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Using TV shows in language teaching: Russian and overseas experience

Статья посвящена вопросу о применении телешоу в обучении иностранному языку. Рассмотрена роль телешоу, дифференцированы понятия ‘TV show’, ‘TV series’, ‘TV programme’ в английском языке. Изучены способы использования телешоу на занятиях по иностранному языку преподавателями из разных стран. Некоторые приемы и идеи описаны в статье и обобщены в таблице.

Ключевые слова: обучение иностранному языку, телешоу, эдьютейнмент, Talk Show Method

The study explores ways of incorporating TV shows in class for language learners. First, the role of using TV shows in the classroom is identified. Then the term “TV show” is clarified since its meaning differs in Russian and English languages. Also, various teaching methods and techniques from teachers around the world have been analysed and compared. Some further tips and ideas for efficient use of TV shows are provided. The findings indicate that TV shows can become a useful resource for teachers to achieve communicative competence development.

Keywords: language teaching, TV show, edutainment, Talk Show Method

There are times when students worry: “What if I make a mistake while speaking?”, “Why is it difficult to remember the words?”, “I can’t hear the native speakers’ speech well, they speak so fast...” and more. According to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001a) [14], developing communicative competence plays an important role in learning a language. Teacher’s awareness of components that comprise communicative competence, various methods and approaches to teaching a language can be very useful when working on learners’ concerns. Just as important is taking into consideration the time and circumstances students live in. Nowadays, a lot of activities are performed with the use of technology: ordering goods, exchanging information, creating art and even taking notes. Moreover, technological progress keeps moving forward, and students do, too.

It has been stated by the UK’s *Online Nation 2021 Report* that children aged 7-8 spent nearly three hours a day online in September 2020. And children of 15-16 years old spent nearly five hours [8]. In another study, it was found that female college students spend an average of 600 minutes on a cell-phone every day and males spend 459 minutes [9]. Many of us own a mobile phone and “half of children own a mobile phone by the age of ten, and nearly all children do so by the age of 13” [9]. Thus, this can become an opportunity to merge teaching with technology.

For example, in 1973, in a report for the National Geographic Society, Robert Hayman first used the concept of “edutainment”. Researcher N. Kobzeva defines edutainment as “a learning technology, considered as a combination of modern technical and didactic teaching tools, which is based on the concept of learning through entertainment” [10] (*translated by O. F.*). And if the meaning of the first part, which is education, is clear in most cases, “the second part of this concept by different authors is understood differently: this is a game, a digital content, creativity, and living in the situations asked” [3] (*translated by O. F.*). This study considers TV shows to be one of the examples of the “entertainment” part.

In this research by the term ‘TV show’ a TV program is understood. TV show is an authentic audiovisual material and with their help learners have a unique chance to listen to and explore native speakers’ speech’ models [11]. Besides, students’ motivation can increase when using TV shows in the process of learning [4]. On top of that, mass media, with TV shows included, can become a source to help immerse learners into the real language and, furthermore, help develop all components of communicative competence [1].

However, the search result on e-library has shown that there is less research on the topic of TV shows. Many works consider using movies, songs and TV series. Furthermore, some studies devoted to TV shows oftentimes were referring to the ‘TV series’ concept.

This paper presents a comparison of language teachers’ experiences using TV shows in the classroom. In addition, an overview of useful activities is provided.

Such analysis can be beneficial to teachers who plan on incorporating authentic TV shows into their lessons.

Methodology. This study involved comparing and analysing 4 articles on the topic of using TV shows in the language learning environment. The material chosen allows to take a look into various teaching practices by teachers all around the world. There are many researchers who dwelled on implementing TV shows into the lessons. The current study obtains data from teachers who work in different countries. On the whole, researchers' works from Russia, the UK, Malaysia, Indonesia were studied.

It is important to distinguish the terms: "TV show", "TV series", "TV programme". After analysing the dictionaries, it was identified that TV show is the synonym of a TV programme in British English, however, the latter is rarely used. `TV series` or `series` is "*a set of television or radio broadcasts on the same subject or using the same characters but in different situations*" and TV programme or TV show is "*a programme that is entertaining rather than serious:*" [2]. In American English `TV series` can be also called `TV shows`. Sometimes TV programme is referred to as "game show", "chat show" (BrE) or "talk show" (AmE) and so on depending on its purpose.

It is worth mentioning that according to language teaching methods when working with TV shows, the same rules as working with videos are applied. It includes the "pre", "during" and "post" watching stages [6].

Let us have a look at some ideas suggested by Jade Glennon from the UK. First activity she writes about is watching the clip with the sound turned off. Also, this technique is called "Silent viewing" and it means that students get a chance to guess what the video is about without actually hearing the audio in it. Next, she mentions the "Favourite lines" activity which includes finding the favourite line in the show, along with noting down new language. Then, she talks about creating a social media profile for a character from the show. And on top of that the "Design the book cover" activity proposes designing a book cover for the programme [7]. This activity can be transformed into designing a poster for the TV show.

Another researcher, A. Dwinesa explores various ways of implementing the talk show into the classroom. One of the activities pointed out is to brainstorm questions that can be asked on the topic. However, the questions should be the ones that cannot be answered with a one-word [5].

Other researchers mention that language is one of the most important aspects to analyse when talking about genre in television. This brings us to the idea that with the help of TV shows native speakers' language can be studied and analysed by learners.

Russian researcher D. D. Dmitrieva observes the use of television in Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) class and she states that after watching the programme students can be assessed on understanding the content by answering questions. And in developing speaking skills she suggests using discussions, making projects, creat-

ing the TV programme of your own about a certain topic and so on [4]. In addition, students can create their own questions or quizzes to demonstrate comprehension of the content.

Besides various activities proposed by the teachers, there is also a method developed to work with talks shows specifically. It is called “The Talk Show Method” (or TSM) and it was developed by a Malaysian researcher Vahid Nimehchisalem.

This method is about turning the lesson into the TV talk show and it consists of 3 main stages: 1) before the show; 2) during the show; 3) after the show.

During the first stage the topic is assigned. The students can also choose it themselves if they want. It will depend on the number of students in class and the course objectives. At this stage students are also acquainted with the examples of how a talks show can be run by watching some episodes of the chosen tv show. Also, this stage requires planning how the show will develop: who the guests will be, what material will be used. The plan should be reviewed by classmates, then together with the teacher, they agree on the final outcome. If students want, the talk show performance can be recorded [12].

After the show stage comes the part where students carry out the lesson in format of the talk show. This part has a beginning and end as the real talk show. And during it, students ask questions, share information, do quizzes and so on [12].

After the show, the content of the show can be discussed, teacher may ask some follow-up questions, complete worksheets. If the video of the lesson was recorded, it can be uploaded on YouTube. Also, students can share their experiences from such a lesson in their journals [12].

There is also the study that proves the positive effect for learning in using subtitles of the language that is being learned [13]. It means that the episode can be subtitled beforehand or it can also become the task for students of creating subtitles for the chosen video or making up new ones, probably adding the comedic element as well.

Results. In the fast-developing world using edutainment, and TV shows in particular, when teaching a language can be a great way of boosting students’ motivation and developing numerous skills. It was observed in the beginning of the study, that there is not much research done on the topic of using TV shows in the classroom. A great deal of papers found on the Internet is devoted to ways of teaching with movies and songs. In this study, the focus is on TV shows only and different ways of working with them proposed by teachers from different parts of the world.

Having analysed the works that observe using activities for TV shows (D. D. Dmitrieva, A. Dwinesa, J. Glennon, V. Nimehchisalem), the table (see *Table*) containing different ways of working with TV shows was made. Some activities proposed by the author are written in the “Additional TV show activities” column.

Table – Activities that can be used when working with TV shows

	TV show activities	Additional TV show activities
Before watching	Predicting what will happen [7], brainstorming questions that can't be answered with a one word [5]	Creating a profile for yourself as a character in the show, analysing the vocabulary
During watching	Watch without sound [7], working with replies: filling the gaps, repeating, guessing the blanks and so on)	Answering instead of the guests, creating subtitles, highlighting information: who said it, dates, facts, numbers and etc.
After watching	Creating TV show of their own, topic discussion, project [4], reflection [12], working with replies: choosing the favourite line [7]; creating social media profile for a TV show character [7], making a video and uploading it to the Internet [12]	Creating a poster for the TV show, comprehension checking questions and quizzes, analysing the vocabulary

The *Table* illustrates the activities that could be used during different stages of working with TV shows. From the table it can be seen that activities for all of the 3 stages were mentioned by the teachers. The proposed activities are aimed at developing different skills such as speaking, writing, listening and reading. Overall, these findings prove that there are many ways to incorporate TV shows in language teaching.

The evidence suggests that implementation of TV shows still requires further exploration and finding ways for it to be used a source of developing various language skills.

Conclusion

Prior studies have proved that authentic materials have a positive impact for communicative competence development. However, these studies focused primarily on using movies or songs. In this study the implementation of TV shows was observed.

As a result, experiences of Russian and overseas teachers were compared. In addition, the list of useful activities was provided. The study indicates that TV shows can be as beneficial as movies or songs and many different activities can be created

with TV shows. These findings can be helpful for language teachers as well as for further work on the topic.

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