
THE ROLE OF AUDIO-VIDEO MATERIALS IN DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION



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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the problem of the use of information technologies in the formation of intercultural communication in teaching. Some issues connected with the formation of intercultural communication in the process of teaching a foreign communication taking into account cultural and mental distinctions, that is a necessary condition for the successful dialogue of cultures of native speakers are mentioned in this article. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the improvement of the language learners speaking in learning the English language with the using audio-video materials.

Keywords: *intercultural, issue, ambiguity, assess, theoretical dimensions, creativity, dissemination.*

Formation of the intercultural communication, readiness to real foreign language communication, is the main aim of teaching foreign languages at the present stage. The formation of educational communications of high school learners, an important place among which is given to the intercultural communication, is considered to be an actual issue of the modern Uzbekistan pedagogical theory and practice.

The intercultural communication has a particular importance for modern education, so as it is school graduates who will carry out not only an intercultural communication in the professional sphere, but also to solve the problems of the formation and development of intercultural communication in their future professional activity. A modern education is designed to meet the challenges of educating cross-cultural personality, and also to provide the readiness of graduates to interact with other people in the process of exchanging the cultural values, knowledge, ways of activity. The use of various information technologies in a foreign language classes has a great role in the development of learners intercultural communication.

It is not necessary to convince teachers and learners in the importance of information technology for modern education. It is obvious that the development of intercultural communication in teaching foreign languages is unthinkable without becoming familiar computer classes, multimedia educational software, the Internet, distance learning. Information technologies act as innovative interactive learning tools that have the ability to visualize the phenomena, dynamically represent the process of explaining, to handle significant amounts of educational information, contribute to the dynamics of learning process, turn the lesson into a colorful interactive activity.

Tasks of modernization of education cannot be solved without the optimal implementation of information technology in all its spheres. The introduction of the personal computer, multimedia technologies and global information network of Internet affects the educational system, causing significant changes in the content and teaching methods, including foreign languages.

The task of the teacher is to create the conditions of practical language learning for each learner, to choose such training methods that would allow each learner to show their activity, their creativity. The task of the teacher — to strengthen the cognitive activity of the learner in the process of learning foreign languages. Modern teaching techniques such as cooperative learning, project methodology, the use of new information technologies and Internet resources help to implement a learner-centered approach to learning, to provide individualization and differentiation of teaching taking into account the abilities of the learners, their level of training, aptitudes.

All of the properties of multimedia programs help to solve the main problem of language education, determined by the Program of foreign languages — formation of learners intercultural communication. In the “post”-ist paradigm (post-communist, post-colonial, post-modern), the ethos of our times is hard to pinpoint in terms of standardized phenomena and stable dimensions. This state of instability, which is manifest at political, economic, social and cultural level, breeds ambiguity and makes human life more complex. If there is anything that one can audio-video materials, that is the likelihood of change. Geert Hofstede in his unpacking of cultural differences, analyzed the attitude that people from different cultures have towards ambiguity. The two variations that he identified are “high uncertainty avoidance” and “low uncertainty avoidance” . Nowadays, it is quite problematic to remain in a high uncertainty avoidance paradigm. Rather than avoid uncertainty, one is more or less

compelled to develop intercultural communication and thus learn how to adapt to ambiguity. In this section, we briefly tackle the issue of intercultural communication and the challenges posed by the objective of developing it in a formal educational setting.[Geert Hofstede 2010:190]

Situations of intercultural encounter are intrinsically ambiguous and how one deals with the unknown and the non-familiar gives an estimate of his or her communication as intercultural communicator. Starting from the model of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, scholars of culture have designed similar grids to define and assess intercultural communication. Byrams pioneering research in the 1990s, materialized in his book entitled Teaching and Assessing Intercultural communication, inspired other academics to work on definitions of intercultural communication and on the dimensions along which it can be measured. [Byram, M. 1997:112]

According to Champoux videotapes are nowadays easily accessible and easy to get in addition, for classroom use. In addition, the production quality of the films is high, they are an economical option and they offer both cognitive and affective experiences. Thus, the use of videotapes as teaching material has increased rapidly since the 1970s. He points out that films extend the range of classroom teaching techniques and resources and not only enhance, but in addition, diversify the curriculum. Champoux emphasizes that film scenes can make it easier to teach abstract themes and concepts because of their visuality. In addition, inexperienced pupils can benefit from films because of their greater feeling of reality. [Champoux, J. 1999:206-217]

In addition, highlights the realistic examples that the films enable. Combining both audio and visuality makes film a comprehensive tool for language teaching. The visuality supports the pupils: it helps learners by supporting the verbal message and provides a focus of attention while they listen. For the intercultural trainer, the challenge is how to design courses which would develop the trainees intercultural communication within the time and resource limits that they have. As it is the case with learning a foreign language, one can best learn how to behave in a certain culture by living in it. Yet, such cultural “bath” would involve financial resources that one cannot expect all learners to have. Moreover, intercultural communication no longer presupposes going “there” to encounter “the other.” The Internet has brought “the other” “here” and “now.”

Though Intercultural Communication is rather new on the curricula of Romanian business schools and departments of communication or cultural studies, we can already differentiate between how it was taught in the beginning (five years ago, in the case of my institution) and how it is being taught nowadays. From a focus on knowledge about culture and cultures (definitions of culture, theoretical dimensions used to describe them, models and metaphors to interpret cultures), we are now increasingly concerned with developing the learners knowledge how to operate in a culture other than their own and how to operate in the global culture of international business, international media, world travel and consumption of global products.

In order to develop the knowledge, skills and the right attitude towards other cultures, trainers of intercultural communication ought to create opportunities for learners to become self-motivated in their discovery of other cultures, to interact with foreigners and to acquire the public virtues and values of a global, transcultural citizen. Such a citizen can navigate “the waves of culture” (to use Trompenaars metaphor) via Web 2.0 tools, so as to become more open, flexible, autonomous, transparent and sensitive in his or her communication. For trainers, an invaluable resource is the Moodle platform.

Moodle allows teachers/ trainers to design courses which give learners/trainees access to materials uploaded by the teacher/trainer or by other learners/trainees, to access links that are relevant to the topics suggested for discussion, and to input their own contribution. The trainer has more flexibility to facilitate learning not only by providing several alternative sources of information but also by creating simulations and scenarios and by enabling learners to create their own learning path, according to their creativity, style of learning and type of intelligence. The platform can be used in a blended-learning approach where learners work on the computer individually or in groups, at home and/or in the classroom/training room. Moodle and other similar platforms such as Curs and Blackboard are effective ways of developing learners communications of written intercultural communication, as well as their positive attitude and tolerance towards other cultures. Communications in oral intercultural communication, on the other hand, can be trained by creating opportunities for learners to interact in real time, using the voice call function in Skype or yahoo messenger. To increase intercultural interaction, trainers can capitalize on learners familiarity with Facebook and yahoo to create multinational groups in which learners learn from each other. This implies that, in the context of a provider of formal

education, there are prior agreements with trainers in different countries to collaborate in e-twinning projects.

Another useful tool is YouTube, which functions as both a source for intercultural learning, when learners watch videos and comment on them, and as a venue for the dissemination of cultural knowledge produced by learners who make videos. The videos can be watched directly on YouTube or imbedded on other webpages. By resorting to simple film making software such as Windows Movie Maker and user-friendly sound-processing software such as Audacity, learners can create videos that express the values of their own culture or of other cultures, which they can then upload on YouTube, or embed on other sides. It is always a good idea to tag videos so as to facilitate the search for them. The labelling of videos can be done as a learner collaborative activity, which increases their group consciousness of the issues that they find the most relevant content-wise, and allows them to learn how to structure and organize their learning process. Information and Communication Technologies provide trainers with less conventional ways to evaluate the degree to which learners have acquired the concepts and the theoretical knowledge that they are required to master by the end of the course. Instead of asking learners to submit a summary of the intercultural material or extensive responses to it, the trainer/teacher can ask them to write tweets. This is a realistic exercise that re-contextualises summary-writing and makes it more appealing. The limited number of characters that a tweet can contain trains learners/learners to be concise and to the point in summarizing what they had to read or to do research on.

A very useful tool in the evaluation of intercultural communications is the electronic portfolio, which can be built on Mahara. This system allows users to upload files of their work (essays, videos, photos, relevant articles that they have downloaded, etc.), as well as to develop their own profile. Electronic portfolios make peer evaluation possible. According to the concern of the teachers and the pupils, the use of the video aids provides the learners opportunity to have background knowledge of any topic which is necessary for the learners. In addition, use of audio-visual aids gives the learners extended language exposure to the learners giving them better idea of the target language culture. The study of Cakir supports this result as he mentioned, “Moreover, the pupils have a general idea of the culture of the target language. It may be enjoyable for the learners to have something different for language learning apart from the course books and cassettes for listening” . [Cakir, I. 2006:69]

It has been found that the participants think that a great advantage of using the video materials is the contextualization of the lesson. Teachers can make the lessons effective and create contexts using audio-visual aids. Learners can easily make a correlation with the visual aids and the lessons. Moreover, it creates a long-term impact on learners mind if there are visuals with the lessons. Mathew and Alidmat found similar results in their study. They found that video materials could make lessons easy to understand. Images that a student views on the screen can be easily comprehended and remembered than descriptive reading materials. Student felt that information could be retained for longer duration due to the use of audio-visual aids. [Alidmat, A.O.H. & Mathew, N.G. 2013:128].

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