

Patricie Kubáčková

Transitional experience as reflected by the first Czech immigrant generation in the USA with a special focus on language

This dissertation is focused on how the members of the first generation of the Czech immigrants in the USA reflected in the autobiographical narrative interviews their life experience of emigration and their effort on adaptation in the new country where they settled down and started their new life. In the reflection of the emigration they considered not only their situation but the future of their offspring too. As a unifying topic the motive of an stranger was determined. The strangers begin their new life in the new country, however, their origin remains detectable even after long time. This social legibility of their origin is analysed in the non-native accent and on different assimilative strategies concerning the names of the immigrants. I understand the first immigrant generation as a transitional generation. I focus on how the members of this generation reflected their language dissimilarity in their narrations if they experienced it as discredited or as a stigma and under what circumstances. In the gathered and analysed material I studied the attitude of the respondents to the native language maintenance and its transferring to their offspring. I also dealt with how the respondents reflected their bilingual situation. I presented on some utterances how the mother tongue of the respondents was influenced by the long-term contact with English language. I also focus on the specific usage of metaphors related to the conceptualization of the new life.