

Audiovisual Sources of Developing an Authentic Personality in Multicultural Environment

Ekaterina Kalinina*

History and Linguistics Department
Glazov Teachers' Training Institute
Glazov, Udmurt Republic, Russia
ekalinina1979@yandex.ru

Svetlana Gubina

Department of education and psychology
Vyatka State University
Kirov, Russia
svetgubina@gmail.com

Abstract: *The article investigates the concept of authenticity in the context of foreign language learning, and dwells on the significance of audiovisual sources for mastering the multicultural environment by an individual. The authors focus on authenticity as a psychological phenomenon and present an empirical study of the relationship between authentic perception of language and psychological constitution of personality. Psychodiagnostic techniques related to self-actualization, ability to adapt in new living conditions were used with students of Glazov Teachers' Training Institute. The results of the empirical investigation show that the students who were taught using mostly authentic texts exhibited a higher foreign language skill level, greater psychological stability in communication, and they were able to use a greater range of non-verbal communication means.*

Key words – *audiovisual source, authentic personality, multicultural environment, intercultural communication* *.

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of “authenticity” concept in applying audiovisual sources for forming an authentic personality in multicultural environment is not currently much elaborated. The practical significance of authentic materials for developing skills at foreign language lessons is widely acknowledged, but the real results of the full application of such materials are presented insufficiently in modern science [7].

The research problem is determined by the necessity to study the tertiary students' personality authenticity which affects the process of professional foreign language acquisition. A person characterised by personal authenticity has a clear picture of what he/she does and why, comprehending the responsibility for his/her actions. He/she can make a choice and correct his/her behaviour (including verbal behaviour), depending on the situation [5]. Consequently, the more authentic a student is, the more able he/she is to admit the value of his/her fellow student's views, his/her own views and views of the society as a whole, the more harmonic he/she is in his/her utterance, speech activity (both oral and written); he/she is also able to correct any mistakes made, because he/she is not afraid of the situation when the teacher estimates his/her utterance. Thereby, we can observe the student's activity not for a mark expressed in numerical, scoring terms but for a

substantive aspect of the utterance, search for an idea, and meaning hidden “between the lines”.

Thus, there is a contradiction between the fact that there are some research works concerning formation of the concept “personality authenticity”, and the fact that its manifestation during foreign language acquisition is studied insufficiently. Scientific knowledge of the authenticity concept is elaborated insufficiently. In particular, it is related to its influence on the process of professional foreign language acquisition and the society's need in the knowledge of such language as a critical component of multicultural environment, conditions and regularities of its successful mastering.

Authenticity shall be considered as a property of educational interaction in efficiently arranged audiovisual conditions. In other words, it is not sufficient to bring a scrap to the classroom, it is necessary to organise an educational environment in a way that would facilitate the development of the authentic communicative activity.

The communication, as it has been proved by language and psychology researches, includes not only verbal communication means. An important component of the information transmission and interpretation process is non-verbal means also. It often happens that the communication partners' intention becomes clear thanks to the latter. For professional foreign language acquisition and in conditions of multicultural communication it is necessary to understand the meaning of non-verbal communication means. Therefore, audiovisual sources are a special value because they not only facilitate the understanding process and make it colourful, vivid, imaginative, but also they are a valuable asset for studying non-verbal communication means and the basis for learning the communicative behaviour of representatives of different cultures. “The modern world is a visually oriented world, a world of virtual opportunities and information technologies” [5]. Therefore, the features of TV and video resources are attractive not only as entertainment, but they are actively used in all spheres of human activity, including education.

This article presents practical research into “authenticity” phenomenon from the viewpoint of personality characteristic which is directly associated with the ability to authentically perceive educational material during foreign language learning as an integral part of the multicultural environment.

* Ekaterina Kalinina (ekalinina1979@yandex.ru) is a corresponding author.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Before discussing the results of the conducted research let us specify the content of the terms used in this work. The concept of “authenticity” is widely used in different areas of expertise. In the present study, we define authenticity as identity, uniformity and truth. Consequently, an authentic text is a text which corresponds implicitly to the foreign language text and has the same legal force as the latter, because authentic texts shall correspond to each other in terms of their logical content.

The term “audiovisual sources” is most frequently used in the sphere of source studies, archival science and history. Herein the audiovisual sources will mean the forms of organisation of filmed or recorded text material of official, creative or personal origin.

Another concept which is essential for the contents of this article is multicultural environment. It means the social environment reflecting specific features of cultural diversity and facilitating the process of natural sociocultural interaction of its participants [9].

In the modern world, the interaction of cultures plays a critical part in the existence and development of culture of any ethnos, and it is a critical manifestation of the history of peoples and languages. During language and cultural contacts mutual enrichment with values, knowledge occurs, and the condition of survival and sustainable development of the whole mankind is fulfilled. Intercultural exchange is a contact of two or more cultural traditions during and as a result of which the participants exert essential influence on each other, mutually exchanging with information, skills and knowledge [4]. In the 21st century it is important to develop and maintain intercultural exchange and create a dialogue of cultures.

Intercultural communication is one of the progressively developing trends abroad and in modern Russia. The problem of interaction and mutual understanding of cultures is relevant for all countries of the world. The contacts of representatives of different cultures cause many problems which are induced by the difference of norms, values, peculiarities of world views of the partners, etc. Such communication difficulties are termed “intercultural barriers” [6, p. 26].

The intercultural barriers are directly associated with the process of psychological adaptation to unknown (new) life conditions, manifesting via emotional instability and anxiety. In new cultural conditions, it is necessary to exhibit the attention concentration in solving non-standard living problems for establishing the optimal compliance of a communicative personality with the environment. The intercultural barriers may be an obstacle in the acquisition of a new social space because an individual begins to feel the lack of self-confidence. It is known that in the process of collision of different languages and cultures a cultural and communicative shock may occur during communication. The basic cause of their occurrence is intercultural barriers. They decrease the efficiency of communication between representatives of different cultures and languages, and in

some cases they may cause insuperable difficulties and destroy the process of understanding, tolerance and further interaction [8]. The following barrier groups are distinguished usually: language barriers, non-verbal barriers and stereotype and prejudice barriers.

Language barriers occur because representatives of different cultures use different models of perception of social realm which is implemented by using language structures, forms and styles of oral and written communication. Most frequently the language barriers become the first and the main obstacle in intercultural communication.

Non-verbal barriers Non-verbal behaviour performs important functions in the intercultural communication process. In most cases the used symbols may have different meaning for the interaction participants. Their inconsistency and non-understanding may affect communication efficiency.

Stereotype and prejudice barriers. Peculiarities of national and ethnic consciousness of representatives of different cultures are often intercultural interaction barriers [1, p. 77].

To overcome such barriers, the modern foreign language and Russian teaching methodology pay significant attention to the issue of developing an authentic personality and authenticity. Generally, non-authentic texts are educational texts which are created by native speakers or authors of textbooks for those who learn a foreign language. The goal of such texts is providing the fundamentals of reading and pronunciation rules, minimum word stock, basic knowledge of grammar. Thus, the main goal of a non-authentic text is an educational one.

An authentic text is originally written not for educational purposes, it is created by native speakers for speakers of the same language. Some examples of such texts are literary works, newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements, official documents, personal letters, films, plays, video clips, etc.

The authentic texts are specific in terms of their linguistic content: they contain many interjections, particles, phraseological units, emotionally coloured words, complex syntactical structures, elliptical sentences, slang words, parasitic filler words, dialectical words, appraisive words; the mood is expressed vividly, etc. Such linguistic elements facilitate the sociocultural background implementation; they give the reader an insight of real situation and communication methods typical for the particular language and the ethnos speaking it. An authentic text is, “on the one hand, a product of speech and is a method of verbal influence on the reader, on the other hand it is an object of semantic processing and creates the necessary content and communicative basis for development of speaking: it has communicative integrity thanks to which it meets cognitive and emotional needs of students and activates their cognitive activity” [3].

The modern textbooks and study guides use photos and images in the form of an advertisement and newspaper

clipping for the creation and rendition of the maximum authenticity. Certainly, it contributes to creation of the authenticity effect to some extent. However, real communication with native speakers is not confined to reading and a written response. In real-life communication it is important to understand correctly, “post-read” and “supplement” what was unsaid applying non-verbal means used by communicants. Therefore, it is necessary to apply audiovisual sources as a means for learning the cultural specifics of communication of other country.

Thus, based on the aforesaid, language acquisition is closely interwoven with the concept of “authenticity”, where the term “authenticity” has gained currency in psychology due to development of humanistic and transpersonal trends in science. Several lines of research into the phenomenon of authenticity and its peculiarities can be described: study of “authenticity” as a synonym of human “ego” in the context of self-consciousness psychology (in the context of psychoanalysis by S. Freud, analytical psychology by K.-G. Jung et al.); equation of the phenomena of “authenticity” and “identity” during human growing-up, comprehension of the world around (epigenetic development theory by E. Erikson, etc.); treatment of “authenticity” as “genuineness” of a personality, its “identity” with itself (humanistic concept by A. Maslow, transpersonal ideas by S. Grof); treatment of the authenticity phenomenon by means of using the category of “authentic method of being” (ideas of psychology of being by Y. Osin, D. Leontyev et al.). The concept of “authenticity” is presented as frankness, openness and honesty of a person to himself/herself. According to the existential concept by V. Frankl, being authentic means living honestly and being oneself. That is to say, a manifestation of authenticity, “meeting with oneself” may occur and remain an individual event, if an individual does not integrate his/her feeling, gained experience into the process of his/her life.

In art, just like in science, the term “authenticity” is also used when improvisation is discussed. For example, a musician improvises and one can refer to the improvisation as authentic or not. Sometimes it happens vice versa when an action is performed freely, but it is not authentic because it is done on the basis of a template or upon external instruction, for example, by a band-master. Hence, an individual may undertake responsibility for the consequences of his/her actions, but that will not make such action authentic. Since authenticity is frankness, openness to the feeling which is manifested well via perception of music, via feeling rhythm and pace [2].

In the modern world, some inter-state contacts are being developed intensely, increasingly numerous are young people who want to receive education abroad. The international character of modern education is expressed in the growth of students’ academic mobility, in the increase of foreign student all over the world. Foreign students are increasingly numerous also in Russia.

Thus, the authenticity phenomenon is studied in detail in modern psychology and linguistics. On one hand, it is understood as a personality characteristic, the degree of

manifestation of full-value condition and maturity in decision-making, the ability to adapt in the surrounding world, etc. On the other hand, it is a methodological category, as close to real linguistic conditions (natural life), as possible. Hence, the goal of foreign language learning is obtaining the maximum harmony of all psychological and educational aspects of authenticity manifestation, which will facilitate the communicative development of students, their cognitive and emotional needs, respectively. Thus, if there is a relationship between psychological authenticity of a person and authentic perception of a foreign language, then it is topical to conduct a detailed study of personality’s psychological aspects (capabilities, motivation, etc.) during foreign language learning taking into account the academic achievements, marks and educational needs of each student.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the aforesaid, we have conducted an analysis and an empirical research involving students studying in Glazov Teachers’ Training Institute within two groups of the first and the third years of training in the amount of 20 people in each group. The students who took part in the research studied Teachers’ training education (with two skills profiles) majoring in Foreign Languages (English and German).

We have *hypothesised* that if audiovisual sources facilitating the activation of authentic traits of character are used in foreign language training process, then the professional foreign language acquisition process would be enhanced because there is an interrelationship between psychological authenticity of personality and authentic perception of a foreign language.

During the research, personality questionnaires were used for assessment of authentic characteristics of personality: methodology “Self-actualisation test” (SAT) and test of the structure of psychological defences (author: A. Tunik) [2].

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teaching foreign students in Russia has long-term traditions. Over forty years ago the first courses of Russian as a second language were opened in Moscow. In the Soviet Union students from socialist countries used to study in the leading universities. Today, the number of foreign students studying at a university is one of the university’s performance indicators.

An important factor of a successful study of a foreign student in other country’s university is his/her successful and fast adaptation, including educational one. The educational socialisation and adaptation mean the necessity to adapt to organisational culture of higher educational institutions. In usual conditions, when a student studies in his/her home country and in his/her native language, he/she is adapted to native environment and copes with problems of interacting with the environment easily. The situation is quite different when a student is in a non-native environment: simple contacts become problems for him/her, and they require significant forces. Foreign students need to

get used to a new educational system, new communication language, the international composition of training groups and classes, etc. The relevance of the adaptation problem is determined by the tasks of further teaching foreign students as future specialists. A successful adaptation facilitates fast involvement of students into the educational process; it helps in enhancing the young people's training quality.

The principal differences between foreign and native students are: the difference of mechanisms and qualitative characteristics of the youth socialisation process in various countries and regions, differences in the activity of educational institutions, in the level of educational and vocational training of youth; qualitative specificity of the social status of gender and age youth groups; differences in the area, level, content and forms of manifestation of social activity of youth; differences in culture, specific behaviour models, in traditions of education and bringing up specific for a nation.

Besides, there are some specific problems of educational socialisation of foreign students in Russia:

I. Linguistic problems of obtaining knowledge and skills of the main activity:

- 1) The problem of learning practical Russian;
- 2) The problem of learning the major language (English, German, and ethnic minority languages, e.g. Udmurt languages);
- 3) The problem of understanding the teacher's speech (it becomes actual at lessons on the major syllabuses within mixed groups with Russian students).

II. Ethnocultural problems of interpersonal interaction and interaction with the social environment:

- 1) The problem of intercultural communication, daily communication with Russians and with other foreigners;
- 2) The problem of access to information in one's native language.

As we have already noted, the main difficulty in the educational socialisation is insufficient command of Russian. Generally, only by the end of the third year foreign students achieve any significant success in the language acquisition, obtain sufficient word stock and begin using their knowledge actively. The language barrier shifts the educational process to the background. It results in overload with educational materials and accumulation of a "snowball" of incomprehensible and non-mastered amount of information. The language difficulties prevent from being "included" into the new culture (acquisition of the basic norms and values of the new environment).

Students from different countries (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia) study in at Glazov Teachers' Training Institute. We asked the departments to analyse the process of educational socialisation of foreign students at the departments. The analysis of the materials provided by the departments allows making the following conclusions:

1) Adaptation in the educational system and educational environment of a department/higher educational institution proceeds, on the one hand, naturally: during study of any subject of the curriculum in Russian. This adaptation mechanism is important and indispensable because it is natural and inevitable. However, it is fairly difficult to organise training in a group consisting of students with different knowledge level and belonging to different cultures. When training a multicultural group, a teacher shall create conditions for the integration of a personality into the multicultural environment. He/she faces a challenge of forming a group with its internal polyculture and inimitative unity from individuals with ethnocultural differences. One of key points here is developing tolerance, indulgence, ability to accept a previously unfamiliar culture and learning how to communicate with its representatives. Inclusion into a multicultural environment is carried out within a Russian language course organised specially for foreign students, within subjects "History", "History and culture of Udmurtia".

2) The main advantage of split-level multicultural groups is the students' possibility to learn more about other ethnoses, their culture, customs during usual communication, within a joint educational process. The atmosphere and spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation are created in such groups successfully.

3) Courses on history and culture of Russia and Udmurtia are necessary for successful and fast adaptation of foreign students. They would precede the beginning of training in the higher educational institution, would be of preparatory nature and would familiarise with peculiarities and traditions of the Russian educational system.

At the initial stage of our empirical research, we compared the academic performance indicators in both groups to check group identity using Mann-Whitney U-test. The results have confirmed that the groups differ in terms of academic performance in foreign language learning in the context of those subjects where audiovisual training techniques were applied. The indicators looked as follows: $U_{emp}=123$, which is a significant difference at the significance level $p < 0,05$ ($U_{cr}=138$), at $n=20$.

Then, to check the intensity and direction of the correlation relationship between indicators of some scales of SAT tests, the structure of psychological defences and results of the authenticity of language perception by the students (the current scores put by the teacher were analysed), Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used. The indicators are specified in Tables 1, 2.

Table 1. CORRELATION RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SELF-ACTUALISATION AND AUTHENTIC PERCEPTION OF LANGUAGE

Authentic language perception	The self-actualisation intensity testing results			
	Self-support	Cognitive needs	Spontaneity	Time awareness
1 st year	0.109	-0.356	0.034	-0.302
3 rd year	0.428	0.309	0.320	0.167

Note: $p < 0,05$ ($r_s = 0,444$), at $n=20$

As seen from Table 1, there is a strong direct relationship between authentic perception of language and indicators of “Self-support” scale in case of third-year students. That is to say, the more fluent the command of non-abridged materials (texts, audio, video, etc.) designed for native speakers and taken from “real life” is, the more a person is inclined to manifest the personal psychological characteristics associated with independence in building life goals, ability to manifest openness to all new, “being not afraid of difficulties”. Judging by the results of correlation relationships with scales “spontaneity” and “time awareness”, senior students are free from any fear of behaving in natural and hang loose way, demonstrating their emotions to associates based on high cognitive need of acquiring knowledge about the world around. However, first-year students demonstrate an inverse relationship between the language perception authenticity indicators and manifestation of cognitive need, which means they lack inner freedom, self-confidence (expressed in unreadiness to make choice in their own life, in absence of inner sense).

From the data presented in Table 2 one can see a strong inverse relationship in the results of first-year students between authentic perception of text and adaptive psychological defences. At the same time a similar situation is characteristic of senior students, but those with non-adaptive defences. Put it otherwise, for first-year students learning a foreign language via audiovisual sources is associated with focusing (strong attention concentration) at lessons and blocking (avoiding) any accompanying emotions, in consequence of which a feeling of guilt may develop in them (dissatisfaction with their results and lack of confidence in the correctness of selection of the major).

Table 2. CORRELATION RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MANIFESTATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENCES AND AUTHENTIC PERCEPTION OF LANGUAGE

Authentic language perception	Results of testing for the psychological defence intensity			
	Non-adaptive	Adaptive	Defences distorting the image	Self-degrading
1 st year	0.401	-0.341	0.207	0.433
3 rd year	-0.368	0.309	-0.218	0.016

Note: $p < 0,05$ ($r_s = 0,444$), at $n=20$

Positive correlation relationship with defences “distorting the image” indicates the first-year students’ tendency to think dichotomically based on the pattern “correct/incorrect”, “good/bad”, imaging themselves and the associates in an explicitly positive or negative context. It means inability to integrate their and other people’s traits into integral images, which is caused by high subjective control and anxiety due to adaptation to new conditions of the educational institution and the fellow students. As for third-year students, for them the higher authentic language perception is, the stronger adaptive psychological defences (in the form of humour focusing on funny or ironical aspects of the conflict (stress) mitigating any emotional stress) are manifested. One of the types of adaptive defences is introspection which means an ability to see oneself from outside which facilitates understanding the reaction of other people to oneself and changing one’s behaviour to socially approved one.

V. CONCLUSION

The research has shown that the authentic personality traits are achieved as one masters a foreign language. They are almost not present at the initial stage of education in a higher educational institution. Hence, to make the language acquisition process more successful, one should not forget about individual psychological personality traits.

It shall be admitted, that the modern Russian foreign language teaching methodology is focused on using didacticised texts created specially for training purposes and designed on the studied lexical and grammatical material and having informative nature. Such texts allow teaching rational extraction of specific factual information on the level of meanings. A technique of “forming a setting to meaning content” (“printing”) [5] is efficient for perception and understanding of a text. An important aspect is self-correction of mistakes where self-correction differs from correction of a mistake after the teacher.

Our research results do not describe all psychological and methodological conditions ensuring productivity of the professional foreign language acquisition process. Taking into account personal traits and authenticity is just one of the factors affecting the formation of professional skills. We believe that the solution of this methodological problem will enable to significantly supplement the existing concept of what the foreign language text understanding is, how the text understanding process shall be implemented, what understanding correctness criteria exist and how this important cognitive skill can be taught to make the process of foreign language acquisition by foreign students efficient.

In conclusion, it shall be noted that the more authentic and able a student is to accept the value of opinions of his/her fellow students, his own opinions and opinions of the society as a whole, the more harmonic he/she is in the verbal activity (both oral and written). The research has shown that he/she can correct any mistakes made because he/she is psychologically stable in a situation where he/she is being assessed by others.

The role of a teacher understanding the call of the times and society is important for forming and successful developing an authentic personality in a continuously changing multicultural environment, and for active intercultural communication. In teaching a foreign language it is necessary to select and use authentic texts which not only contain educational material, but also familiarise the students with non-verbal communication means and enable being involved in a real-life communication situation.

In terms of psychology, the process of communication by means of reading is not confined to the text understanding but continues by the reader’s making some decision resulting in enhancement of his/her personality.

REFERENCES

- [1] Falkova, Y. G. (2007). *Mezhkulturnaya kommunikatsiya v osnovnykh ponyatiyakh i opredeleniyakh* [Intercultural communication in the basic concepts and definitions]. Saint Petersburg, S.Petersburg State University. (In Russ.)

- [2] Gubina, S. T. (2018). *Diagnostika i korrektsiya lichnosti s pomoschyu muzykalnykh sredstv vozdeistviya* [Diagnostics and correction of personality using musical technique]. Moscow, BIBLIO-GLOBUS Publishers. (In Russ.)
- [3] Kiyan, O. N. (2019). *Autentichnost' kak metodicheskaya kategoriya v obucheniye inostrannomu yazyku* [Authenticity as a methodological category in teaching a foreign language]. <http://files/konf/antropos/SECTION/4/KIYAN.htm> (Reference date: 09/06/2019). (In Russ.)
- [4] *Mezhkulturnoye vzaimodeistviye v sovremennom obschestve: osobennosti, tendentsii* [Intercultural exchange in the modern society: peculiarities and tendencies] (2019). <https://works.doklad.ru/view/BlejPqnEDY.html> (Reference date: 09/06/2019). (In Russ.)
- [5] Osin, Y. N. (2015). Kategoriya otchuzhdeniya v psikhologii obrazovaniya: istoriya i perspektivy [The concept of alienation in educational psychology: History and perspectives.]. *Kulturo-istoricheskaya psikhologiya* [Cultural-Historical Psychology], 11 (4): 79–88. (In Russ.). DOI: 10.17759/chp.2015110407
- [6] Sadokhin, A. P. (2008). Mezhkulturnyye baryery i puti ikh preodoleniya v protsesse kommunikatsiyi [Intercultural barriers and methods of overcoming them during communication]. *Observatoriya Kultury* [Observatory of Culture], 2: 26–32. (In Russ.)
- [7] Shekhovtseva, L. F. (2003). Samootsenka, autentichnost' i ljubov' k sebe [Self-appraisal, authenticity and self-love]. *Konsultativnaya psikhologiya i psikhoterapiya* [Counselling Psychology and Psychiatry], 3: 87–103. (In Russ.)
- [8] Slepkin, A. Y. (2011). Sovremennoye polikulturnoye sotsialnoye i obrazovatelnoye prostranstvo [Modern audiovisual and information technologies in education]. *Aktualnyye voprosy sovremennoy pedagogiki* [Topical issues of the modern education science]: proceedings of International Scientific Conference (Ufa, June, 2011). Ufa, Summer: 132–134. (In Russ.)
- [9] *The modern polycultural social and educational environment* (2019). HELPIKS.ORG. <https://helpiks.org/6-32751.html> (Reference date: 09/06/2019).