

**DCCD 2020****Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding****INTERNATIONALIZATION OF STAND-UP COMEDIANS'  
SPEECH BEHAVIOR: LOSS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY?**

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tefimenko@mail.ru***Abstract***

This article pursues the aim of scrutinizing stand-up comedy in order to analyze and determine the impact of globalization and internationalization set on entertainment industry as a whole and the way comedians perform their acts in particular. It is the first time the acts of comedians from three different cultures are analyzed in the light of phono-pragmatic research. Perceptive analysis is implemented to find out the main suprasegmental characteristics used by the comedians. This work presents an interdisciplinary research based on social and pragmatic linguistics, sociophonetics, phono-pragmatic analysis where comedians' social, cultural and geographical background, the context as well as social and linguistic peculiarities of this genre are taken into consideration. Alongside with these methods a proper linguistic method is used: a method of socio-phonetic and pragma-phonetic investigation. The authors arrive at the conclusion that the speakers tend to stick to their style of performance and their native manner of pronunciation. Meanwhile, their stand-up is preserved in the international manner of the genre. The research data supports the claim that the comedians adopt the stylistic features of American stand-up and sound American if they perform in a style of a stand-up. Thus, the results of this work allow to speak about unification concerning the style, genre and some speech patterns regardless of the actor's geographical, social and cultural origin.

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## **1. Introduction**

Such issues as building, retaining and expressing national identity have been in the focus of attention for the last 20 years. Progressing globalization has become a whole new step in the development of internationalization of economic and cultural life. In terms of global integration neither a country nor a culture can remain static that in its turn leads to issues of the preservation of national identity. Moreover, this integration results in unification and universalization in such areas as fashion, education, mass media and culture.

In this article we analyze one type of light entertainment programmes i.e. stand-up comedy broadcast in the USA, the UK and Russia to determine the impact of globalization and internationalization set on entertaining industry as a whole and the way comedians perform their acts in particular.

The stand-up genre epitomizes the interaction of global and local trends. The re-emergence and development of this genre dates from 1950-80-s, the time when the USA was considered to be a major economic power and the transmitter of mass culture. Although some issues concerning stand-up comedy have been discussed before, it is the first time the acts of comedians from three different cultures are analyzed in the light of phono-pragmatic research.

## **2. Problem Statement**

To state the obvious, the forming of global society results in forming of global culture and new global identity. Moreover, some new models in such areas and industries are coming out.

Mass information flows, virtual reality and the Internet unite the countries all over the world and enable to develop information culture as a global one (Gural & Smokotin, 2014, p. 10). It is notorious that language serves as a complex system with each component and level (lexical, grammatical and phonetic) to participate in cumulating, retaining and transmission of culture. While indicating the affiliation of someone with a certain culture, language is the prime source of identification (Rassokha, 2016, p. 94). Consequently, the talks of 6 comedians from three different countries (the USA, the UK and Russia) are at the heart of our investigation. They are analysed from the point of the prosodic features used in their speech. Perceptive analysis is implemented to find out the main suprasegmental characteristics used by the comedians, which will give us ground to make conclusions about internationalization of speech behaviour in the stand-up genre. It is anticipated that despite the affiliation of comedians with their national cultures the speech pattern, used in their talks will be universal.

## **3. Research Questions**

This article is based on some works of researchers in political linguistics and sociology (Gadzhiev, 2011; Kudryavtsev, 2010) social and cultural linguistics (Boldyrev & Dubrovskaya, 2015; Efimenko, 2009; Gural & Smokotin, 2014; Karasik, 2016; Rassoha, 2016; Zheltukhina et al., 2016; Zheltukhina & Vikulova, 2017), phonetics and pragmatics (Blok & Velikaya, 2012; Crystal, 2016; Ivanova, 2018; Mikhaleva, 2018; Shevchenko, 2016; Wells, 2018).

While investigating the impact of globalization many researchers contrapose the national and cultural identity and globalization notions. National identity is determined as a certain paradigm, the

foundation of a social universum model, a complex of prevailing ideas about society as well as individuals, their own country, national ideas and national character (Gadzhiev, 2011). Moreover, national identity is thought as a social construction, as integral part of social world (Zheltukhina et al., 2016, p. 10414). As Peter Scott fairly states globalization entails the emergence of a hybrid mass culture and merging of national traditions (Scott, 1998, p. 112). Gadzhiev (2011) extended this idea saying that some unified cultural events (in education, fashion, entertainment) appear.

As a striking example of this unification in terms of entertainment programmes is the adoption of a certain model of delivering a talk in stand-up comedy, which is difficult to define as it combines elements of other genres. It is worth pointing out that a number of linguists (Brodie, 2008; Daube, 2009; Manwell, 2008; Manzheleevskaya, 2017; Panchenko, 2017, etc) theorized the stand-up genre, so for our work we will sort out and consider its most important peculiarities.

It is an art where a comic performs on stage in front of an audience telling jokes, tall tales, short funny life stories, monologues, improvising with the audience and acting. Stand-up therefore is a form of talking, one which above all implies engagement, and involvement of the audience, its reaction to what the comedian is telling. The audience is an active listener, though power resides with the performer. In this regard, a number of researchers have highlighted its dialogic form. It is a direct conversation not to but with the audience (Brodie, 2008; Daube, 2009). This interaction operates on four linguistic levels: a chat with the audience, role-play of an event, presentation of oneself as an onlooker or an advisor, a conversation with oneself not with the audience. All that adds spontaneity, vivacity, liveliness and humour to the performance.

Another very important trait with its roots in the past when predecessors of modern comedians were vaudeville and clowns is the theatrical character of performances. Thus, in order to progress and stand out from others, comedians embrace emotions, affection and expressiveness in their shows; they display their personality.

Comedians do not tell jokes in discrete units; they interweave them into their material, and each unit is linked with the others and presented in the form of a composition to an audience in which the personality of the comedian is conveyed.

Comedians speak very candidly about taboos. They discuss race, politics, sex, culture and many other social issues in an extremely free and destructive way. They are observant to life around them and mock and slander it in their performances.

The present focus of our research is on prosodic markers (pauses, rate of speech, loudness and tunes) which help the comedians to enhance eloquence and emphasize the humorous effect of their jokes. This genre is generally characterized by the contrastive pitch of the voice, exaggerated emphatic tones, fast tempo.

A noticeable pause plays the major role. It is a rhetorical strategy of timing and linguists emphasize its pragmatic function. According to their opinion, the pause increases the effect of a shift between what a comedian will say and what the audience expected, it reinforces laughter, and sharpens the punch line as well as it gives a comedian an opportunity to think about what to say next.

There has been a widespread belief that a pause in comedian performances precedes the punch line. The punch line being the most remarkable part of a joke should be marked prosodically by either raising

the pitch of voice or increasing volume; they should be delivered with altered rhythm and separated from other text by pauses. However, a very extensive research conducted by Attardo, Pickering, and Baker (2011) on the prosody of humor in stand-up comedies contradicts this point of view. Their reliable data let them state that punch lines were not marked with any unusual shift in voice quality or volume and there were no significant pauses signaling punch lines.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The paper explores phono-pragmatic peculiarities of humorous performances of English- and Russian-speaking comedians in the light of their national and cultural background.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The aim of this article predetermined the methods of the study. As a whole this work is an interdisciplinary research based on social and pragmatic linguistics, sociophonetics, phono-pragmatic analysis where comedians' social, cultural and geographical background, the context as well as social and linguistic peculiarities of this genre are taken into account. Anthropological approach is used to study speech patterns of the stand-up genre in terms of prosodic analysis and revealing national and cultural universals and peculiarities of comedians as the representatives of certain national and cultural societies. Furthermore, general scientific descriptive method (observation, generalization, interpretation, comparison and classification) is applied. Alongside with these methods a proper linguistic method is used: a method of socio-phonetic and pragma-phonetic investigation which allows observation of whether or not the genre is exposed to the process of globalization and how susceptible to internationalisation the chosen informants are.

#### **6. Findings**

One of the most successful and top earning stand-up comedians in the world is an American Jerry Seinfeld, who has been on stage since 1975. His style of stand-up is emblematic. Other comedians talk about Seinfeld that his work is technically perfect. He is an artisan who works on a single joke for years. He amends and abridges it and he believes that the smaller the bit the harder it is to make it, because there is less room for error. His material is not edgy or obscene and the way of laying it out, is quite laidback. Seinfeld does not chase modern trends of a stand-up in terms of jokes and performing a stand-up, and sticks to old-school values. Unlike modern stand-up comedians, who feign that their jokes are extemporaneous and they play them cool deadpan Seinfeld approves of a showmanship and plays his bits in thickly theatricalized tones, and carefully modulates his voice.

In the following joke, taken from his Stand-up Comedy 2004-2013 Compilation (see figure 1), the speaker realizes a wide set of prosodic features (we use IPA symbols to represent them) as well as non-verbal means (gestures) to support his humorous utterances.

But |...The  $\vec{q}$ uestion is  $\setminus$ this.||  $\vec{W}$ hat  $\setminus$ have I been  $\setminus$ doing?| Everybody  $\setminus$ says we  
 $\setminus$ hate you  $\setminus$ don't do the  $\setminus$ show  $\setminus$ anymore.||  $\vec{W}$ hat  $\setminus$ do you  $\setminus$ do? ||  $\vec{I}$ 'll  $\setminus$ tell you what I  
 $\setminus$ do.  $\setminus$ Nothing.||| (laughter, applause).  
 $\setminus$ Year,  $\vec{I}$  know  $\setminus$ what you are  $\setminus$ thinking. | That  $\vec{s}$ ounds pretty  $\setminus$ good. You're  $\setminus$ thinking  $\vec{I}$   
 $\setminus$ might  $\setminus$ like to do  $\setminus$ nothing  $\setminus$ my  $\setminus$ self. Well, |  $\vec{l}$ et me  $\setminus$ tell you  $\setminus$ doing  $\setminus$ nothing is  $\setminus$ not as  
 $\setminus$ easy as it  $\setminus$ looks. || You  $\vec{h}$ ave to be  $\setminus$ careful. | Because the  $\vec{i}$ dea of  $\setminus$ doing  $\setminus$ anything||,  
 $\setminus$ which  $\setminus$ could  $\setminus$ easily  $\setminus$ lead to  $\setminus$ doing  $\setminus$ something, || that  $\vec{w}$ ould  $\setminus$ cut into your  
 $\setminus$ nothing|| that  $\vec{w}$ ould  $\setminus$ force me to  $\setminus$ have to  $\setminus$ drop  $\setminus$ everything.||| (laughter, ovation)

**Figure 01.** An excerpt from Jerry Seinfeld stand-up (2013)

There are 96 words with 59 stressed syllables, 16 pauses. Tones: High Fall – 12, Low Fall – 3, Low Rise – 5, Fall-Rise – 4.

The impression of spontaneity pursues throughout the whole piece. Seinfeld interlaces his voice to attach special emphases to certain utterances. He uses both falling and rising tones to achieve emphases. However, the number of rising nucleus prevails in the first part of this excerpt, which is done deliberately. It shows surprise and perplexity, and even light-mindedness. The voice of the speaker conveys these emotions and the speaker himself remains quite serious which adds to the humorous effect he produces on the listeners.

Seinfeld varies his pitch a lot and uses pauses extensively. The pauses after *nothing* and *drop everything* are very prominent and can be described as topic ones. There is laughter in the audience and a round of applause so the comedian, predicting such an impact waits for his listeners to enjoy the joke and let him continue.

The pauses that signal the climax are also substantial. This indicates that the speaker is aware of focus to the point of manipulating it for humorous purposes. Seinfeld is hinting at emotion. As for the rate of his speech, it remains practically unchanged during the whole piece, though we can observe it slowing down a bit on the final punch line. From the above description, we can say that the focus phrases are prosodically marked. Together with very prominent falling nuclear tones, extended pitch range and pauses the speaker sounds very convincing and funny. He speaks impressively and naturally at the same time.

In every his performance Jerry Seinfeld makes the most of his intonation. His wish to entertain, surprise and convince the audience requires maximum of his vocal energy and he uses greater pitch variations and loudness. His behaviour on the stage and his voice are so interesting that people are prepared to listen to him and enjoy themselves.

Another native New Yorker stand-up comedian whom we focus on – Andrew Schulz. Being one of top young comics in the country he was 2018 and 2019 most viewed stand-up comedian on You Tube. He is a very energetic young man, who has the potential to be an amazing performer. His fervency on stage is obvious. His clear-cut voice is an advantage and helps him to command his audience. However, his humour is unapologetic, offensive, and constant profanity can diminish his performance. Andrew believes that this

is a real comedy and it suits his crowd. Unlike Seinfeld he is not dressed in stylish suits, he is very casual in his outfit and conversational in performances.

The video taken for the analysis is an excerpt 'Gender Inequality Isn't All Bad' (2018) from his show in one of NY comedy clubs. Andrew talks about the food served in different countries and attitude towards women in these countries and according to his viewpoint, these two things are inextricably linked to each other.

Now, jumping to perceptual analysis of his bits we can point out that the rate of his speech is about 155-165 syllables per minute, which is quite a normal rate for a public talk. Though he is performing in front of a small audience, where there is always a danger to speed up and speak fast Schulz is aware that the overall pace of delivery counts for most. In order not to be monotonous Andrew varies the tempo of the speech within his utterances. In the example below (figure 2) he slows the pace down on the phrases *that's undeniable, right*, and looks about the audience then the tempo increases and slows down again on the words *right, it does*.

The speaker also considers the pause an important index of timing and embraces pauses in his monologue. It gives his listeners time to absorb his message. Longer pauses typically occur before and just after punch lines to let his listeners enjoy the joke.

*There are a lot of countries in the world that treat women like shit. But they got the best food. || (laughter) That's undeniable. Right? || The more countries like stay in the kitchen - the better the food comes out of the kitchen. Right? It does. || (laughter)*

**Figure 02.** An excerpt from Andrew Schulz stand-up (2018)

There are 43 words with 23 stressed syllables, 9 pauses. Tones: High Fall – 3, Low Fall – 2, Low Rise – 4, Fall-Rise – 1.

From the onset of his performance, Schulz uses falling and rising tones as well as a fall-rise. His bits stimulate him to express his emotions and this results in a variation of pitch and loudness. In this excerpt loudness increases on the words: *undeniable, stay in the kitchen, comes out of the kitchen*, after which the speaker pauses and resets the loudness level to his norm. This approach of increase and decrease of loudness contributes to the overall perception of his talk. He uses it wisely and never overdoes in his performances.

In the second group of informants there are two UK stand-up comedians.

Jack Whitehall, a young award-winning stand-up star, is an award-winning actor, comedian, presenter and writer.

Born in London in 1988 into a family of media types (an actress and a theatrical agent) Jack is considered to be a posh comedian with a posh accent. The actor started his career as a stand-up comedian at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (2009), when he got his first nomination for 'Best Newcomer' at the Edinburgh Comedy Awards. The stand-up tours *Jack Whitehall Gets Around* (2014) and *Jack Whitehall: At large* (2017) were a success. At present he is successful in the UK and is making a career in

the USA. The British public called Jack Britain's King of Comedy and on the website Ten Tops Jack Whitehall was ranked 15 of the Best British Comedians. In the US 'Variety' magazine he was classed as one of 10 comics to watch.

The reason for choosing Jack Whitehall for the analysis is that he is a representative of young generation who comes from a privileged family, was educated in public schools and has an upper-class British accent. At the same time Jack who is pursuing his career in the USA is exposed to the influence of American English.

The videos taken for the study are extracts from his stand-up shows: Live at the Apollo (2018), Royal Variety Performance (2010). We think that the year, hence, level of his experience and different target audience in his shows will also affect the choice of prosodic features in his speech. Most of his shows are based on self-deprecation and the topic of national identity. Being a multifaceted actor and comedian Jack is very hyperactive and expressive in the shows, his mannerisms, mock accents and shouting are in his non-verbal repertoire.

The excerpt below (see figure 3) is an introduction to an anecdote about an embarrassing experience involving an airplane trip. It was presented in a stand-up in Hammersmith Apollo.

I'm quite posh and I had quite a posh family upbringing and stuff which is why I am so obsessed with trying to find the characteristics that make us all British. Things that link us all whether you're from the North, South, East, West, any socio-economic background, the things that unite us. There's one that I'm a big fan of, one that I think we all possess and that is our obsession and adoration in this country for free shit. (laughter)

**Figure 03.** An excerpt from Jack Whitehall stand-up (2018)

Tempo is fast throughout the extract, especially in the second sentence. He makes use of various lengths of pause: syntactical pauses, emphatic and a few extra short ones which mark the end of the syntagm. High pitch in contrast to mid is used to sound more emotional with a hint of self-mockery. The main tones which prevail are falling tones of different level (Low vs High), enumeration is pronounced in a fast tempo on a lower pitch level and loudness with falling tones. There are also a few Fall-Rising tones used as an introduction to the focus of the sentence (... *that is...*, *that link us all...*) or on a polysyllabic word (*background*) there is one Rise + Fall. The final sentence of this episode consists of very short intonation phrases with nearly every word being nuclear. Jack uses High Falling tones adding longer emphatic pauses after each noun which gives more prominence and draws attention of the public.

The episode lasts 22 seconds. There are 80 words with 44 stressed syllables, 9 pauses. Tones: High Fall – 11, Low Fall – 10, Rise – 2, Fall-Rise – 3.

I've always thought, Your Majesty, that's the one advantage you had when you were growing up because as we all know Buckingham Palace has the tradition when the Queen is in residence the flag is raised and when she's not there it's down. You had an early warning system! *(laughter, ovation)*  
You wanna go out and enjoy yourself with Edward and Andrew. Sneak back at two o'clock in the morning with six packs of Stellas and a Dominoe's Pizza *(laughter)*  
Well, lads, look! Flag's up. Mum's in! Sneak round the back! Don't wake up the corgis. *(laughter)*

**Figure 04.** An excerpt from Jack Whitehall stand-up (2010)

Jack performed at Royal Variety Performance at the London Palladium. The event was held in the presence of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall. Being still a beginner in stand-up Jack was chosen to perform there after his successful debut in 2009.

We can clearly see the influence of extra linguistic factors (the role and status of the speaker and the guests) on Jack's performance and prosodic features used (see figure 4), which can also be put down to the content of this stand-up, he talks to them as if sharing his secret wish, suppressing the emotions. Considering all this we can observe decreased loudness, moderate tempo. Despite used narrow pitch in the majority of intonation phrases there are a few parts where the pitch of the onset is Mid or High and High falling tones are heard which adds modality and emotion to the story. There are also a few complex tones functioning as a referring tone (theme). We can also hear Low Key information in the address to Prince Charles. The pauses are mostly syntactical and emphatic giving time for the audience to react. The tempo is moderate, however, in the final sentence the speed is gradually increasing.

There are 93 words and 46 stressed syllables, 10 pauses in a 38-second episode. Tones: High Fall - 9, Low Fall - 8, Rise - 3, Fall-Rise - 6.

The second British comedian is Peter Kay. Born in 1973 in Bolton he became popular as a comedian in 1996 winning the North West Comedian of the Year. Peter Kay has received a number of prestigious awards among which is a BAFTA/LA Award (2009). The comedian still lives in Bolton. The reason for choosing Peter Kay as our informant is that he is a comedian who started his career at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has probably avoided much influence of the American style in his stand-up shows. Besides staying loyal to his local dialect (speaks Bolton accent (Lancashire)) may prove the fact of preserving his national identity in his performances.

The two extracts below are from Peter Kay's stand-up Live at the Bolton Albert Halls (2003).



→ I'm in Bolton so I don't have to give me mum three rings to let her know I'm safe.  
 → Every night when I'm on tour: "Give me three rings, let me know you are safe".  
 And after the second ring she picks it up. So what's the point of that? I rang all the  
 week from London. She said: "Where are you?" I said: "I am in London". "You  
 don't sound like you are in London". I said: "What do you want? Chaz and Dave  
 singing "Rabbit" behind me, summat like that?" (laughter)

**Figure 05.** An excerpt from Peter Kay stand-up (2003)

Moderate tempo changes into fast in the reporting clauses before direct speech and a comment (see figure 5). Emotional expression of the episode is achieved with the help of fast tempo with some parts of utterance pronounced as Low key, the voice drops from High Level Head to Low. There are syntactical pauses, i.e. intonation breaks correspond to grammatical boundary, pitch prominence is on monosyllables, and the tones are contrastive (Low and High Falls). Prevalent high falling tones together with increased volume are used in the parts of utterance where the comedian wants to focus the attention of the audience, the parts which sound absurd or funny. The speech is frequently interrupted by loud laughter. Kay repeats the same words or part of the phrase role-playing the conversation with his mum and making it sound natural. Non-finality of the last sentence is achieved by the use of implicational Fall-Rise tone.

There are 93 words and 43 stressed syllables, 11 pauses in the episode lasting 56 seconds. Tones: High Fall - 7, Low Fall - 8, Rise - 4, Fall-Rise - 2.

→ Texting's bad. "Teletexting", me nanna calls it. "You are always teletexting. You're always teletexting". I sit at night wi' me mobile phone, on the couch, looking every few seconds, just to see if someone's texting. "Billy No Mates" – that's me. "Vodafone have new offers. If you would like to..." "Oh, balls to your new offers. More friends I want, not offers". And when you text, you text crap. "What are, what are you watching? What ARE YOU watching?" "Corrie". "So am I!" "I know. We are in the same room" (laughter)

**Figure 06.** An excerpt from Peter Kay stand-up (2003)

Just like in example 5 (mocking his mum's speech) Peter Kay uses paralinguistic features – dialect switching – to achieve the effect of authenticity (switching from dialectal speech to normative to imitate an accent of a Vodafone representative) (see figure 6). Fast tempo of speech and only one grammar pause lead

to a great number of co-articulation processes. The longer emphatic and extra linguistic pauses are meant for non-verbal illustration and laughter of the audience. High level tone is used in most sentences with contrastive Low and High Falls. The words in intonation phrases are almost all accentuated. High Fall as an emphatic tone is used to hyperbolize the emotional state of the character in the extract and together with Fall-Rise to express clear correlating rheme and theme of the sentence. The comedian reuses his own words which seems typical for his stand ups. The emphatic pronunciation of the sentence *What ARE YOU watching?* with slowly drawled syllables adds greater involvement of the speaker in the slow process of typing a text message.

There are 90 words and 62 stressed syllables, 5 pauses in the episode lasting 39 seconds. Tones: High Fall – 12, Low Fall – 12, Rise – 4, Fall-Rise – 7.

Russian stand-up comedy is a new genre for our country, which has become a significant part of our pop culture for the last 20 years. One of the most successful representatives of it is a 40-year old Ruslan Belyj who has been on stage since the mid-2000. His talks may cause discomfort as the comic uses a lot of profanities and rude words.

The extract is taken from his show in St. Petersburg (2019) where he was speaking about citizenship and tolerance (figure 7).

*Tak Piter?| Chto vy? Kul'turnaya stolica? O, molodcy, molodcy. Ya poslednee  
vremya tozhe nachal hodit' po teatram.| Da. Pytayus' kak-to stat' luchshe|. Tem  
bolee, ya takoj poduma|| Nu, Ruslan, mozhет byt' ty tam vstretish' svoyu lyubov'.  
Sudya po auditorii teatrov| eto budet srazu Lyubov' Andreevna. ||| Ha, ha.  
(laughter)*

**Figure 07.** An excerpt from Ruslan Belyj stand-up (2019)

There are 37 words with 29 stressed syllable, 5 pauses. Tones: Low Fall – 4, High Fall – 1, Low Rise – 11, Fall-Rise – 1.

Already in this passage, we can see rhetorical questions posed to the audience. To establish rapport with his listeners, to interact with them as well as to make the conversation sound more intimate comedians use this technique. This approach gives the audience the feeling of having a dialogue with them now while at the same time the comic performs a rehearsed monologue.

The tempo of his speech is quite fast. He makes very little pauses and they are short. The longest one is after the punch line. His pitch range is narrow. The style of speaking is conversational. Belyj uses a lot of rising tones even in the end of affirmative sentences which resembles an uptalk.

Another Russian stand up comedian is Pavel Volya (born in 1979) who is considered one of the first to introduce this type of entertainment genre in Russia in 2005. He tours with big stand-up shows, acts, performs and works on TV.

My baluem detej, rebyata, my baluem detej. Oni vedut sebya za granicej kak ferzi. Emu dva goda... U nego lico takoe – pokazyvajte, chto u vas tut v Italii. Udivi menya, Italiya... Skuchno im. Otvezli ego v druguyu stranu, on govorit: “Tut skuchno”. – “Ty na drugom konce sveta, malysh. Chto znachit skuchno?” Ya do chetyrnadcati let ne vyezhal iz Penzy, i mne bylo normal'no. (laughter, applause) Ne bylo skuchno. (ovation) Ya v pervyj raz, kogda popal v Sochi, ya vsyu noch' ne mog usnut', znaete, pochemu? Potomu chto za oknom byla pal'ma. Ne na kartinke, ne v mul'tike – za oknom. (laughter)

**Figure 08.** An excerpt from Pavel Volya stand-up (2019)

The excerpt is taken from his show (2019) where Pavel describes kids going on holiday (figure 8). The comedian is having a go at modern kids who are spoiled by their parents and at the age of two they are already bored travelling to a place like Italy, for example. He shares his excitement of going to Sochi at the age of 14 and seeing a real palm tree.

Describing the manner of his presentation we notice simple sentences, a lot of repetition of the words which are meant to sound funny, drawling of sounds which is used for emphasis but also to imitate the way bored people speak. Rhythm is typically Russian – syllable-timed, tempo is moderate. Medium pitch is used with rising and falling tones, loudness is high. Highlighting is made on key words. We can notice rising tones used as pre-nuclear in the onset which demonstrates standard Russian intonation construction.

There are 96 words and 45 stressed syllables, 6 pauses in the episode lasting 38 seconds. Tones: High Fall - 16, Low Fall – 7, Rise – 9.

## 7. Conclusion

The style of the stand-up genre determines both non-verbal and speech behavior of a comedian.

The stand-up humour is deep and multifaceted but a joke is immediately apparent and the audience is eager to experience humour and ready to laugh. All comedians are highly motivated and interested in their talks; they speak their own, unique opinion and the audience does not mind the actors being offensive. The comedians are hyperactive on stage, they physically emphasize the funny moments in their talks, are verbally involved in the performance by using extra-, paralinguistic as well as prosodic features. They demonstrate the mastery of the form of stand-up. All four linguistic levels of stand-up realization were noticed.

All informants control their voice sounding natural: vary the pitch, exaggerate the contrasts in nuclei and loudness, tempo and pauses. On the whole the number of the prosodic parameters used by all

nationalities was approximately the same, only Russian speakers had typically more Rising tones and no complex Fall-Rising. Sociophonetic aspect did not significantly influence the manner of presentation.

By and large, on the one hand, the speakers stick to their style of performance and their native manner of pronunciation, on the other, their stand-up is preserved in the international manner of the genre. So, if a comedian performs in the style of a stand-up, it will sound American because they adopt the stylistic features of American stand-up whether or not the comedian actually has or has not those features.

Thus, we can speak about unification concerning the style, genre and some speech patterns regardless of the actor's geographical, social and cultural origin.

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