



DOI: 10.22363/2313-1683-2024-21-1-203-219

EDN: VKDLFM


UDC 372.881.1

Research article

An International Learner-Made Video Project as a Tool to Develop EFL Students' Intercultural Competence: Students' Perceptions

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Abstract. The aim of this small-scale pilot study was to identify students' perceptions of an international learner-made video project as an EFL educational tool, and its effect on improving the learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC). In addition, the authors tried to ascertain students' views of the effect of their participation in such a project on improving their language and digital skills. The authors also aimed to clarify whether the students experienced the sense of L2 enjoyment through the project. The sample of this study consisted of 81 undergraduate students from eighteen countries who took part in the yearly International Competition of Student-Made Videos in Foreign Languages “University is my Universe” in the Southern Federal University (SFedU), Russia. To assess the students' perceptions, the authors adapted a 14-item quantitative Likert scale questionnaire originally created by Freiermuth and Huang to evaluate students' ICC development through cultural exchanges. The results showed that the use of learner-made video projects in teaching and learning English as a foreign language motivates students and helps them not only to develop their ICC but also to improve their language and digital skills. These two points, however, need further research.

Key words: EFL, intercultural competence, intercultural communication, learner-made video, information technologies, L2 enjoyment, digital skills.

Introduction

It is often the case nowadays that foreign languages in schools are still taught (and learnt) according to traditional patterns. At the same time, one cannot discount the fact that today's students have grown up with advanced technologies and, according to M. Prensky, “are no longer the people our traditional educational system was designed to teach” (Prensky, 2001, p. 3). This contradiction dictates the need for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to become an integral part of teaching in language classrooms. Skilful integration of these technologies by



teachers can revolutionize teaching methods. Of crucial importance for the effective cultivation of foreign language learners in the 21st century are clear learning outcomes, appropriate activities and aligned assessments.

ICT and the internationalization of various sectors of the economy, politics and education bring people into contact with their colleagues or clients from different cultures. To be able to communicate in an intercultural context, students need to develop a special intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Therefore, foreign language teachers need to include cultural aspects of the target language in education programs and develop effective up-to-date techniques for teaching them. This poses great challenges for foreign language educators in Russia, where English is learnt as a foreign language.

According to L.S. Vygotsky, collaborative environments are catalysts for effective learning, that shape learners' identities through interaction (Vygotsky, 1986). Sociocultural theory emphasizes that engagement in various settings, inside and outside the classroom, is an integral part of language learning (Lantolf, 2000). The implementation of project-based language learning allows students to engage in authentic activities and has a notable positive impact in terms of interaction skills in the target language (Tucker, 2020).

Learner-made video projects have already been used in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. In a number of studies such videos were recognized as valuable educational tools (Domínguez Romero & Bobkina, 2020; Sari *et al.*, 2020; Abdulrahman & Basalama, 2019), but the connection between video-based learning and ICC has been understudied to date.

Data from multiple sources helped us understand the current state of the problem of providing EFL students with opportunities to acquire and improve ICC using various technological tools within project-based learning, as well as to draw some conclusions for further research.

The aim of this small-scale study is to identify students' perceptions of an international learner-made video project as an EFL educational tool from an empirical standpoint.

The primary objective is to examine the students' perceptions concerning the effect of participating in this project on improving their ICC. The secondary objectives are (1) to ascertain the students' views of the effect of participating in the project on improving their language skills; (1) to ascertain the students' views of the effect of participating in the project on improving their digital skills; and 2) to find out whether the students experienced the feeling of L2 enjoyment from the project.

The research questions are:

1. What are the students' perceptions of the effect of participating in the international learner-made video project on improving their ICC?
2. What are the students' views of improving their language skills through the project?
3. What are the students' views of improving their digital skills through the project?
4. Did the students experience the feeling of L2 enjoyment from the project?

ICT as an EFL educational tool

In the 21st century, teaching languages has moved beyond the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary, recognizing the need to develop critical thinking and social interaction skills in language learners (Crystal, 2003; Sun, 2014). Educators are actively discussing the possibility of creating positive learning environments (Lian & Sangarun, 2017). According to Freire (1998), true learning involves the active creation of knowledge rather than its passive acquisition. A. Lian and P. Sangarun (2017) highlight the importance of matching the learning environment with learners' language development to enable complex communicative tasks to be achieved across a variety of skills. The studies conducted by Y. Guo (2021) and S. Liu (2022) confirm that enjoyment can promote academic engagement and motivation among EFL students.

In recent years, ICT advances have given educators the opportunity to improve the standard of education. Personal computers, digital cameras, smartphones, scanners, copiers, and convenient software have become available to teachers and students for daily use. This helps not only to develop all the four language skills but also to improve multiple competences aligned with technology, which, summarizing definitions from various studies, J. Brown, J. Bryan and T. Brown called “twenty-first century literacy” — digital literacy, global literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy, information literacy (Brown et al., 2005).

The analysis of publications, including the most recent ones, shows that ICT has become an integral part of language classrooms. Y. Sun (2014) emphasizes its necessity for teaching and learning. B. Kumaravadelu (2013) argues that rational use of technology represents a significant shift in our understanding of knowledge and learning. A. Lian and P. Sangarun (2017) highlight how technology provides students with autonomy and freedom to make their learning choices. S.R. Baluyan (2017) shows that technology-aided creative activities, such as digital storytelling or expanded language course offerings, allow students to represent the knowledge they acquire in the classroom and develop not only their language skills, but also their creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Making videos can be an effective tool in teaching and learning foreign languages. Today, video production is all around us. The ways video films can be created and presented have improved significantly. Students constantly use their tablets and smartphones to record videos and post them on social media platforms. They also have access to different technology gadgets such as personal computers and laptops with Windows Movie Maker or iMovie built-in operating systems. There is no ample excuse for language teachers not to take advantage of students trying to improve their communicative competences through the video creation process. In addition, such activities help solve 21st century problems and, according to M. Porter (2012), develop creativity and inventive thinking, multiple intelligences, higher-order thinking, multiple literacy (information, visual, audio, and technical), effective communication (oral, written and digital), teamwork and collaboration, project management, and sustainable understanding.

E. Meyer and L.A. Forester (2015) highlight the excellent learning opportunities offered by student-produced videos. A number of studies support the benefits of using these videos in language learning.

The use of various kinds of video resources, including student-created ones, has gained a notable position in improving individual components of students' language skills. The video resources in question may include educational mini-videos (Bobkina et al., 2020); a digital video recording project (Qureshi et al., 2020), social media video content (Li & Medic, 2021; Qomariyah et al., 2021; Madzlan et al., 2020; Listiani et al., 2021); video blogs or vlogs (Lingga et al., 2021; Huang, 2021; Huang et al., 2020; Kartini et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2021); a collaborative project on the basis of videos from the online platforms Flipgrid and Blogger (Iglesias, 2021).

Technology can be effectively integrated into the teaching and learning process through project-based learning. Project-based learning is an instructional technique that engages students in solving meaningful tasks or problems to promote their knowledge acquisition and critical thinking (Howard, 2002). It emphasizes realistic and intriguing activities that facilitate relevant learning and addresses real-world issues through on-site learning and apprenticeships. Open-ended generative tasks are a key feature that encourages students to develop their own questions, plans and goals. Collaborative decision-making and problem-solving are important as students work together in teams to create a product. In project-based learning, the teacher becomes a cognitive coach, guiding students and fostering independence in goal setting, decision-making and reflection.

When using technology, teachers should consider five important principles of meaningful learning (Jonassen et al., 2002). First, meaningful learning is active. Students solve real-world tasks, where they manipulate, change, experiment, and observe the results of their actions. Second, meaningful learning is constructive. By expressing and reflecting on new experiences and connecting them to their existing knowledge, students begin to develop their own simplified mental models for understanding the world. Third, meaningful learning is intentional. Students who have clear goals act purposefully. When they can set their own goals and reflect on their progress, they are more likely to understand their learning and apply it to new situations in the future. Fourth, meaningful learning is authentic. Real-world issues are rarely straightforward and simple. And fifth, meaningful learning involves collaboration. By adhering to these meaningful learning principles, technology becomes a valuable tool that enhances the educational process by promoting active participation, constructive knowledge acquisition, intentional goal setting, authentic problem-solving, and collaborative group work.

A. Minyar-Beloroucheva and P. Sergienko (2022) show that the use of digital technologies within the learner-oriented approach develops all the communicative competences, including ICC, to secure successful L2 language acquisition.

The value of using learner-made videos in language classes increases when students work in groups. Research and practical experience confirm that bringing students together in small cooperative groups promotes intellectual exchange, promoting creative thinking and productive problem-solving (Johnson & Johnson, 2019).

Engaging learners in collaborative teamwork improves their communication skills, while making group video projects international helps students develop their ICC.

Intercultural competence

Today, there is no consensus regarding the exact definition of ‘intercultural competence’. The one we found acceptable for our study was proposed by M. Guilherme (2000) in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*. It describes intercultural competence as “the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as being different from our own” (p. 297). In teaching and learning English as a foreign language it becomes intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

The most influential model of intercultural competence was developed by M. Byram (1997), who stated that intercultural competence consisted of five main elements such as attitudes, knowledge, interpretation and communication skills, discovery and interaction skills, and critical cultural awareness. This model was supported by most theorists in this field and laid the basis for the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) regarding learners’ competences.

As for the assessment of intercultural issues in EFL settings, it is possible to test and ascertain the extent to which students are able to show or apply their cultural knowledge and intercultural skills or awareness, using special rating scales developed by D. Brinkman and M. Wink (2007). Researchers advocate e-portfolios as an appropriate tool, or even propose quick and simple questionnaires to assess students’ intercultural competence, since existing instruments are often very complex, require registration, or are quite expensive.

The use of technology can be an effective means of developing students’ ICC. Teachers use video as a tool to support their teaching. As stated by Y. Lin and H. Wang (2018), the use of enhanced open educational resource (OER) videos in EFL classes improves university students’ ICC and prepares them for multicultural encounters. S. Chiper (2013) provides an overview of ICT resources that can be applied to intercultural teaching and gives examples of good practice from her teaching experience.

Project-based learning can be used as a tool for developing students’ ICC. Teaching intercultural communication in English as a *lingua franca* context is particularly challenging because it occurs in situations where the target culture often does not exist. R.T. Chen (2022) attempted to address the problem by engaging students in activities (videos, forum discussions, face-to-face interactions) that involved experienced multicultural EFL users. The results of M. Prapinwong’s (2018) study showed how an ICT-enabled learning environment transformed a typical tertiary-level EFL class and demonstrated significant improvement of pre-service teachers’ intercultural awareness and communicative competence. B. Heinsch (2022) concluded that the potential for German in specific-purpose programmes increased significantly due to interculturality and the greater use of digital media use. M. Liaw’s (2019) research efforts were based on the results of an experiment in which the participants interacted with international interlocutors using advanced virtual reality technologies. Her findings revealed occurrences of ICC in these interactions and positive attitudes of the participants to them. J. Chen and S. Yang (2014) conducted three collaborative intercultural projects employing web-based tools to improve students’ language skills and ICC. They determined strong positive

attitudes of the participants towards technology-aided intercultural language learning, which contributed to the development of their ICC along with linguistic competence.

Method

Research design. This small-scale pilot study was based on an exploratory descriptive quantitative research method using a Likert scale questionnaire to collect students' attitudes and opinions with the intention to explore the effects of international learner-made video project as a tool to develop EFL students' intercultural competence. The study was of a relatively short duration. All of the participants had equal opportunities to participate in creating videos in English within the international project.

The research questions and data collection instruments are presented in Table 1.

Research questions and data collection instruments

Table 1

Issues to be explored	Instruments to be applied
Research Question 1 The effect of learner-made video-project on improving students' intercultural competence.	Likert scale questions 1–8
Research Question 2 The effect of learner-made video-project on improving students' language skills.	Likert scale questions 9–12
Research Question 3 The effect of learner-made video-project on improving students' digital skills.	Likert scale question 13
Research Question 4 The feeling of L2 enjoyment from the project	Likert scale question 14

Participants. The study involved 87 undergraduate students who took part in the yearly International Competition of Student-Made Videos in Foreign Languages “University is my Universe” at the Southern Federal University (SFedU) in the spring of 2022, Russia, and presented their video projects in English. The 87 participants (39 SFedU Linguistics Department students and 48 international university students) formed 17 groups of five or six students each. The English language proficiency levels of the majority of the participants ranged from B1 to C1 according to the CEFR except for 6 students from the USA and UK for whom English was a native language. These 6 students did not participate in the survey. Thus, the sample in this study included 81 students (38 males and 43 females aged 20–24) from 18 countries (Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Iran, Israel, Paraguay, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan). Participation in the study was voluntary.

Data Collecting Instrument. Questionnaires are recognized as efficient and economic tools for collecting data from geographically diverse samples and for analyzing it quickly (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). To assess the participants' perceptions of the international learner-made video project, a 14-item quantitative questionnaire was developed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 5 (‘strongly agree’). This assessment tool was adapted from M.R. Freiermuth and H. Huang's (2021) study, which focused on how cultural exchanges via such platforms as Zoom can improve language learners' ICC. After interacting via

Zoom with their overseas partners, the participants were asked to complete a Likert-scale questionnaire composed by the authors to assess various aspects, including the enjoyment factor, cultural expressions, increased cultural awareness, altered cultural perceptions, enhanced intercultural knowledge, camaraderie with intercultural partners, building interpersonal relationships, assessing the participants' performance, and learning intercultural language. This helped us conclude that Zoom exchanges could develop intercultural competences by using increased verbosity and polite language, and, most importantly, by building interpersonal relationships.

The adaptation of the original questionnaire included the addition of one item on improving digital skills. For inclusion in the questionnaire, each question was considered according to several criteria. First, the relevance of the question to the objectives of the study was assessed. Next, it was ensured that the question was neutral and easily understood by the participants, and measurable, allowing for effective analysis and interpretation of the responses. Finally, a pilot test with a small group of the participants helped us evaluate assess understanding and quality of responses before the questionnaire was completed.

As shown in Appendix, the survey consisted of four parts categorized as (1) intercultural competence (eight items); (2) language skills (four items); (3) digital skills (one item); (4) and L2 enjoyment factor (one item). One open-ended question was added for the students' comments.

Two experts reviewed the survey to ensure its relevance, as well as thoroughness and clarity of the individual items. Appropriate modifications were made to improve the reliability and validity of the questionnaire before offering it to the participants. The data were imported into Excel to facilitate SPSS analysis.

Procedure. The students formed teams and submitted applications to participate in the Competition of Student-Made Videos in Foreign Languages “University is my Universe”. Each team was supposed to go through two stages of the Competition held online (in MS Teams and in social media). At the first stage, the participants created a Mind Map to introduce their team and visually structure their ideas about the future digital project. At the second stage, they presented their projects. The jury determined the winners of the Competition in the following categories: “The Best Digital Project”, “The Most Personal Story”, “The Most Original Idea”, and “The Most Comprehensive Presentation of Universities”.

Out of the two components of a learner-made video — the content and the technical part — the former was considered the main one, because without an interesting narrative, a well-thought-out, well-written script and careful scene selection, using pictures and video clips with fancy digital effects did not help create a high-quality final product. In the rating scale, the first criterion was given more weight than the use of technology.

As for the technical side, the data received from a survey conducted among SFedU students before the announcement of the competition showed that there would be no problems using software to complete tasks in this format, since most of it is free and available to everyone, including: Windows Movie Maker, iMovie, Cap cut, Movavi Video Editor 14 Plus and others.

During the preliminary instructions, it was recommended that the process of creating a video be divided into the following stages: (1) to form an international

group to make a video and participate in the competition; (2) to come up with the creative idea and planning the content; (3) to research, explore and learn the topic; (4) to write the script, including the introduction, the body and the conclusion; (5) to make a plan to help make decisions about images, sound and video; (6) to collect or create images, audio or video; (7) to create the final product using software available to students; (8) to share the video with a wider audience by uploading it to the Internet; and (9) to reflect, receive feedback and assessment.

The video creators began by identifying the audience (age, cultural background, gender and other characteristics) and took it into account during the production of the video. At the preparation stage, the students were required to use both general competences and linguistic competence in writing and speaking. While creating the content, the students were supposed to use the target language: write a narrative in English, transform its message into a short script, record the script, listen to the recording, and check for understanding.

After completing the video project, the students were given six days to respond to the questionnaire (from April 30 to May 4). The obtained data were in such a way that the anonymity of the respondents was preserved.

All the participants who expressed interest received a copy of the final project report from the researchers.

Results and discussion

All the 81 returned questionnaires (100%) contained valid responses. To answer the research questions, the authors made an analysis of the data from the questionnaires regarding the participants' perceptions of the effects of international learner-made video project as a tool to develop EFL students' ICC, language and digital skills and L2 enjoyment factor (Table 2).

In describing the results of the study using a Likert scale, two common statistical measures were calculated, i.e., the median (Me) and the interquartile range (IQR). The median represents the mean value in a data set and provides a more accurate estimate of central tendency than the mean. The IQR, calculated as the difference between the upper and lower quartiles, indicates the spread of data and variability in responses. Together, the median and IQR provide a comprehensive summary of participants' opinions, helping researchers understand the response distribution and make informed interpretations of the data.

RQ1. In the first category, which included eight ICC items, the students' responses to the first one about using videos to express culture were very positive. More than half of the students strongly agreed and a significant part of them agreed that they could effectively demonstrate their culture through video images combined with appropriate discourse in an international video project (Me = 4, IQR = 1).

The second cultural item asked whether the students' awareness of another culture increased through their participation in the project. Most of the students felt that this activity increased their cultural knowledge. The results showed that the majority of the students strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, some were neutral, and very few strongly disagreed (Me = 4, IQR = 1).

Table 2

Survey results

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Me	IQR
1. Making videos was a good way for me to express culture.	0 0%	2 2.5%	5 6.1%	42 51.9%	32 39.5%	81 100%	4	1
2. My awareness of another culture increased due to participating in the project.	0 0%	2 2.5%	8 9.9%	47 58%	24 29,6%	81 100%	4	1
3. My perceptions of another culture changed through the experience.	2 2.5%	5 6.2%	21 26%	42 51.8%	11 13.5%	81 100%	4	1
4. Such projects increase intercultural knowledge.	0 0%	2 2.5%	5 6.2%	31 38.2%	43 53.1%	81 100%	5	1
5. The activity gave me an excellent opportunity to communicate with students from cultural backgrounds different from my own.	0 0%	0 0%	5 6.2%	33 40.7	43 53.1%	81 100%	5	1
6. I enjoyed participating in the project with my intercultural peers.	0 0%	0 0%	8 9.9%	42 51.8%	31 38.3%	81 100%	4	1
7. The project made me more interested in the personal experiences of others' daily lives.	0 0%	0 0%	8 9.9%	41 50.6%	32 39.5%	81 100%	4	1
8. I would recommend such projects to my fellow students, given the opportunity.	2 2.5%	2 2.5%	9 11.1%	31 38.3%	37 45.6%	81 100%	4	1
9. The project helped me improve my reading skills	0 0%	6 7.4%	35 43.2%	27 33.3%	13 16.1%	81 100%	3	1
11. The project helped me improve my writing skills	0 0%	6 7.4%	26 32.1%	31 38.3%	18 22.2%	81 100%	4	1
10. The project helped me improve my speaking skills	0 0%	0 0%	13 16%	37 45.7%	31 38.3%	81 100%	4	1
12. The project helped me improve my listening skills	0 0%	0 0%	19 23.4%	31 38.3%	31 38.3%	81 100%	4	1
13. The project helped me improve my digital skills.	0 0%	2 2.5%	5 6.1%	31 38.3%	43 53.1%	81 100%	5	1
14. I enjoyed my experience with the video project "University is my Universe".	2 2.5%	0 0%	3 3.7%	31 38.3%	45 55.5%	81 100%	5	1

The third item from the questionnaire asked whether the students' perceptions of culture changed through the experience. A large majority of the respondents indicated strong agreement or agreement that their perceptions had indeed changed (Me = 4, IQR = 1).

The fourth item directly asked the participants whether such activities as video projects increased their intercultural knowledge. Again a large majority of

the participants strongly agreed or agreed, while a smaller percentage of them were neutral or disagreed (Me = 5, IQR = 1).

The fifth cultural item of the questionnaire asked whether the activity provided the respondents with an opportunity to communicate with students from cultural backgrounds different from their own. It was evident that the majority of the students participated in interactions with their peers from diverse cultures and the activity was successful in developing intercultural communication and interaction among the participants (Me = 5, IQR = 1).

The answers to the sixth item showed that a large majority of the students enjoyed completing the project with their intercultural peers, while a much smaller number of them were neutral (Me = 4, IQR = 1).

In answer to the seventh item, most of the respondents strongly agreed that they had become more interested in the personal experiences of others' daily lives, while very few others were neutral (Me = 4, IQR = 1).

The final eighth item in this category asked whether the participants would recommend such projects to their fellow students, given the opportunity. The results showed that most of the students would strongly recommend or recommend such projects to their fellow students. A relatively smaller number of them were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed (Me = 4, IQR = 1).

Thus, the data related to RQ1 indicated that the students' overall perceptions of the effects of the international learner-made video project as a tool to develop their ICC were very positive. The number of the respondents who did not find the activity helpful was relatively small.

RQ2. The second Likert scale category to be discussed was the language learning aspect. In the questionnaire, the participants were presented with four statements regarding their opinions and views on improving their English language proficiency in relation to the four macro-skills. The results showed that their speaking skills (Me = 4, IQR = 1), listening skills (Me = 4, IQR = 1) and writing skills (Me = 4, IQR = 1) improved more than reading skills (Me = 3, IQR = 1).

That does not seem surprising, given the opportunity to collaborate and communicate primarily verbally with students of different nationalities and English proficiency levels through popular video conferencing applications such as Zoom, MS Teams and others, as well as writing scripts.

RQ3. The third Likert category asked about the effect of participating in the project on the development of the students' digital skills. The data showed that the items most highly rated by the students were those associated with the improvements in their digital skills (Me = 5, IQR = 1).

RQ4. The fourth Likert category contained one statement to reveal the L2 enjoyment factor. A significant majority of the students enjoyed their experience with the video project "University is my Universe" (Me = 5, IQR = 1). This shows that such cultural exchanges are worth considering. One of the two students who did not enjoy the project later commented: "Our team did not receive any prize".

The international learner-made video project turned out to be an effective and powerful educational tool and successfully expanded the range of EFL courses. It enabled the students to present the knowledge they were acquiring in class and demonstrate not only their language skills but also creativity, critical thinking and

problem-solving skills. The project also helped them improve their motivation and efficiency in learning foreign languages and contributed to their e-portfolio. In addition, the project video recordings made by the international students allowed the teachers to collect and preserve artifacts of student learning.

The Likert ratings and comments indicate that sharing cultural information was found to be very valuable to the participants. The data analysis shows that the students perceived the learner-made video project as a language activity that helped them develop their intercultural competence and promote collaboration among peers, as well as improve their English language proficiency and develop their digital competence. Along with the students' overall positive attitudes, the conclusions have opened up a new research niche that should not be ignored: the latter two areas need further rigorous quantitative study employing methods that provide reliability and validity of the research results.

It has become apparent that video production is an ideal activity for group projects. The participants play important roles that contribute to the overall success of the endeavor. The students are given the freedom to choose their preferred partners for collaboration and engage in brainstorming sessions to generate innovative ideas. However, the instructors establish guidelines to ensure effective teamwork. One of the requirements is that all the team members must actively participate in the video production process.

At the same time, the workload should be distributed equally among all the participants. This will ensure a fair division of tasks and encourage collective responsibility. The participants are encouraged to collaborate in finding relevant information and collectively writing the video script. These collaborative efforts promote teamwork and strengthen group bonds.

To ensure a coherent and well-designed video, the participants had to reach consensus on various aspects. They collectively decided on the visual and conceptual design of the video as well as methods and tools for retrieving information. This promoted effective communication and teamwork.

Furthermore, the participants were supposed to explore their creativity as a group while considering the objectives of the project. This encouraged out-of-the-box thinking and development of unique and engaging video content.

By actively participating in various aspects of the project, the students contributed to the overall success and quality of the final videos. They combined their diverse skills, perspectives and efforts combined to create a comprehensive and captivating final product.

The interdisciplinary nature of learner-made international video projects required that the students possess advanced ICC, listening skills, speaking skills, digital skills, etc. to create an informal video story recorded directly or narrated through a recorded voiceover, still or moving images, music or sounds, in a kind of documentary film format.

The findings revealed the students' positive attitudes, as the project provided opportunities for authentic language practice, real-life language use, and independent learning, as well as opportunities for autonomy, collaborative study, self-reflection, and technology integration.

Some potential limitations of this study include the small sample size of eighty-one students, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. In addition, sampling bias could be a factor as the participants were students who voluntarily participated in an international video competition, potentially skewing results due to their higher motivation levels. Finally, the absence of a control group makes it difficult to attribute the improvements in intercultural communicative competence, language skills and digital skills solely to the video project.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that incorporating student-made video projects into English language teaching and learning environment can inspire students and not only help develop their intercultural communicative competence but also improve their language and digital skills, thus significantly contributing to a high-quality language education and the effectiveness of language learning. Such projects provide new forms of communication and open up a number of possibilities for developing ICC. During the project, the participants can exchange not only new but also local knowledge. Instead of being forced to develop their cultural competences through “chalk-talk” classes and sanitized materials in textbooks to explain specific cultural norms, the students receive real cultural knowledge.

The project received overwhelmingly positive feedback in all its aspects. This suggests that international video projects created by students themselves can create meaningful learning environments. In this environment, students can explore and acquire knowledge according to their individual needs and interests.

Integrating technology into learning also helps bridge the gap between students (“digital natives”), and their teachers (mostly “digital immigrants”) in an increasingly digital world.

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¹ Instagram is part of Meta, which is recognized as an extremist organization and banned in Russian Federation.

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APPENDIX

Likert scale questionnaire

Student feedback to the video project “University is my Universe”
Rate your level of agreement with each statement

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
ICC					
Making videos was a good way for me to express culture					
My awareness of another culture increased due to participating in the project					
My perceptions of another culture changed through the experience					
Such projects increase intercultural knowledge					
The activity gave me an excellent opportunity to communicate with students from cultural backgrounds different from my own					
I enjoyed completing the project with my intercultural peers					
The project made me more interested in the personal experiences of others’ daily lives					
I would recommend such projects to my fellow students, given the opportunity					
Language skills					
The project helped me improve my					
– reading skills					
– writing skills					
– speaking skills					
– listening skills					
Digital skills					
The project helped me improve my digital skills					
L2 enjoyment factor					
I enjoyed my experience with the video project “University is my Universe”					
Any other comments (additional)					

Article history:

Received 19 September 2023

Revised 21 December 2023

Accepted 25 December 2023

For citation:

Baluyan, S.R., Ovcharenko, V.P., & Privalova, Y.V. (2024). An international learner-made video project as a tool to develop EFL students' intercultural competence: Students' perceptions. *RUDN Journal of Psychology and Pedagogics*, 21(1), 203–219. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2313-1683-2024-21-1-203-219>

Author's contribution:

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Conflicts of interest:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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DOI: 10.22363/2313-1683-2024-21-1-203-219


EDN: VKDLFM

УДК 372.881.1

Исследовательская статья

Международный конкурс видеопроектов как средство формирования межкультурной компетентности студентов

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Аннотация. Рассматривается опыт применения одной из инновационных образовательных технологий, используемых в рамках проектного метода обучения иностранным языкам, – Международного студенческого конкурса видеопроектов на английском

языке. Исследование проводилось с целью выяснить мнение студентов о влиянии их участия в проекте на развитие у них межкультурной компетентности, языковых и цифровых навыков, а также мотивации к обучению. Выборку исследования составил 81 студент бакалавриата из 18 стран, принявшие участие в ежегодном Международном конкурсе студенческих видеороликов на иностранных языках «Университет – моя Вселенная» в Южном федеральном университете (ЮФУ). Для количественного анализа респондентам была предложена анкета из 14 вопросов с пятибалльной шкалой Лайкерта. Результаты исследования свидетельствуют, что создание видеороликов для проекта на английском языке в коллаборации со сверстниками из разных стран мотивирует студентов к изучению иностранных языков и помогает сформировать межкультурную компетентность. Кроме того, участие в проекте позволяет им развить умения и навыки во всех видах речевой деятельности (хотя и в различной степени) и повысить цифровую грамотность. Однако два последних утверждения требуют дальнейшего исследования.

Ключевые слова: английский язык как иностранный, межкультурная компетентность, межкультурная коммуникация, видеопроект, видеоролик, информационные технологии, мотивация, цифровые навыки

История статьи:

Поступила в редакцию 19 сентября 2023 г.

Принята к печати 25 декабря 202 г.

Для цитирования:

Baluyan S.R., Ovcharenko V.P., Privalova Y.V. An international learner-made video project as a tool to develop EFL students' intercultural competence: students' perceptions // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Психология и педагогика. 2024. Т. 21. № 1. С. 203–219. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2313-1683-2024-21-1-203-219>

Вклад авторов:

С.Р. Балуян – концепция и дизайн исследования, написание и редактирование текста.

В.П. Овчаренко – статистическая обработка и анализ данных, написание и редактирование текста.

Ю.В. Привалова – сбор и обработка материалов, написание и редактирование текста.

Заявление о конфликте интересов:

Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

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