theories and methods and are characterised by complex, uncertain conditions [10]. Among the general competencies, the following are highlighted: the ability to search for, process and analyse information from various sources and the ability to communicate in a foreign language [10]. And one such source, in our opinion, is English-language psychologically-driven motion pictures.

In the course of developing professionally oriented foreign language communication skills for future psychologists, the syllabus for the academic discipline “Foreign Language for Professional Purposes” provides for the completion of specific tasks, including the application of teaching strategies, approaches, technologies, teaching techniques and methodological materials that simulate real academic situations and relevant typical situations of professional communication; the introduction of new teaching strategies and techniques that increase student motivation.

The relevance of using psychologically-driven motion pictures is due to the following factors:

- the need to find new ways, methods, and materials for effectively teaching future psychologists foreign languages;
- the need to develop optimal methods for teaching foreign languages through the use of interdisciplinary connections;
- the need to develop new forms and methods for stimulating the independent activity of future psychologists.

In the process of teaching foreign languages at the Faculty of Economics of Kherson State Agrarian and Economic University, psychologically-driven motion pictures are used to achieve the following goals:

- increasing motivation;
- conditional immersion in relevant typical situations of professional communication;
- stimulating the cognitive interest of future psychologists, developing their cognitive abilities, forming strategies and techniques (cognitive activity), skills and abilities for academic work in a foreign language (critical analysis);
- raising the level of general culture and broadening the horizons of students.

The objectives of teaching psychology students a foreign language using feature films with psychological content are:

- to develop foreign language communication skills in all types of speech activity;
- to develop the ability to synthesise and analyse feature film material;
- to develop critical thinking;
- engaging students’ emotional involvement, developing the intellectual and creative personality;
- developing the ability to abstract from the perceived situation.

Thus, in the process of watching a feature film, the skills of synthesising and analysing, abstracting from the situation, and attending to verbal and non-verbal means

of communication are developed. These skills, improved through the mastery of a foreign language, are necessary for the professional activity of a future psychologist.

For our upcoming textbook, tentatively titled “English for Specific Purposes: Psychology”, we have selected films that are incredibly profound in terms of psychological analysis: “Coda: Life with Music” (2019), directed by Claude Lalonde [11]; “The Wife” (2017) – the director is Björn L. Runge [12]; “Experimenter” (The Stanley Milgram Story 2015, by Michael Almereyda) [13]; “Girl, Interrupted” (1999), directed by James Mangold [14]; “Exam” (2009) – the director is Stuart Hazeldine [15], and “Good Will Hunting” (1997) by Gus Van Sant [16].

The common thread running through all these films is the exploration of human identity through the prism of social constraints, internal conflicts and ethical dilemmas.

Here are the specific criteria we plan to use to structure our recommendations to students and develop exercises:

1. Psychological issues (content-based criteria). It is the main bridge for future psychologists. Each film illustrates specific concepts:

“Coda: Life with Music”: performance anxiety, complicated grief, professional burnout, and age crises.

“The Wife”: impostor syndrome, suppressed identity, passive-aggressive relationships.

“Experimenter”: social psychology, conformism, research ethics (Milgram experiment).

“Girl, Interrupted”: clinical psychology, borderline personality disorder, institutionalisation.

“Exam”: group dynamics, behaviour in stressful situations, game theory.

“Good Will Hunting”: psychotherapeutic alliance, defence mechanisms, childhood trauma and its impact on adult life.

1.1. Overcoming psychological barriers and blocks: all characters are in a state of ‘stagnation’ or crisis. Henry Straud in “Coda” cannot play due to panic attacks, Will Hunting due to childhood trauma, and the heroine of “The Wife” due to years of self-denial.

1.2. The role of a mentor/guide: in almost every one of these films, interaction with another person who helps them through the crisis plays a key role (the therapist in “Good Will Hunting”, the journalist in “Coda”, the writer husband in “The Wife”).

1.3. High level of intellectual and emotional tension: these films show people with high intelligence or talent whose internal conflicts require complex cognitive analysis.

2. Linguistic potential (English Learning criteria). Since students are learning English, these films offer specific language material:

2.1. Professional terminology: the films “The Experimenter” and “Girl, Interrupted” contain a lot of diagnostic vocabulary. For example: *informed consent, debriefing, variables, behavioural obedience, compliance* (“The Experimenter” [13]); *bipolar disorder, compulsive eating, promiscuity, institutional care, ward* (“Girl, Interrupted” [14]).

2.2. *Levels of formality*: “Exam” and “The Wife” demonstrate highly intellectual language (*I am making a brief remark* [12]), while “Good Will Hunting” is a mixture of academic style (Ivy League Academic English – professor Lambeau) and working-class Boston slang (Will): *wicked smart* (very clever), *apples* (humorous expression of success) [16].

2.3. *Description of emotional states, metaphors, overcoming fear*: “Coda” – *the abyss, white noise, the keys are like teeth, resilience, revival, closure*. Students will also face elusive states: *melancholy, isolation, artistic block, transcendence* [11].

2.4. *Negotiation language, leadership, phrasal verbs*: “Exam” – *If we cooperate, we might..., Providing that everyone agrees..., We need to establish a lead*. There is a large number of phrasal verbs describing actions in a group: *work out, point out, rule out, team up, back down*. Among leadership vocabulary, the following can be offered for learning: *domination, consensus, submission, and manipulation* [15].

3. Ethical and deontological criteria. This is one of the most interesting aspects for psychology students, as it allows them to discuss not only ‘what is wrong with the patient,’ but also ‘whether the specialist/system is acting correctly.’ Future specialists need to analyse the ethics of the characters’ behaviour.

3.1. “*Experimenter*” is the ‘gold standard’ for studying ethics in psychology. Ethical dilemma: Does the scientific value of the results justify causing psychological pain and stress to the subjects? Deontological aspect: deception of participants and lack of informed consent. Stanley Milgram made people believe that they were torturing others with electricity.

3.2. “*Girl, Interrupted*”. Ethical dilemma: the line between helping and institutionalisation. Does a psychiatric hospital always act in the best interests of the patient? Deontological aspect: professional distance between staff and patients.

3.3. “*Good Will Hunting*”. Ethical dilemma: the limits of professional behaviour for a therapist. Sean Maguire uses physical contact (grabbing Will by the throat) and self-disclosure about his personal life. Deontological aspect: the problem of professional boundaries. Can a therapist be a friend or mentor?

3.4. “*The Wife*”. Ethical dilemma: intellectual property and moral damage. Psychological aspect of voluntarily giving up one’s own voice for the sake of another’s success. Deontological aspect: Ethics of interpersonal relationships: manipulation, gaslighting, and exploitation of emotional labour.

3.5. “*Coda: Life with Music*”. Ethical dilemma: the relationship between the journalist/interviewer and the subject of the study. Journalist Helen crosses the line of professional curiosity, effectively becoming Henry’s therapist. Deontological aspect: Does a person without psychological training have the right to interfere in another person’s deep trauma, even if it helps? Risk of retraumatisation.

3.6. “*Exam*”. Ethical dilemma: corporate ethics and the ‘price of success’. How far can a person go in cruelty if it is part of the official selection process? Deontological aspect: Psychological manipulation in a group under pressure. The ethics of creating such stressful conditions by an employer.

It should be noted that we plan to include a section on “Psychology in Cinema” in the future textbook “English for specific purposes: Psychology”.

For this article, we have chosen the film “Coda: Life with Music” [11]. The film was selected for Patrick Stewart’s high-quality English (clear diction, rich vocabulary) and for the authenticity of the psychological symptoms portrayed. At present, we think, students can watch the entire film in advance. They may choose either the Ukrainian-language version with English subtitles or the English-language version with subtitles. It will be indicated in the textbook.

We are sure that watching the film independently before class serves several strategic functions that critically affect the quality of learning:

1. *Emotional and cognitive unloading.* A feature film is, first and foremost, an emotional experience. If a student sees the movie for the first time in the classroom, they focus on the plot and their emotions, which prevents them from performing analytical tasks. If a student watches the film in advance, they “live through” the story and satisfy their curiosity about the ending. And in class, they are already ready to work with the film as a “clinical case”, objectively analysing the symptoms of Patrick Stewart’s character.

2. *Linguistic Scaffolding.* For psychology students, English is a tool. Independent viewing allows them to listen at a comfortable pace (with the ability to pause and use subtitles), get used to the actors’ pronunciation, and write down unfamiliar words so as not to slow down group discussions in class due to language barriers.

3. *Formation of “clinical observation”.* Psychology requires observation. When a student watches a film on their own, they have the opportunity to notice details independently: how the pianist’s hands tremble, how he avoids specific topics. It develops individual professional opinions, which they can then compare with groupmates’ opinions during classroom discussions.

4. *Saving classroom time.* Watching a full-length film takes almost two hours. It is impossible within the limits of a class. You use class time only to watch key scenes (for analysis) and for intensive conversation practice (discussion and role-plays).

By the way, “Coda: Life with Music” is very calm and meditative. It is best to watch it in the evening to fully immerse yourself in the atmosphere of Beethoven and Rachmaninoff’s piano works, which are key to understanding the protagonist’s psyche.

Traditionally, the work on the film includes the following stages: pre-viewing stage, viewing the film, and post-viewing stage. Let us consider the pre-viewing stage of work on the feature film.

The pre-viewing stage may include:

1. **Brainstorming & Lead-in:** we can use the technique “Word Mapping”, asking the question: *How do you feel when you think about a musician’s public performance?* Students write down words such as *sweaty palms, rapid heartbeat, fear of failure*, etc. A professional discussion may cover the concept of *coda*. In music, this is the finale; in psychology, it may mark the end of a career or a life.

The teacher can offer to show students the film poster or a 30-second trailer without sound. As a result, students may predict that they will answer the question: *Based on the protagonist's body language, what psychological challenges might he be facing?*

2. Language Scaffolding: “Match the Term to the Definition” task may be helpful: *avoidance behaviour – actions taken to prevent the occurrence of a stressful situation; performance anxiety – fear of one's ability to perform a task under observation*, etc. Besides, synonym search activity may be offered: *scared – petrified, apprehensive, overwhelmed*.

3. Professional Briefing: the students may be occupied with a short reading task: a short text about Yerkes-Dodson Law (law of dependence of the result on the level of stress). It perfectly explains the state of a pianist: when anxiety becomes too high, skill declines. Moreover, you can compile a list of symptoms for panic disorder according to DSM-5. Students should familiarise themselves with them in advance so that they can tick them off during the viewing.

In the context of training psychologists, *the while-viewing stage* should be focused on active professional observation. Students do not simply watch films; they become “clinical interviewers” or “observer-researchers”. We think it is better to choose 2–3 key scenes (for example, the first panic attack on stage and the first conversation with Helen in the park).

1. Clinical Observation Log (Journaling): students watch the concert scene and focus on Henry's non-verbal communication and physical state. They should fill in the observation log (Table 1).

Table 1

The observation log		
Observed Feature	Description (English Vocabulary)	Psychological Interpretation
Facial Expression	E.g., <i>vacant stare, tightening of jaw</i>	Dissociation or intense internal fear
Micro-movements	E.g., <i>trembling hands, shallow breathing</i>	Somatic symptoms of a panic attack
Avoidance Actions	E.g., <i>abrupt exit, avoiding eye contact</i>	Maladaptive coping / “Fight-or-flight” response

2. Semantic Spotting (Linguistic focus): students should ‘catch’ specific markers of state in the speech of the characters. They listen to the dialogue between Henry and Helen in the park and should tick the phrases or keywords that indicate Henry's defensive mechanisms: *I'm perfectly fine* (denial), *It's just the acoustics* (rationalisation), *I don't want to talk about it* (avoidance/withdrawal).

3. Identifying Therapeutic Techniques: since our students are psychologists, they should analyse Helen's actions as a quasi-therapist. Thus, they focus on Helen's

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communication style. *How does she gain Henry's trust?* The examples can be noted down: *validation* (acknowledging his feelings), *open-ended questions* (encouraging him to speak), *active listening* (using silence or nodding).

4. Linguistic Scaffolding during viewing: The teacher should remind the students to use the Symptom Checklist that they worked on during the pre-viewing stage. Now they should tick off which DSM-5 symptoms they see at that moment.

The post-viewing stage is the culmination of the entire methodology. Its goal is to transition from observation to professional action and deep reflection. Students must synthesise the knowledge they have gained and use English as a tool for solving professional tasks. We can offer a few possible tasks:

1. Case Report Writing: compiling a concise 'psychological portrait' of Henry Straud, using professional vocabulary: *trigger, maladaptive coping, performance anxiety, bereavement*.

2. The "Why" Discussion: *How did the lack of closure after his wife's death contribute to his current professional crisis?*

3. Therapeutic Encounter: working in pairs – "Psychologist – Client": students should imagine Henry comes for a consultation after his first breakdown. CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) techniques must be used with the focus on language means: *What evidence do you have that...?, Let's reframe this situation..., How would you describe the intensity of your fear on a scale from 1 to 10?*

4. Critical discussion and ethics (critical thinking developing): the analysis of the ethical aspects we have discussed earlier. It can be the discussion about Helen's role: *Helen's involvement was beneficial but professionally risky*. Key concepts to be used: *boundaries, dual relationships, informal support vs. professional therapy*.

5. Self-reflection: linking the hero's experience to the student's personal experience – *My Own "Coda"*: essay-reflection. The task may be designed in this way: *Reflect on a time you faced a "block" or fear of failure. What coping mechanisms did you use?* The students can use the movie's metaphors.

Conclusions and perspectives. The proposed three-stage methodology for integrating psychologically-driven motion pictures into the ESP curriculum proves to be a transformative approach for training future psychologists. By transitioning from linguistic scaffolding in the pre-viewing stage to active clinical observation during the screening, and culminating in professional simulations at the post-viewing stage, students bridge the gap between abstract theory and authentic practice. Using "Coda: Life with Music" as a focal case study demonstrates that cinematic narratives serve not only as a source of professional terminology but also as a "visual laboratory" for developing diagnostic intuition, ethical discernment, and therapeutic communication skills in English.

Future research in this area will focus on the empirical validation of the developed textbook "English for Specific Purposes: Psychology", specifically by measuring long-term retention of professional vocabulary and improvements in "soft skills» among students. Another promising direction is expanding the "Psychology in

Cinema” rubric to include interdisciplinary projects, such as comparative analyses of diagnostic portrayals across different film genres. Additionally, exploring the impact of AI-assisted tools in creating interactive observation logs based on these films could further enhance the digital component of the proposed educational framework.

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