THE EFFECT OF MULTIMEDIA-ASSISSTED INSTRUCTION ON PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN ARMENIAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract. The article explores the use of multimedia as an effective tool for developing sociocultural competence among students studying English in Armenia. Multimedia-based instruction offers learners exposure to authentic language use, contextual cues, and cultural patterns that are often absent in traditional textbook-based learning. Through verbal and nonverbal communication including gestures, tone, facial expressions, and cultural rituals multimedia tools engage students in real-life scenarios and encourage intercultural awareness.

The integration of culturally rich content in the English curriculum can significantly contribute to learners' understanding of cultural norms such as greetings, apologies, expressions of respect, and emotional communication. These cultural elements, when presented through engaging visual formats, support students in interpreting the underlying meaning behind language use and foster empathy toward different worldviews.

The aim of this article is to investigate how multimedia contributes to the development of sociocultural competence among EFL learners. It also seeks to explore students' perceptions of cultural differences and the impact of visual storytelling on their communicative behavior and cultural understanding.

Key words: multimedia, sociocultural competence, integration of multimedia tools, multimedia-assisted instruction, EFL learning.

Introduction

English language education must go beyond the traditional boundaries of grammar and vocabulary. One of the key competencies required for successful communication in a multicultural world is sociocultural competence- the ability to interpret, adapt to, and respect the cultural norms and communicative behaviors of others. As learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) increasingly interact with diverse global communities, the development of sociocultural competence has become a critical component of language instruction. The development of sociocultural competence implies the training of future professionals in a multicultural personality. The process of becoming aware of the national and cultural features of the social and speech etiquette of language speakers, their customs, rules of conduct, social stereotypes, history and culture, and using this knowledge in communication is a two-way activity. It also helps them to master the features of the language. Therefore, every

lesson in a foreign language is a crossroads, a point of intercultural communication. The use of authentic and instructional video materials in the development of students' socio-cultural competence is the most effective tool not only in offline education, but also in the process of distance learning in the process of gaining popularity. As it is well known, teaching culture has been an integral part of language class and it is viewed as a cognitive component. The Post-Method Pedagogy proposes that the cultural dimension as "an obligation we, language teachers, have to our students". (Vegas P., 2010)

English teachers use various teaching media namely human, printed, visual media and multimedia. Now, let us define the word "**Multimedia**". Multimedia refers to the use of a combination of different content forms such as text, audio, images, animation, video, and interactive content to convey information or provide entertainment. It typically involves the integration of multiple media types in a digital format to enhance communication, learning, or engagement.

In simpler terms, multimedia is any system or application that uses more than one type of media at the same time. Examples are websites, video games, online learning platforms, presentations, and movies.

The definition provided above is a general explanation based on widely accepted usage in fields like computer science, media studies, and education. It is based on authoritative references like:

1. *Oxford English Dictionary:*
   - *"Multimedia: the use of a combination of moving and still pictures, sound, music, and words, especially in computers or entertainment."*
2. *Cambridge Dictionary:*
   - *"Using a combination of moving and still pictures, sound, music, and words, especially in computers or entertainment."*
3. *Techopedia:*
   - *"Multimedia is a form of communication that combines different content forms such as text, audio, images, animations, or video into a single presentation."* https://www.techopedia.com/definition/2379/multimedia

Multimedia refers to the integration of various digital elements such as text, audio, video, animation, and interactive features to enhance learning. In EFL (English as a Foreign Language), it allows learners to experience language in contextually rich and engaging ways, often mimicking natural environments (Mayer, 2009). Using multimedia in foreign language education is beneficial because it creates a more natural learning environment, improves comprehension, and enhances student engagement. It allows learners to experience language in context, see native speakers, and gain insight into the culture associated with the language. Additionally, multimedia tools can boost motivation and foster a deeper understanding of the language. Multimedia allows EFL learners to access a rich variety of authentic English language materials, including videos, podcasts, and interactive websites. This exposure to diverse accents, contexts, and cultural content enhances listening comprehension, pronunciation, and contextual understanding, which traditional textbooks may not fully offer.

Research results

The success of authentic video materials, podcasts, interactive games and simulations usage in teaching English depends on the effective organization of work with them. At the stage of material selection, it is advisable to determine the educational goals and objectives of using a certain material. The problem of choosing the video material to use for educational purposes is of paramount importance for teachers. It is important to choose the material in accordance with the specific task of the lesson. The task of the teacher when selecting video material is to focus on the fact that students are not only interested in the plot, but also fascinated by the process of understanding the language. It is safe to say that the effectiveness of a foreign language lesson using video materials depends on the teacher's preliminary preparation for the lesson. The effectiveness of the usage of video materials is determined by the rationality of the organization of this lesson structure, in other words, it depends on how well the capabilities of the video are coordinated with the tasks of the educational process.

After analyzing the works of various scientists on this topic, we will try to formulate a number of principles for selecting authentic video materials in accordance

to the purpose of our research:

1. The principle of conformity to the topic of the lesson during this period of training. The information provided in a reliable source should be up-to-date and focus on the interests and needs of the student.

2. The principle of external content imposes requirements on the video content volume and the quality of the video image.

3. The principle of internal content implies the appropriate language design of the material. The linguistic content of the material should correspond to the level of language training of students.

Following this principle, the teacher should analyze the lexical units and grammatical constructions of the video content, determine the existence of language material that represents the cultural and national features of native speakers. Also, psychological research strongly supports the power of visual learning. By using different media avenues, such as models, audio-visuals, audios, and presentational tools, a friendly learning environment and experience will be enabled for learners to promote knowledge acquisition. In most schools, facilities such as the TV set and most commonly the computer are widely available to display videos for learners. Another viable source of accessing instructional videos for classroom learning is the use of the internet. Classrooms were connected to the internet as far back as the 2000s, allowing for interactive digital video and video conferences. Since then, new technology like smart phones and tablets, together with social media like YouTube, have increased social engagement and made it easier than ever to integrate video applications into teaching and learning.

Research and practice both suggest that in today's world, every carefully designed visual element can capture the learner's attention and sustain their interest. Considering this reality, I decided to conduct an experiment to prove the effectiveness of the use of multimedia in the educational settings.

The research question lies as follows: Does the integration of multimedia tools significantly improve the English language proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and vocabulary retention) of intermediate-level students in Armenian schools

compared to traditional teaching methods?

In my study, I aimed to investigate whether using multimedia tools in English language instruction could improve the performance of intermediate-level students in Armenian schools. The focus was on four key skills: listening, reading, vocabulary acquisition, and speaking.

To explore this, I conducted an experimental study involving two groups of 8th and 9th grade students from a local Armenian school. Each group consisted of 30 students. Both groups were at an intermediate level of English, as determined by a placement test administered at the beginning of the study.

The **control group** was taught using traditional methods—textbooks, printed handouts, and classroom instruction using a whiteboard. Meanwhile, the **experimental group** received instruction enriched with multimedia. This included the use of:

- YouTube videos for listening practice,

- Quizlet for vocabulary learning,

- Storybird for digital storytelling and creative writing,

- Kahoot and Quizizz for grammar reviews and quizzes,

- and various audio clips for pronunciation training.

The study lasted for six weeks, following the same curriculum across both groups to ensure consistency in content. Before the intervention began, all students completed a pre-test to assess their baseline levels in the four target areas. At the end of the six-week period, they took a post-test designed to measure progress in those same areas. In addition, brief oral interviews were conducted with selected students from both groups to evaluate speaking fluency and confidence.

After collecting the data, I analyzed the results using paired t-tests to compare pre- and post-test scores. The goal was to determine whether the students in the multimedia group showed significantly greater improvement than those in the control group.

What I expected—and what the preliminary results suggested—was that the experimental group not only performed better on vocabulary and listening tasks but also demonstrated increased motivation and participation throughout the course. Their speaking fluency, while not perfect, showed measurable improvement, and many

students reported feeling more engaged during lessons.

Of course, the study also highlighted some challenges. Not all students had equal access to digital tools outside the classroom, and some teachers expressed uncertainty about using new technology. These findings suggest that while multimedia has the potential to enhance EFL learning, it must be supported with proper training and infrastructure.

The data collected from both the control and experimental groups were analyzed to determine the impact of multimedia-assisted instruction on English language proficiency. Pre-test and post-test scores were evaluated across four language skill areas: listening comprehension, reading comprehension, vocabulary retention, and speaking fluency.

Overall Performance Improvement

	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Gain
Control Group	64.3 %	70.2 %	+5.9 %
Experimental Group	63.7 %	79.5 %	+15.8 %

The results clearly support the hypothesis that multimedia-enhanced instruction leads to greater gains in language proficiency, especially in listening and vocabulary. The findings also underscore the importance of digital literacy and access to technology in maximizing the benefits of multimedia tools.

Conclusion

The experiment confirmed that multimedia can be a powerful addition to English language teaching in Armenian schools—especially when it is integrated thoughtfully and systematically. Multimedia significantly enhances the EFL learning process by making language input more engaging, contextual, and accessible. However, to achieve maximum benefit, multimedia tools must be thoughtfully integrated into pedagogical frameworks, supported by teacher training and infrastructure.

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Article sent: 12.8.2025

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