Chapter 4


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ABSTRACT

Mission of the chapter is to draw the attention to how specific and universal cultural contexts influence audio-visual media used in technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) and how additional efforts in this area from both faculty and students might give very satisfying and rich results, both drawing from cultural differences to ensure the mutual enrichment and appealing to universal basic principles that could be understood in different cultures more or less similarly and/or identical. As audio-visual media nowadays finds its way as a large area of the internet, filtering what is suitable for TELL and what might not be depends a lot on cultural context of media, which should be chosen wisely depending on situation and curriculum. Also included are the recommendations, based on authors’ experience in the field of study, and a vast array of background information.

INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges in TELL (technology-enhanced language learning) is to provide vast accompanying cultural context in the process of education, making it more accessible and informative for students. A few problems arise with the use of modern technology, namely Internet in that area, as primary asset of this global network nowadays, suitable for language learning purposes is audio-visual media – a big
differentiated complex of videos, movies and interactive new media available in the Internet. Audio-visual media requires a lot more processing than usual educational text, but, combined with an educational approach might give much more valuable information and skills for the students.

Dwelling upon the fact that some of the approaches in audio-visual media use in TELL nowadays are becoming outdated in the modern technology-driven world the chapter will include analyses on how cultural context changes on an international political level and how these changes might affect and influence language learning. Main aim of the chapter is to establish how experiences of developing countries, especially such aspiring cases as Ukraine, might be valuable for TELL, projected through cross-cultural aspects, which are inevitably of concern to authors expertise in political studies.

Additional concerns of the chapter will include:

- Providing examples of how cultural contexts in audio-visual media influence and enrich Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL);
- Sharing the experience of Vasyl’ Stus Donetsk National University (Vinnytsia, Ukraine) in that field;
- Establishing the use of audio-visual media creation as an education asset in TELL;
- Discussing the role of visual aids in correlation between TELL and EMI (English as medium of instruction) at universities in Ukraine, especially when it comes to the specific domain of teaching International Relations to native and in-coming students;
- Recommendation of core principles of the Universal Code of Movies to choose audio-visual media suitable for TELL.

BACKGROUND

Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) is as wide-spread in Post-Soviet countries nowadays as it is puzzled due to the ever-changing technological advancements. The Internet alone at times provides more in a year in terms of language learning the whole educational system of Soviet Union was able to provide in decade. It might be not as visible, but dominating Soviet outlook at language learning is still an actual, controversial problem in the Post-Soviet countries, which is at times strengthened by the fact that despite craving for globalizing the educational aspects at times population is too puzzled to actually have stable, working interest in learning the foreign languages. Such problems could be emphasized on a governmental level and they are, but execution is far from perfect – as of now, being in a state of active, if contained, war conflict, Ukraine can’t provide sufficient financing to enhance every educational facilities TELL needs. The question is whether it should at that point, or just providing sufficient guidance and allowing certain new techniques might be more efficient and helpful.

One of the ultimate problems is the fact that there are still a lot of people in the governmental facilities who were educated by Soviet standards of language learning – their whole understanding of the problem is based on their own language learning experience which in Post-Soviet areas could at times be described as misguided and even grammatically crippling. While faculties are mostly more advanced in terms of TELL, the fact that most of educational facilities are dependent on government and, more so, standards implemented by it might not be as efficient in the 20th century with students in junior high school able to access as much information as they possibly could (sometimes more then they can comprehend in that age, but that depends on an individual cases) on the Internet.
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