

IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIO-VIDEO MATERIALS IN DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN EFL CLASSES



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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 EFL classes. 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.*

Keywords: *evaluation, cultural values, distance learning, collaborative activity, tool, visualize, tackle, issue, authenticity, flexibility.*

This thesis is devoted to the problem of the use of information technologies in the formation of intercultural communication at secondary school. 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 introduction of new teaching methodologies, modes and media of learning has led to changes in evaluation. We are no longer concerned mainly with checking and assessing learners understanding of concepts and theories but with assessing communications. One convenient and learner-friendly way to develop communications is the creative use of information and communication technologies in the educational process. The subsequent sections of this thesis give an overview of some audio-video materials that can be used in teaching and evaluating intercultural communication skills, as well as some examples of good practice from the authors teaching/training experience.

Formation of the intercultural communication, readiness to real foreign language communication, is the main aim of teaching foreign languages at the present stage. Intercultural communication is the major in foreign language education system and is aimed at the formation of the "subject of intercultural communication". 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.

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.

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” [Hofstede,2010]. 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.

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* (1997), inspired other academics to work on definitions of intercultural communication and on the dimensions along which it can be measured. One of the most recent and most comprehensive is given by Paul Catteeuw [Catteeuw,2012].

Video materials are a versatile tool for foreign language teaching and they can be used in several different ways when teaching the different aspects of foreign language. This part discusses using films in five different areas of language teaching. These areas are teaching oral communication, teaching writing, teaching vocabulary, teaching grammar and teaching culture. Since the areas differ rather radically from each other, In addition, different teaching methods must be used. Thus, this section discusses each area separately and summarizes how films can be taken advantage of when teaching for instance vocabulary or grammar.

Culture can be defined in numerous ways. From a humanistic point of view, culture can be defined as “the product of a canonical print literacy acquired in school”. This definition concerns the general knowledge of arts and literature and is closely associated with the educated middle class that would aspire towards upper class membership and is often referred to as big C, or high culture. High culture has had a central position in institutions as it has reinforced the idea of a national community with its focus on arts, literature, history and institutions of the target country [Kramsch ,2016].

Using films in EFL teaching may seem to be irrelevant, and some teachers may think that using films is too time-consuming. Moreover, films are quite often used as a light stimulation in the beginning of a lesson or in the end of it. In addition, teachers do not necessarily consider the film as a proper teaching resource, since it may be seen only as entertaining and not as educational. However, 1) mentions that

some teachers have at first commented on technical difficulties associated with using films and film equipment, but on the other hand have agreed that films enhance the study of culture as well as English language skill development. Using video materials has brought authenticity, variety, reality and flexibility into EFL classrooms. Films actually get pupils to talk and they can be a stimulus to genuine communication in the classroom by bringing out different opinions within the group. Films are considered an insightful means of teaching, since they reflect peoples way of life in terms of variety, contemporaneity and authenticity. The realistic verbal communication In addition, helps the pupils to pick up the language more spontaneously.

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.

The advantage of using learner-made videos is that the very process of making them motivates learners, stimulates their creativity, allows them to understand their own culture or the culture that they make a film about, and to present it in a way that is intelligible and appealing for others. Videos can also be uploaded as podcasts, which allows learners to showcase their work, interact with the audience and receive valuable feedback via comments.

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-contextualizes 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.

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