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CREOLIZED MULTIMEDIA SPACE IN FOSTERING STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the acute problem of fostering students' intercultural communicative competence in the process of foreign language teaching in higher education organizations. The analysis of theoretical works conducted by the authors unveils insufficient investigation of the stated issue, which makes its research quite relevant. For better comprehension of the concept *intercultural communicative competence*, the authors first describe the notion *intercultural communication*, since both phenomena are very important for the professional activity of a future specialist. It induces the authors to claim the effectiveness of creolized texts and multimedia presentations in English teaching. The research is focused on their specificity and perspectives of application in the formation of students' intercultural communicative competence. Also, the authors consider some examples of multimedia presentation slides with different degree of creolization; frequent mistakes made by students when preparing a multimedia presentation are enumerated. The main methods used in the study are general scientific methods, linguistic analysis, and empirical method of modeling real communication situations. The authors come to the conclusion that text creolization is an effective means of intensifying English language teaching and students' motivation for studying. Creolized multimedia presentation content helps stimulate the cognitive activity of students, develop their tolerance towards other cultures and nations, and enhance their intercultural communicative competence.

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Keywords: Higher education, English language teaching, intercultural communicative competence, creolized text, multimedia presentation.



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1. Introduction

Rapid changes in all spheres of life in modern society caused by increasing globalization – the strengthening of social and economic relations, the advancing of information and communication technologies, intensifying of intercultural and interlanguage communication, – have translated into the necessity of integrating language education into the professional activities of future specialists. Fluency in a foreign language comes to the fore as it acquires the status of a means of intercultural communication. Obviously, all this determines the urgency of training students who will be competent in the field of both professional activities and multicultural dialogue. That is why higher education institutions pay great attention to enhancing students' the intercultural and linguistic communication competence. As a result, the understanding and interpretation of communication is transforming; new forms of communication are used along with the long-existing ones, and more people are involved in the communication process.

This triggers a transformation in higher education due to the necessity of a new teaching paradigm to train not only professionals in a narrow field but also individuals able to fulfill themselves and effectively perform in a wide range of different realistic situations. The life itself and creativity of the individual are in the public limelight. This has a certain impact on the fundamental goal of education – to prepare a student for living in the conditions of current globalization, multiculturalism, in tune with divergent ethnic and religious trends (Frik, 2013; Fay, 2017; Ponomarenko et al., 2020).

The demand for intercultural communication defined the formation of intercultural communicative competence of higher education students, which involves not only the acquisition of linguistic and cultural knowledge but also the promotion of motivational readiness for intercultural dialogue.

Intercultural dialogue implies a certain set of developed competencies, especially intercultural communicative competence. It is part of the professional competencies of specialists and is defined by many researchers as a combination of knowledge, skills, methods and experience of conveying and understanding statements in communicative situations (see, for example, Fay, 2017; Frik, 2013; Galante, 2015).

Thus, the need for fostering higher education students' communicative competence when teaching a foreign language is incontestable.

2. Problem Statement

Forming and enhancing students' intercultural communicative competence is urged to tackle educational issues in teaching English. But while analyzing scientific literature on this issue, we found out that usage of creolized texts in this process is not sufficiently developed. This identified the problem of our study which consists in finding new ways of developing students' intercultural communicative competence when learning English as a foreign language. The priority area of the research is the study of literacy in the preparation of multimedia creolized content in the framework of academic and scientific activities.

Multimedia presentations with low quality content are a common problem in academic practice. Tackling this problem is possible via creolized content which both simplifies and increases students' perception of information. Due to the novelty of the phenomenon of creolization, the study of the structure and varieties of creolized texts, their role in the process of intercultural communication has not been

thoroughly studied. In this regard, we consider the analysis of creolized content and its functioning in a communicative environment to be of particular relevance.

3. Research Questions

Information and communication technologies in the academic process are a learning tool enhancing and expanding the possibilities of students' educational and cognitive activities. Creolized texts are extremely important for this. They are beneficial for both accurate and effective perception of the certain content and deep understanding of some other culture, values of speakers of another language, and intensifying the cognitive activity of students.

Creolized text space has ample opportunities for the promotion of students' communicative creativity. The creation of their own creolized text, which is a multimedia presentation in the framework of our study – motivates students for mastering a foreign language and fostering their intercultural communicative competence.

The use of creolized textual space in the process of fostering intercultural communicative competence of higher education students has a number of didactic advantages: attracting the attention of the recipient; intensifying the role of an information constituent; effective dynamics of visual perception of the text content; enhancing sociocultural knowledge.

The exact communicative situation and the extralinguistic background make the addresser, when introducing an image into the text, select the most optimal, expressive modes in order to influence the addressee. Taking into account a particular audience, the author of the text should choose such images for the text which will be accessible for understanding, since the speaker can successfully implement the intended speech act only when he/she is sure that the pragmatic context corresponds to the conditions of this speech act.

Presentation of materials through multimedia creolized texts (multimedia presentations) provides the teacher of a foreign language with the opportunity to save class time, to consolidate students' learning motivation, and to develop their intercultural communicative competence.

The use of creolized text space in the process of teaching English at universities allows taking a fresh look at tools of forming intercultural communication and makes it possible to develop students' tolerance towards different cultures and values of other nations.

4. Purpose of the Study

As the objective of our study we take specifying the role and didactic characteristics of multimedia presentations as a type of creolized texts when fostering intercultural communicative competence in academic and research activities.

While achieving the main goal, we solve the following tasks:

- 1) taking into account the research on the topic, to reveal the essence of the concept *intercultural communicative competence*;
- 2) to describe the main features and types of creolized text;

- 3) to analyze the didactic characteristics of creolized content through the example of a multimedia presentation;
- 4) to establish the ways of creolized multimedia text space to foster and intensify students' intercultural communicative competence when mastering the English language.

5. Research Methods

Studying creolized multimedia presentation content as of a means of developing the students' intercultural communication competence, we use the following methods:

- methods of theoretical research (analysis of scientific works on pedagogy, methodology, linguistics on the stated problem, their formalization);
- general scientific methods (deduction, description, analysis and synthesis, mental modeling, generalization);
- linguistic analysis and interpretation of the structure and content of creolized content;
- empiric methods (modeling of situations of intercultural communication in English lessons and using multimedia presentations of creolized content).

6. Findings

6.1. Intercultural communication as a goal of English language teaching in higher education institutions

Fostering intercultural communication in English language teaching in universities is one of the relevant and widely researched issues. The variety of approaches to the description and presentation of this phenomenon significantly complement each other but, nevertheless, complicate an unambiguous understanding of the term itself.

First of all, the concept *intercultural communication* to a certain extent correlates with the notion *dialogue of cultures*, that is communication of people belonging to different national cultures (Frik, 2013; Samokhina, 2019); free communication of people in the field of academic and business environments (Yuges, 2020).

Studying the problems of intercultural communication leads to understanding the aspects, peculiarities, and principles of communication and basic functions of culture (Crystal, 2017; Yuges, 2020), the impact of cultural values and traditions on peoples' self-awareness and their perception of other cultures (Remache, 2016), the possible ways of developing the future specialists' personality, professional and language knowledge for applying them in divergent life spheres (Savitskaya, 2020).

Numerous definitions of the concept *intercultural communication* induce some discrepancy in its interpretation. Still, in most of them there is a common constituent – intercultural communication is assigned to interaction of communicants belonging to different cultures, and studies the difference in languages of the participants of the communicative situation.

6.2. The importance of fostering students' intercultural communication competence

Most scientists attribute successful fulfillment of an interactive act to intercultural communication competence. In scientific works one can find the following definitions of this term (see, for example, (Bennett, 2009; Frik, 2013; Safonova, 2014)):

- peaceful coexistence of peoples of different groups (different social status, gender, sex, etc.) in a community;
- tolerant and respectful attitude towards people of other nationality and culture, the ability to cooperate with them;
- cultural intelligence implying awareness of cultural processes in a foreign country, peoples' behavioral patterns and acceptance of their divergency and unicity.

All the above indicates the necessity of fostering students' intercultural communication competence when teaching foreign languages, since a language mirrors the culture and world perception of a nation. And English lessons are a perfect opportunity for students to have some practice in intercultural communication and to enhance their intercultural communication competence. Due to this, intercultural competence acquires an educational value as it has a drastic effect on student's linguistic personality formation.

Linguistic personality formation comprises communicative, sociocultural, and cognitive development of students. That is why English teachers should find optimal ways to decrease factors compounding the difficulties of intercultural communication and to teach students to use other cultures as a means of their own enrichment (Fay, 2017; Galskova & Gez, 2006).

Neuner and Hunfeld (2007) state that "the fundamental way of intercultural teaching of foreign languages is the method of comparing the elements, structures of different cultures and languages, establishing similarities and differences between them" (p. 117). Thus, English language teaching sets its sights on training such a specialist who will be apt to take part in intercultural communication.

Moreover, intercultural communication competence gives students the opportunity to get acquainted with the culture of the country the language of which he/she studies; to understand the behavioral patterns of the nation; to become aware of usage peculiarities of the language in the natural surroundings, etc. At English classes this can be implemented via information and communication technologies and authentic materials – original texts, audio and video recordings, – which demonstrate normative rules of the language and contain linguistic and regional information.

6.3. Intensifying language teaching and intercultural communicative competence via information and communication technologies

As was already indicated, intercultural communicative competence allows a future specialist to be a confident participant of intercultural communication. Fostering higher education students' intercultural communicative competence is a complex, dynamic process which is affected by a number of factors: cultural, communicative, sociocultural, psychological, and linguistic. Due to this, new psychological, pedagogical and methodological forms of its effective enhancing should be found.

As a result, the use of information and communication technologies is considered rather effective. They are some kind of key to promoting the quality of language training, to intensifying students' cognitive

activity, motivation and knowledge of the language, to developing intercultural competence. As a result, there appears a wide range of opportunities for educational and scientific self-realization.

Application of ICT in English language teaching helps:

- create a positive motivation to learn English;
- organize training of students on the bases of individual academic patterns;
- create necessary conditions for enhancing students' tolerance;
- provide multilevel (continuous assessment, progress check, summative assessment) control of the educational process;
- organize students' self-assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities;
- save time;
- optimize the learning process.

Currently, various information and communication technologies are wildly used in foreign language classes. For the successful use of these technologies, an appropriate IT infrastructure is required, which is a set of systems and services ensuring functioning of information interaction tools. Thanks to ITC, in English language teaching one can use a lot of different applications – text documents, spreadsheets, images, video files and audio tracks, presentations.

Due to this, such a new linguistic phenomenon as creolized text and multimedia presentation as its form is becoming increasingly important in the process of implementing the intercultural approach in teaching.

6.4. Enhanced educational technology and creolized text in teaching English as a foreign language

In recent years, modern linguistics and language teaching have taken a great interest in non-verbal forms of communication, in so-called sources of visual, non-verbal information. This phenomenon is found in many studies devoted to not traditional text linguistics but to linguistics of a complicated in semiotics, “non-traditional”, non-verbal, polycode creolized text (Anisimova, 2003; Bateman, 2014; Price, 2017). We follow the definition of the creolized text as complex text formation consisting of verbal and iconic communicative means being as bonding and whole parts of a homogeneous framework. Among the issues connected with creolized text content of small format, scholars study political, advertising, media-discourse, and Internet memes creolized space (Ledeneva, 2017; Oprishch & Ogareva, 2020; Shatalova et al., 2019).

Creolized text combines two inhomogeneous parts: linguistic (verbal) and iconic (non-verbal). Moreover, texts may be partially and totally creolized. Partial text creolization implies integration of verbal and visual components. Removing an image in such texts will not distort the content, as the verbal constituent prevails over the non-verbal one. Also integrating verbal and non-verbal elements, texts with complete creolization fully depend on the visual component, removal of which can lead to incorrect perception or total incomprehension of the content of the text by the recipient. Among the main characteristics of creolized texts the following are worth mentioning: message, comprehensibility, informativeness, pithiness, image correspondence with the text content, and visual correctness.

The process of forming the students' intercultural communicative competence through a creolized text space includes several core stages:

- preparatory phase – introduction to the topic of discussion, activation of background and socio-cultural knowledge of students, updating the students' life experience, as well as studying the characteristics of the creolized text;
- content phase – acquaintance with foreign and native cultures (verbal description of the text, interpretation of information based on the verbal description of creolized content, subsequent semantic interpretation);
- stage of comparative analysis of cultural specificity – intercultural reflection (analysis, expansion of the knowledge resource about a foreign language culture and own culture);
- creative stage – project activity (the development of conceptual and visual thinking in the intercultural space, the development of communicative and social creativity).

In teaching English, the most widely used form of creolized text space is multimedia presentations. But notwithstanding the frequency of their application in the training process, students continue making a lot of mistakes while preparing them.

6.5. Role of creolized multimedia space in enhancing students' intercultural communicative competence

Nowadays, English language teaching in higher education institution cannot be imagined without multimedia presentation. One can apply it in either learning or scientific events as it fully aligns with academic aims. It is beneficial at any level of teaching process: introducing and drilling the language material, revision and systemization of learned material, students' knowledge assessment, and control of training as a whole.

Being a creolized text space, a multimedia presentation has its main components – linguistic (verbal) and iconic (non-verbal) ones. They have to correlate with each other regarding the content, composition and language means and to clearly reflect the linguistic and extra-linguistic constituent of the targeted text. The more interrelated these components are, the easier it is for a student to decode and comprehend the information and message of the text. Thus, complete creolization of the multimedia presentation content through the coherence of its linguistic and iconic elements stimulates the cognitive process of students.

Let us consider some examples of multimedia presentation slides with different degree of creolization which promote the development of students' intercultural communicative competence.

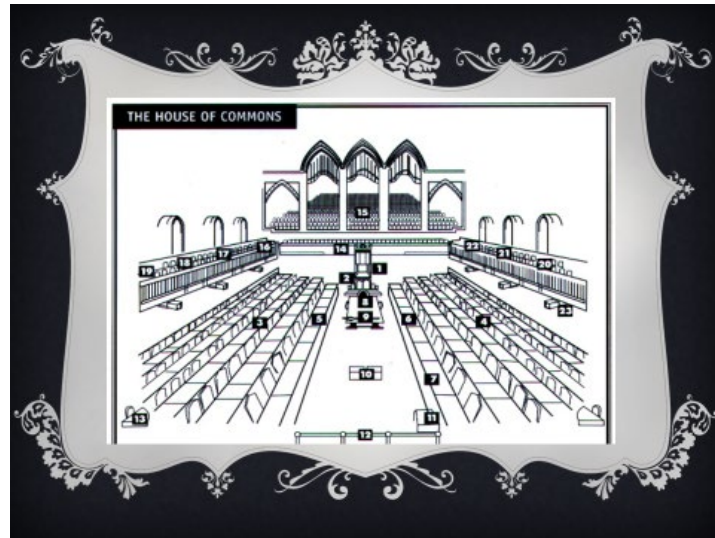


Figure 01. The multimedia presentation slide with partial creolization

Figure 01 illustrates a partly creolized multimedia text. The iconic component is the photo of House of Commons. The verbal component is the title and figures. The presuppositive background generates the main imagery representation about the discourse context. With the support for the image of the iconic context and according to the sender's communicative intents, the message is partly directed on involvement of the recipient into the presuppositive information. The communication component is finding the answer by the recipient on the basis of given content.



Figure 02. The multimedia presentation slide with complete creolization

In the above picture (Figure 02) we see the fully creolized media space. The non-verbal component is the photo of the House of Commons. The verbal component is shown in selected hints given in smaller font, located on the right side of the photo. The key words describe the structure of the lower house (the House of Commons): 1) Decorated in green; 2) The Speaker; 3) 650 MPs; 4) 5 years. Different colours of the text simplify the understanding of the message. The slide can be regarded as an example of complete creolized text as the picture promotes the comprehension of the text content to some extent. The sender gives the information based on the image (iconic component) and it is impossible to replace the verbal

component without losing the image semantics and vice versa. The photo fully reflects the discourse context.



Figure 03. The non-creolized multimedia presentation slide

Figure 03 is an example of non-creolized multimedia text. The iconic component is the image of the UK flag. The verbal component is the question “How does a bill become the law?”. The constituents make the slide non-verbal as they do not correspond with each other, do not promote the comprehension of the message,, and cannot characterize the discourse subject. The presuppositive background generates the task but imagery representation does not help the recipient understand the discourse context. The understanding of the image of iconic context without verbal support makes sender’s communicative intents hidden. It is impossible to get aware of the discourse subject without the verbal contextual space. The communication unit is to find an answer on the question based on the specified context. It also motivates the recipient to listen to the message up to the end for full understanding.

Thus, we can see that an important indicator of context creolization is the level of audience perception of the message. The integrity or complete creolization of the verbal and non-verbal components of the multimedia presentation context helps stimulate the cognitive process of students. In case of incomplete or partial context creolization, or absence of connection between its iconic and linguistic components, decoding and comprehension of the information becomes difficult or even impossible.

Some commets on the most frequent mistakes students make when preparing a multimedia presentation. They are:

- overloading slides with too much text and its full reading. It can also induce students to focus on the textual constituent but not on the message;
- using only images or pictures on slides;
- including too much information in the presentation;
- a lack or absence of logic presentation of slides;
- difficult, or too easy, way of presenting the material;
- a weak link or no link at all between verbal and non-verbal elements of the presentation;
- the way of presenting the material itself (for example, reading cluttered slides in a boring monotone; speaking incoherently; neglecting the audience, etc.).

As we can see from the conducted analysis, the formation of students' intercultural communicative competence is complex and dynamic. In this regard, the effective implementation of the educational goals and objectives depends on new vectors in teaching a foreign language. As a fundamental organizational form for this we see interactivity in education and advanced technologies when teaching English in an intercultural context. This can be fulfilled via creolized multimedia content of presentations, which help provide visibility at lessons with a minimum amount of time, increase the motivation of students to learn English, enhance their intercultural communicative competence.

7. Conclusion

In this study we have examined creolized text and its usage in teaching English in higher education institutions. We take into account different interdisciplinary perspectives: theoretical data, pedagogy, methodology, and text linguistics. The focus of our attention is on a multimedia presentation as it is the most popular form of creolized content used in the process of teaching English. One more reason for us to select presentation as an object of the research is its effectiveness for fostering students' intercultural communicative competence. It's importance for professional activity of future specialists is beyond any doubt. We consider this competency to be an indispensable component of students' professional competence, since it will help them overcome the intercultural communication barrier which can arise in a modern information-driven society.

We have analyzed the specificity of creolized text, described its verbal and iconic components, and studied its application in English language teaching. As a means of development of students' intercultural communicative competence, we have identified the creolization of multimedia content through the example of multimedia presentations. Also, the stages of work on creating creolized content are given in the article. The most frequent mistakes which students make when preparing creolized texts, in particular multimedia presentations, are outlined.

Having conducted the research, we can state the obvious effectiveness of the verbal and iconic communicative content of multimedia presentations for fostering students' intercultural communicative competence as an indefeasible constituent of their future professional activity.

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