

Materials in teaching elements of British culture at the pre-intermediate level

The essay entitled “Reading and audiovisuals – materials in teaching elements of British culture at the pre-intermediate level” aimed at achieving five goals:

1. to introduce to teaching the element of fun by using videos and to show that videos motivate students to learn better and more efficiently
2. to teach students customs, traditions, and elements of British culture
3. to show that audiovisual tasks serve well to teach language and culture
4. to incorporate elements of culture into teaching reading by proposing culture-oriented texts
5. to provide students with activities that will allow them to improve their reading and listening skills

The first goal to achieve was to introduce to teaching the element of fun through the use of videos, which would at the same time motivate the students to learn better and more efficiently. This aim was fully accomplished. The videos played involved elements of amusement, for example, a funny song about wives of Henry VIII. The students, normally accustomed to books, not films, this time treated films as a time of merriment. From the observation, it seemed that students enjoyed the films very much and did the tasks willingly. Whenever the task with the video was introduced to the students, they showed an immense interest in the video and the exercise to it as well. While the film was being played, the students were watching quietly so that it might be assumed that all of the learners were focused on doing the task prepared for the film. However, the short time of teaching practice was not sufficient to monitor whether the students could learn better and more efficiently with the use of the videos.

The project also aimed at introducing to the students elements of British culture, customs, and some traditions. To achieve this aim a variety of tasks that

concerned Great Britain in many aspects, e.g. famous universities, festivals, great thinkers, well-known James Bond films, food, etc., were introduced. The students were very attentive doing the tasks, especially when reading about James Bond's films or reading about the internet auctions in Great Britain. Nevertheless, it was noticed that not too much material about British culture could be presented in the lessons. Due to the fact that some other points from the curriculum must be followed, grammar, speaking, and writing practice, the time recommended was too short for doing all these activities.

The third objective to accomplish was to show that audiovisuals are a great aid for teaching language and culture at the same time. Many grammatical structures are used in the films as well as vocabulary and other phrases concerning culture. Moreover, the students may learn how to use such structures after watching the film. The learners, having watched the video in exercise 8 that presents traditions concerning typical British food, would be able to order a meal abroad or to name products being used to prepare it.

Another aim to achieve was to include elements of culture in teaching reading by using culture-oriented texts. The texts were taken from different sources and the students were able to see samples of real British books and those books specifically prepared for English language learners. The students were to do exercises preceding and following the texts, so that reading comprehension was also provided.

The last aim of the project was to improve students' reading and listening skills by supporting them with the above mentioned activities like culture-oriented texts and videos. It is believed that this goal succeeded in achieving by using the films with the listening tasks or texts with the reading tasks. The students practised the reading and listening skills by doing the prepared exercises and through that practice managed to improve them.

All in all, these all aims were achieved through the usage of a variety of tasks concerning listening or reading and culture at the same time. However, it is hard to

say whether the students will benefit and learn a lot about culture due to the fact that constant exposure to culture should be provided. The time devoted to teaching practice is too short to see a significant improvement in that respect; nonetheless, from the author's own experience and observation, she is undoubtedly certain that culture should be combined with the reading and listening skills. We frequently hear that the students are willing to participate in the lesson as long as the task provided is up to date and so is the film. Moreover, it is not true to say that it is hard to control students during the classes. The learners should be controlled when they are involved in doing tasks or exercises all the time so that they do not have any time to chat with a schoolmate.