METHODS OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH THROUGH AUTHENTIC VIDEO MATERIALS IN OFFLINE AND ONLINE EDUCATION SETTINGS

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Abstract: This article explores effective methods for developing students' socio-cultural competence in English through the use of authentic video materials in both offline and online education settings. Socio-cultural competence is essential for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), enabling them to understand and navigate cultural contexts, norms, and practices of English-speaking communities. This paper discusses the role of authentic video materials, defines socio-cultural competence, reviews pedagogical methods for integrating videos into EFL instruction, and examines the advantages of both offline and online approaches. Key strategies include task-based learning, critical thinking development, and collaborative activities, which together enhance learners' ability to interact meaningfully in diverse social and cultural contexts. The study concludes by providing practical recommendations for teachers aiming to incorporate these resources into their teaching practices.

Keywords: socio-cultural competence, English language learning, authentic materials, video-based instruction, offline education, online education, task-based learning, cultural awareness.

In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to communicate across cultures has become a crucial skill. English, as a global lingua franca, serves as a medium for cross-cultural exchange. To be effective in this communication, learners must not only acquire linguistic skills but also develop socio-cultural competence. Socio-cultural competence refers to the knowledge and skills needed to understand and navigate the social and cultural contexts of language use (Byram, 1997).

Authentic materials, such as videos from real-life sources, are recognized as valuable tools for enhancing socio-cultural competence. Videos provide contextualized language use, diverse cultural perspectives, and authentic situations that textbooks often lack. This paper aims to investigate methods for integrating authentic video materials into English language teaching (ELT) and their effectiveness in both offline and online learning environments. Socio-cultural competence involves more than just learning vocabulary and grammar. It encompasses understanding the cultural values, social practices, norms, and communication styles of native speakers of the target language. Byram (1997) identified several components of socio-cultural competence, including:

- The ability to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds without prejudice.

- The knowledge of the cultural context, including understanding how meaning is constructed within a particular society.

- The bility to learn from and engage with cultural experiences.

Language learners who possess strong socio-cultural competence can better interpret the nuances of communication, such as humor, politeness, and indirectness, which are often culturally bound.

Authentic video materials are those that originate in real-life contexts, such as television shows, news broadcasts, movies, interviews, or even user-generated content on platforms like YouTube. Unlike scripted educational videos, authentic videos present language as it is actually used by native speakers in daily life. These materials expose learners to:

- *Natural language use:* Authentic videos offer learners exposure to colloquial language, slang, idiomatic expressions, and regional accents, which are often overlooked in textbooks.

- *Cultural contexts:* Videos often reflect cultural practices, values, and social norms, which are essential for developing socio-cultural competence.

- *Variety in communication styles:* Videos provide a range of communication styles, from formal speech in news broadcasts to informal dialogue in movies, allowing students to experience different registers of the language.

Task-based learning (TBL) is an instructional approach that focuses on the completion of real-world tasks. Videos can be used in TBL to create tasks that require students to engage with content actively and meaningfully. Tasks could include:

- *Role-playing:* Students watch a video depicting a social interaction and then role-play a similar scenario, allowing them to practice language use and cultural norms.

- *Problem-solving:* After watching a video, students work in groups to solve a problem presented in the video, encouraging collaboration and critical thinking.

- *Discussion:* Students watch a video and then discuss its themes, characters, or cultural aspects in groups or as a class, fostering deep understanding and reflection on cultural differences.

Integrating videos into lessons also provides opportunities for critical thinking. After viewing a video, students can be asked to analyze cultural behaviors, compare them to their own culture, and reflect on the implications of these differences. This promotes a deeper understanding of cultural relativism and encourages learners to question stereotypes and biases. Critical thinking can be further enhanced by asking open-ended questions about the video's content, encouraging students to express their opinions and make informed judgments. Collaborative learning can be promoted through group activities that involve video materials. For instance, students can work together to create a presentation or produce a video themselves. This collaborative approach not only improves linguistic skills but also strengthens students' understanding of the cultural content they are engaging with. In both offline and online settings, digital tools such as discussion boards, video editing software, and collaborative document platforms can facilitate collaboration among students, regardless of location.

In traditional offline settings, video materials can be incorporated into face-to-face lessons. Teachers can play videos in class, pausing them to elicit responses or discuss cultural aspects. One of the main advantages of offline settings is the ability for immediate interaction and feedback. Teachers can guide students through the video content, ask comprehension questions, and discuss cultural nuances in real-time. However, offline education also has limitations, such as time constraints and lack of access to the latest video content. Additionally, classroom distractions can sometimes hinder students' engagement with the material.

Online education settings provide a different set of opportunities and challenges. The flexibility of online platforms allows students to watch videos at their own pace and engage in asynchronous discussions. Teachers can create online courses or video playlists that students can access at any time, facilitating self-directed learning. Furthermore, online platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, or discussion forums offer spaces for real-time or delayed feedback and interaction.

One of the main benefits of online education is the vast array of authentic video content available. From TED Talks to popular media, students can access videos on almost any topic or cultural context, making learning more dynamic and relevant. However, challenges such as technology access, screen fatigue, and reduced face-to-face interaction can impact student engagement.

Advantages of Video-Based Learning for Socio-Cultural Competence

- *Exposure to authentic cultural contexts:* Video materials help bridge the gap between textbook knowledge and real-world usage, offering a window into the daily lives, customs, and values of English-speaking cultures.

- *Increased engagement:* Videos can hold students' attention better than traditional text-based materials, particularly when dealing with culturally relevant content that sparks curiosity.

- *Language acquisition in context:* Watching videos provides learners with the opportunity to observe language in context, improving their understanding of how meaning is conveyed through both verbal and non-verbal communication.

- *Cultural sensitivity:* Videos can highlight cultural diversity and promote empathy by showcasing different perspectives on societal issues, fostering an understanding of cultural relativism.

In a Conclusion, Developing socio-cultural competence is a key goal of English language teaching. Authentic video materials provide an engaging and effective means for enhancing learners' understanding of both language and culture. Through task-based learning, critical reflection, and collaborative activities, students can improve not only their linguistic abilities but also their cultural awareness. Both offline and online education settings offer unique advantages for integrating videos into language instruction. While offline education facilitates immediate interaction and teacher feedback, online platforms provide a wealth of accessible resources and flexibility for learners. Teachers can maximize the effectiveness of video-based learning by selecting materials that reflect the diversity of English-speaking cultures and by designing activities that encourage active

engagement with the content. By doing so, they help learners develop the socio-cultural competence necessary for successful communication in global contexts.

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