

Formal and Non-Formal Education Means of Mastering Foreign Language Skills

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Abstract: Education includes the formal and non-formal experiences that train, discipline and shape the cognitive, mental and physical potentials of the maturing person. Formal education is a purposeful, planned effort to impart specific competences or information. Formal education is a systematic process in which someone designs the educating experiences and it is considered a success when those being instructed acquire the competences, thoughts and information that those designing the experience seek to impart. It means education is a formal process that is supposed to transfer any kind of knowledge, skills, values and habits from one generation to the next generation. Non-formal education which is often called the “hidden curriculum” occurs in a spontaneous, unplanned way and involves people in learning during their daily life. Experiences that educate non-formally occur naturally; someone to stimulate specific thoughts or to impart specific skills does not design them. The following study analyses means of mastering Foreign languages attributed to both formal and non-formal education. The researchers consider that students’ linguistic club could be regarded as an important part of extracurricular domain. Based on the concept of polycultural education a students’ linguistic club being a part of non-formal education is supposed to carry out a number of certain functions within university educational area: linguistic; cognitive and educational. While organizing students’ linguistic club the researchers assume that beneficial combination of both formal and non-formal education is supposed to have a certain impact on students’ personal and professional development and their successful adaptation to polycultural reality. The study proves that students’ involvement in linguistic club activities encourage most participants to become successful partners of intercultural dialogue.

Key words: Foreign language, linguistic club, polyculturalism, curricular activities, extracurricular activities

INTRODUCTION

It has been widely recognised in the language teaching professional sphere that learners need not just knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways. This is the major innovation of “communicative language teaching”. At the same time, the “communicative approach” has introduced changes in methods of teaching, the materials used, the description of what is to be learnt and assessment of learning (M. Byram, B. Gribkova, H. Starkey). Increasing globalization has created a need for people in the workforce who can communicate in multiple languages. The common languages are used in areas such as trade, tourism, international relations, technology, media and science. In many countries such as Korea (Kim Yeong Seo in 2009), Japan (Kubota in 1998) and China (Kirkpatrick and Zhichang in 2002) frame education

policies to teach at least one Foreign language at the primary and secondary school levels are accepted. However, some countries such as India, Singapore, Malaysia, Pakistan and the Philippines use a second official language in their governments. According to GAO (2010), China has recently been putting enormous importance on foreign language learning, especially the English Language (Soldatova *et al.*, 2002). The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe has the following aims (Andrea Kettemann):

- Multilingualism: all are entitled to develop a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages over their lifetime in accordance with their needs
- Linguistic diversity: Europe is a multilingual community and all its languages are equally valuable modes of communication and expressions of identity; the right to use and to learn one’s language (s) is protected in Council of Europe Conventions

- Mutual understanding: the opportunity to learn other languages is an essential condition for intercultural communication and awareness and acceptance of cultural differences
- Democratic citizenship: involvement and participation in democratic and social processes in multilingual societies is facilitated by the level of multilingual competence of individuals
- Social cohesion: equality of opportunity for personal development, education, employment, mobility, access to information and cultural enrichment depends on access to language learning throughout life

Basic statements and messages of the Bologna declaration point out the following levels to implement innovations in language teaching and learning (Koryakovtseva, 2002):

- Curriculum and materials
- Behavioural patterns
- Beliefs and principles underlying new approaches

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Range of pedagogical researches confirms the concept that a student's educational experience is made up of both curricular and extracurricular activities. One of the fields to realize intercultural dimension in language learning could be linguistic club activities as a part of extracurricular domain. Taking this concept into consideration while organizing students' linguistic club at the Udmurt State University, the starting point was the idea that beneficial combination of both formal and non-formal education is supposed to have a certain impact on a student's personal and professional development and their successful adaptation to polycultural reality (Deardorff, 2009).

The research was based on the following concept: to encourage students to take part in linguistic club activities founded on principles of non-formal education (such as voluntariness, subjectivity, freedom, choice, personal interest) and theoretical background of polycultural education (openness, dialogue of different cultural areas, value judgment and tolerance towards cultural pluralism, availability for interpersonal and intercultural contacts).

The analysis of polyculturalism, its' phenomenon and philosophical background led us to the conclusion that the following principles can be a key to success while organizing the linguistic club: congruity with culture; dialogue of cultures; principle of polyculturalism;

consistency; demonstrativeness; personal involvement; interdisciplinarity. Let's disclose them taking into account that principles are supposed to form the theoretical background of a pedagogical activity (Banks, 2001).

Congruity with culture implies saturation of educational route appealing to culturally, socially and historically significant content. Based on the ideas of analytical thinking and juxtaposition, the principle under discussion is aimed at achieving a deeper level of understanding and personal acceptance of different cultures.

Dialogue of cultures requires establishment of tolerance as well as the relations of interaction and cooperation between various cultures.

Principle of polyculturalism could be regarded as a pedagogical standard aimed at preparing young generation to function in polycultural surroundings. That is to say that students are supposed to be ready to accept both national and world cultures.

Principle of consistency aims at logical realization of the offered activities within linguistic club. Principle of demonstrativeness suggests that different human senses could be of certain significance while taking part in students' club work.

Personal active position has a certain impact on tempo, soundness and solidity of the absorbed didactic materials. Students' conscious activity is one of the keys to success in establishing effective and competent polycultural interaction and cooperation.

Principle of interdisciplinarity suggests that achievements and perspective of various branches of knowledge are to be taken into consideration while organizing linguistic club activities.

Participation in students' linguistic club is aimed at student's development as a polycultural character based on such principles as congruity with culture; dialogue of cultures; interdisciplinarity; personal involvement; consistency and demonstrativeness.

In our research, we share the position of Richard M. Felder from North Carolina State University and Eunice R. Henriques from the University of Sao Paulo who consider that students must be provided with an opportunity to learn in many ways by seeing and hearing; reflecting and acting; reasoning logically and intuitively; memorizing and visualizing. Thus, teaching methods should also vary and instructors are expected to be able to lecture, to demonstrate, to discuss, to focus on rules and examples, to stimulate memory and understanding.

A number of scholars propose to classify the ways people receive sensory information as visual, verbal and others (tactile, gustatory, olfactory). Visual learners prefer

that information be presented visually in pictures, diagrams, flow charts, time lines, films and demonstrations rather than in spoken or written words. Verbal learners prefer spoken or written explanations to visual presentations. The third category (touch, taste, smell) plays at most a marginal role in language instruction and will not be addressed further. This categorization is somewhat unconventional in the context of the learning style literature (Barbe and Swassing in 1979; Dunn and Price in 1978) in which sensory modalities are classified as visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Since, the five human senses are seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling, we suggest that “kinesthetic” does not properly belong to the list of sensory input modalities. A student’s preference for motion or physical activity of some sort during the learning process belongs in a separate learning style category: our proposed system and Kolb in (1984)’s Model place it in the active/reflective dimension and the familiar model based on Jung’s typology (Lawrence in 1993) includes, it in the extravert-introvert dimension (Ivanchenko, 2014).

The challenge to language instructors is to devise ways of augmenting their verbal classroom presentation with nonverbal visual material, for example, showing photographs, drawings, sketches and cartoons to reinforce presentation of vocabulary and using movies, videotapes and dramatizations to illustrate lessons in dialogue and pronunciation.

Movies were regarded as an integral part of the University linguistic club activities and as an effective tool to Master English and develop critical comprehension and analysis skills.

It is commonly accepted to point out a number of functions attributed to video while mastering a foreign language (Solovova, 2005):

- Informative and learning
- Illustrative and visual
- Controlling
- Educational
- Integrating

We believe that the teacher should be responsible for the selection, organization and exploration of the materials and technologies which are brought to class. They must be creative, provocative, meaningful, allow the active, critical exploration of both students and the teacher.

Gil Pocas, the head of Spanish at Langley Park School for Girls highlights that watching a film is a perfect way to learn a Foreign language in context and be exposed to real life conversation and new up-to-date phrases and vocabulary. Moreover, both Foreign and Russian researches prove the idea that film is a great listening tool that increases students’ ability to cope with different

accents and to stimulate discussion which in turn helps students develop their thinking and critical skills (Bennett, 1993).

Language teachers have been using films in their classes for decades and taking into account the research data introduced by Kearan Donaghy, we can emphasize a number of reasons why video is an excellent teaching and learning tool.

Learning from movies is motivating and enjoyable:

Motivation is one of the most important factors in determining successful second-language acquisition. Films and TV shows are an integral part of students’ lives, so it makes perfect sense to bring them into the language classroom. Film, as a motivator, also makes the language learning process more entertaining and enjoyable.

Movies provide authentic and varied language:

Another benefit of using film is that it provides a source of authentic and varied language. Film provides students with examples of English used in “real” situations outside the classroom, particularly interactive language the language of real-life conversation. Movies expose students to up-to-date speech formulas and the natural flow of speech. If they are not living in an English-speaking environment, perhaps, only movie and television can provide learners with this real-life language input.

Movies give a visual context L:

The “visuality” of video makes it an invaluable language teaching tool, enabling learners to understand more by interpreting the language in a full visual context. Film assists the learners’ comprehension by enabling them to listen to language exchanges and see such visual supports as facial expressions and gestures simultaneously. These visual clues support the verbal message and provide a focus of attention.

Variety and flexibility:

Movies can bring variety and flexibility to the language classroom by extending the range of teaching techniques and resources, helping students to develop all four communicative skills. For example, a whole film or sequence can be used to practise listening and reading and as a model for speaking and writing. Video can also act as a springboard for follow-up tasks such as discussions, debates on social issues, role plays, reconstructing a dialogue or summarising. It is also possible to bring further variety to the language learning classroom by screening different types of film: feature-length films, short sequences of films, short films and adverts.

Given the benefits of using movies in the language learning classroom, it is not surprising that many teachers are keen to use videos with their students and an

increasing number of them are successfully integrating film into the language-learning syllabus. Until quite recently, it was difficult to find pedagogically sound film material to help students improve their language through watching film and teachers had to spend hours creating their own materials. However, with the advent of the internet there is now a wealth of online resources for both language teachers and their students. With so many resources, it's sometimes difficult for teachers to see the wood for the trees (Stepanov, 2003).

Using movies to teach English can be an integral part of effective learning. English is much more than just spelling, grammar and punctuation. Watching films help develop critical comprehension and analysis skills. The following techniques are resorted to (Felder and Henriques, 1995):

- Hold class discussion previous to the film viewing: Use films in English classes to help students visualize the meaning of an idea. Be sure to have an effective preview discussion
- Develop a film check list: Help students focus on specific areas by developing a guideline check list for them to follow while the movie is playing. Experts refer to this practice as "while-viewing." It helps students develop their critical thinking skills. Check lists may also be used as a platform for other class activities
- Have periodic discussion breaks: Be sure to let students ask questions about what they have seen to increase both their listening and speech skills. Students must organize their thoughts in order to ask questions aloud. Have them draw parallels to their own lives
- Wrap it up and conduct a through review after the film is over: This is commonly referred to as "post-viewing" which is a similar technique used in many literature and English classes. Improve students' summary skills by having them give an overview of what they have seen and talk about why it might be relevant to them. Have students extend their thinking beyond simple "I liked it" or not

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Together with the colleagues from the Institute of Pedagogy, Psychology and Social Technologies of the Udmurt State University, we conducted an experiment which involved 60 students. The purpose of the experiment was to compare students involved in the linguistic club activities and students who were offered a special educational program as participants of intercultural dialogue:

- Group 1 (30 members) was made up of 1-3 semesters students who do social communication. This group was supposed to be plunged into the field of intercultural education through English classes
- Group 2 of 30 people consisted of students who participated in the linguistic club activities

Applied diagnostic instruments included express-questionnaire "Tolerance index" (Soldatova *et al.*, 2002); Questionnaire on ethnic identity (Soldatova and Ryzhova, 1998); Scale of social distance (Bogdarius Scale modified by Pochebut, 2004); Questionnaire on ethnic affiliation (Soldatova and Ryzhova, 1998); Questionnaire "Personal Growth" (Stepanov, 2003).

At the first stage (i.e., before experiment implementation) the level of students willingness for intercultural interaction was analyzed. After the experiment implementation statistical data manipulation was applied (SPSS version 11.5 for Windows) and certain dynamic was registered.

After the introduction of the experimental training in the formed groups of students some valid data and shifts were revealed (Table 1).

The implementation of the experimental English program which was worked out for Group 1 and was based on intercultural Internet dialogues showed 2 valid shifts. We can observe the rise of tolerance and ethnic affiliation indexes. It could mean that the program emphasized the significance of students ethnic origin and the idea to accept cultural diversity.

The participation in the students' linguistic club resulted in several valid shifts. Tolerance index increased while indexes of ethnic nihilism, ethnic isolationism, social distance within Gypsies and Russians decreased. Ethnic nihilism is a form of identity which means breaking with an individual ethnic group in order to find a different social and psychological foundation that wouldn't be based on ethnic criteria. Ethnic isolationism supposes assurance in a certain national superiority and advantage and also implies the idea of a national culture refinement, denial of

Table 1: The dynamic of indexes changes in experimental groups of students before (initial milestone) and after (final milestone) the experiment

Indexes	Mean value		Confidence level
	Setting stage	Final stage	
Group 1			
Tolerance	88	93	0.000
Ethnic affiliation	13	14	0.074
Group 2			
Tolerance	82	90	0.000
Ethnic nihilism	4	3	0.060
Ethnic isolationism	5	4	0.062
Social distance within gypsies	6	4	0.012
Social distance within Russians	2	1	0.030

international marriages, xenophobia. Social distance is a willingness to tolerate and let people in an individual surroundings and milieu.

As a result of re-interview of the students using “Personal Growth” test by Stepanov (2003), we found certain shifts in students' attitudes towards the family, the fatherland, to the Earth (Nature), to work, to knowledge, self-corporal and to the person as “Other”.

The students of both groups were also interviewed and they were asked “What impact has the learning of the English language had on them”.

The answers of Group 1 students were ranged as: awareness of a different culture peculiarities (54%); patriotism to my own country (50%); sociability, willingness to communicate and mutual enrichment (43%); positive emotions to representatives of various nationalities in the process of intercultural communication (39%); responsibility (36%).

Group 2 students replies cover: awareness of other cultures uniqueness (100%); demonstration of friendliness to other nationalities (100%); positive emotions to a different culture and nationality (100%); interest to other cultures and nationalities (84%); willingness to help (84%); awareness of a person's uniqueness (80%); empathy to other nationalities (72%); awareness of the native culture uniqueness (76%); proficiency of views about a different culture (76%); demand to respect the native culture (68%); awareness of non-verbal communication and its proper interpretation (64%). Thus, we may conclude that the efficiency of the club activities have improved through promotion of such conditions as:

- Encouragement of interaction between the students and the teachers based on collaboration, partnership and mutual support
- Integration of formal and non-formal education principles (in order to provide students with certain opportunities to master linguistic and sociocultural proficiencies within University disciplines and extracurricular activities
- Students involvement in selection of socially significant content and formation of didactic materials
- Opportunities for situational interaction
- Interdisciplinary approach: taking into account the integration and various fields of knowledge achievements

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it should be pointed out that participation in students' linguistic club based on the

principles of non-formal education and concepts of polycultural education encourages to work out certain conditions, mechanisms and technologies that could facilitate the process of personal integration and adaptation to both world and national culture through the system of education and add to personal ability to accept, interact and cooperate with various cultures, system of values. Thus polycultural education within the students' linguistic club is to provide students with educational experiences that enable them to maintain commitments to their community cultures as well as acquire certain competences, skills and cultural experience needed to function in the national civic culture and community to function effectively within and across diverse groups and beliefs.

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