

Antonina Muntian

Dnipro National University of Railway Transport

(Dnipro, Ukraine)

Iryna Shpak

Dnipro National University of Railway Transport

(Dnipro, Ukraine)

Multimedia and multilingualism: teaching and learning a foreign language in the higher educational establishments in Ukraine

Annotation: This piece is aimed at the analysis of teaching and learning a foreign language in the higher educational establishment under the conditions of multilingualism. In the course of analysis the authors come to the conclusion that both teachers and students are motivated by ICT primarily because of visual, audio and kinaesthetic aspects; animation plays an important role in the teaching/learning process alongside other factors.

Key words: multimedia, multilingualism, communicative method, interactive board, smartboard.

Мультимедіа та мультилінгвалізм: навчання та вивчення іноземної мови у вищому навчальному закладі в Україні.

Анотація: Дане дослідження стосується аналізу методик навчання та вивчення іноземної мови в вищому навчальному закладі в умовах мультилінгвалізму. В ході аналізу автори доходять висновку, що і викладачі і студенти першочергово вмотивовані через можливість використовувати візуальні, аудіо та кінестетичні аспекти, оскільки анімація відіграє важливу роль у процесі вивчення іноземної мови, наряду з іншими факторами.

Ключові слова: мультимедіа, мультилінгвалізм, комунікативний метод, інтерактивна дошка, розумна дошка.

Modern education space in Ukraine is a sphere which requires rigorous enhancement. Nevertheless, one aspect that leaves no doubts is that education as an umbrella term under which one may find higher education, comprehensive schools, elementary schools, etc., with all the issues relevant to those, may be distinguished by an active search of ways to modernize itself: to modernize teaching and learning methods and to digitalize the process of teaching and learning (use multimedia and interactive methods and technologies in the educational process). Such modernization will help to create conditions proper for individual and personal development of students. It is argued that using multimedia and addressing multilingual aspects during a foreign language class intensifies students' motivation and thus enhances their both personal and academic development.

Among the basic competences for a professional today is a capability to communicate in one or more foreign languages. In linguistics such a concept is known under the name of multilingualism – one of the central ideas of educational policy in Europe since the originating of the European Union, however officially this key issue of European educational policy has been accented by the European Commission only in the beginning of the 21st century. Being a part of Europe (at least geographically) Ukraine is aspiring to sharing European mentality, living by European principles and standards. Having joined the Bologna process, which ensures standards of comparability and quality regarding degree qualifications, Ukraine received a chance to develop multilingualism and become a real player on European labour markets apart from being a member of a strong European educational system, which produces compatible specialists, ready for continuous development of personal skills and acquiring new knowledge.

The main goal of teaching language in the 21st century society is for learners/students to master communicative competences, which in their turn will let students to implement their theoretical and practical knowledge as well as other skills

to solve real tasks in real life situations. A foreign language is a means of communication between representatives of different nations, thus in the framework of education its learning continues to further develop as intercultural approach under the teaching within the concept of “dialogue of cultures” to form students’ multilingual literacy [6]. According to state educational standards foreign language learning at a higher educational institution has two purposes: a) to develop a foreign language competence as well as its structural components; b) to develop student’s personality with the help of implementation of the potential of a foreign language. One of the key elements of this process is the formation of students’ demands for foreign language learning and mastering a foreign language as a communicative tool; means of perception, cognition, self-realization and social adaptation in the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic world under the conditions of globalization basing on the understanding of the importance of both foreign language and mother tongue learning as means of communication and cognition in the modern world [5]. In accordance with the provisions of the Council of Europe Recommendations on Language Education, the comprehensive development of linguistic competence, which includes all language skills, is the goal of teaching foreign languages. At the same time, the basis of language learning is multilingualism and multicultural development of the student [3]. Mastering a foreign language in terms of multilingualism contributes to the development of the linguistic and communicative consciousness of a future specialist, helps him or her to understand the common and distinctive features of the languages being studied, contributes to the deepening of knowledge and the facilitation of learning in general [1].

The communicative approach under the conditions of multilingualism to teaching foreign languages is today a methodical standard. Implementation of the communicative approach means that the formation of foreign language skills and abilities takes place through and thanks to the implementation by a student of his or her foreign language activities, and the process of learning a foreign language is constructed adequately to the process of real life communication [4].

The communicative approach determines the goals, principles, content and methods of teaching foreign languages, and teaching methods, in their turn, are implemented in methodical techniques in terms of multilingualism. In accordance with the communicative-activity approach, priority is given to communicatively-oriented tasks and exercises that provide language acquisition as a means of communication. However, this does not mean that in the educational process language exercises are

In modern pedagogy and methods of foreign language teaching, interactive teaching methods are distinguished as an integral part of innovative pedagogical technique, which aims to encourage learners to cognitive autonomy, create conditions for their creativity and cooperation in the process of learning. It is the interactive teaching methods that help students to reveal themselves in the personal aspect, which is a prerequisite for the training of a competitive professional in terms of their future career. Using of such methods while teaching a foreign language (though not solely teaching a foreign language) allows them to acquire professional skills in the classroom involves the students in solving problems that are as close as possible to their future professional activities. While teaching, it is important to pay attention not only to therevealed knowledge and skills, but also to the creative independence of participants in the process of learning. All these comes down to “experiential-interactive teaching/learning of a foreign language” [7], where students have to actively participate in the situations, which close resemble real life ones; they gain both language and professional experience going through the tasks carefully set by the teacher. In its turn it leads to the turning of the mechanism of involuntary memorizing and even imprinting [2;8]. With the rise and development of ICT it is getting easier and easier to achieve involuntary memorizing and imprinting, because ICT helps to more intensively and extensively address to multiple intelligences of all the students in the course of a class. However, it is worth mentioning that ICT in general and the smart board in particular will not solve all the problems that might arise in the classroom singlehandedly, nevertheless those tools will normally facilitate the process of knowledge acquisition and may even play a part in rapport building.

The gist of interactive learning is that the learning process takes place under the constant, active interaction of all students. The organization of interactive learning involves modelling of life situations, using role games, solving the problem based on the analysis of circumstances and the situation. It effectively promotes the formation of skills and abilities, the development of values, the creation of an atmosphere of cooperation, and interaction [7]. Setting of real life situations invariably leads to involving ICT in the process of learning both as an effective tool of mastering a foreign language and as an integral attribute of a modern world.

In higher educational institutions in Ukraine under the conditions of multilingualism, the main goal of foreign language teaching/learning is to form a communicative and multilingual competence. The multilingual aspect is crucial for Ukraine as far as the majority of its citizens are coordinative bilinguals. It means that the teacher has to use not only the foreign language as a teaching tool, but also he or she may address L1 and L2 (Ukrainian and Russian as well as other languages of ethnic minorities respectively) if those languages might help to create an appropriate situation relevant to the aim of the class. To achieve this goal the teacher is encouraged to use as many multimedia tools and resources as possible. Returning to the point of relevance of a smart board in a foreign language classroom there are several ways a smart board can influence teaching/learning process. Smart using of IWB software and resources can highly improve the understanding of grammatical and lexical topics, as far as, while using a smart board skilfully for presentations, demos, models creation or guided discovery, a teacher can engage students with different intelligences simultaneously: there are visual, audio, kinaesthetic and logical-conceptual components at least. When we talk about students' engagement and motivation for attendance those raise drastically: apart from the learning process itself, which becomes much easier as far as in most cases it deals with the exact student's abilities thus facilitating the process of memorizing new material, the involvement into direct personal using of a smart board motivates students even more. As for the teacher, the using of a smart board plays its part in classroom

management, giving the teacher a possibility to improve the pace and progress of the lesson.

A smart board allows the teacher to submit information through a variety of multimedia resources; students can comment on the material and learn the lexical material in more detail. It can simplify the explanation of grammatical schemes and help the teacher sort out a difficult problem in much more understandable and acceptable way for students.

The study of multilingualism as an important factor in teaching foreign language communication makes it possible to draw the following conclusions: In the process of forming a foreign language competence, students learn communication through the communication itself, where the main method of teaching foreign languages in universities is a communicative method. Formation of communicative competence involves the formation of communication skills by means of communication, thus it necessitates the use of communicative-oriented exercises. Multi-lingual education provides students with broad access to information in a variety of subject areas. The result of multi-lingual education is the achievement of the basic multi-lingual competence. The aim of teaching a foreign language at the present stage is to master students' communicative competences, which allow implementing their knowledge and skills for solving definite communication problems in real life situations. Special significance in the interaction of the teacher with the students in the conditions of multi-lingual education takes into account the psychological patterns of formation of the leading motivation in students. In all its forms multilingualism promotes mutual understanding between people of different nationalities, between representatives of different cultures.

Additionally, it will be only fair to report that the presence of a smart board in a foreign language classroom ensures a positive motivational impact not only on students but on teachers as well. After introducing the practice of using the smart board during every English language class, we may report enhanced efficiency on the part of students and facilitated lesson planning as well as easier access to resources on the part of teachers. Another factor regarding motivational results is easier access

to numerous resources, relevant applications, etc., thus teaching according to them. For students the ability to use online resources and adequate up-to-date material for learning process make a great difference as well and become another motivational factor. On the other hand we should not leave behind the reason of this intensified motivation. Both teachers and students are motivated by ICT primarily because of visual, audio and kinaesthetic aspects; animation plays an important role in the teaching/learning process alongside other factors as students' active engagement and enhancement of the pace of a class.

As it has been mentioned before the issue of the ICT using during classes has been reflected in a great number of scientific studies, however there are still umpteen blue oceans in this field: where is ICT more relevant: primary, secondary, high schools or university? Which ICT tools should be used where? How should they be used? Which subjects at universities should be taught with obligatory use of ICT? The question which we find to be most scientifically intriguing is whether ICT can lay a common ground between science (math) and humanities (languages)? We offer this issue for further research as far as, according to our questionnaire, students of Dnipro National University of Railway transport named after Academician V. Lazaryan stated that two subjects where ICT was most motivating were Math and English.

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