

Multimedia and EFL learners' Intercultural Awareness

*Boukhemis Lina**

*University of Algiers 2- Abou
El Kacem Saad Allah, (Algeria)*

lina.boukhemis@univ-alger2.dz

Hamitouche Fatiha

*University of Algiers 2- Abou El Kacem
Saad Allah, (Algeria)*

f_hamitouche@yahoo.com

Abstract

The present research focuses on the incorporation of multimedia tools in EFL classrooms. This research aims at studying the influence of multimedia tools on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. For this purpose, research questionnaires and interviews are used for data collection. The informants taking part in this study are thirty EFL learners and six EFL teachers. The results demonstrate the influence of multimedia tools on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Moreover, the findings shed light on significant challenges and provide practical suggestions to apply in EFL classrooms. Finally, this research's findings shed light on future research to be conducted in this field.

Article info

Received

07 June 2021

Accepted

08 September 2021

Keyword:

- ✓ *Multimedia*
- ✓ *Intercultural awareness*
- ✓ *EFL classrooms*
- ✓ *EFL teachers*
- ✓ *EFL learners*

* Corresponding author

1. Introduction

Intercultural awareness represents a significant part of foreign language learning. EFL learners need to develop their intercultural awareness to reach communicative competence, which is essential to engage in intercultural communications without any problems. The lack of intercultural awareness may lead to communication breakdowns or pragmatic failures. Thus, interlocutors may feel embarrassed, underestimated, or angry. The lack of intercultural awareness may cause social relationship problems. Therefore, EFL researchers are seeking the best strategies to develop their learners' intercultural awareness.

Recently, multimedia saw a critical emergence in the field of education. Multimedia tools represent an option among different possibilities to apply. Multimedia represents the combination of several media at the same time. Thus, this combination may be helpful since it provides meaning through several resources of information. In other words, these different resources may satisfy EFL learners' different learning styles, reinforce meaning, and explain ambiguities. Thus, applying multimedia tools to develop EFL learners' intercultural awareness may have a significant influence.

Therefore, this research article seeks to analyze multimedia tools' impact on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. For this purpose, it studies different researchers' viewpoints and arguments. Then, it deals

with EFL teachers and EFL learners to analyze their perceptions regarding the multimedia impact on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. This research aims at encouraging the use of multimedia to develop EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Of course, multimedia use may be either integrated into EFL classrooms or applied at home. Nevertheless, both EFL teachers and EFL learners need to notice the multimedia impact on EFL learners' intercultural awareness.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Multimedia

Multimedia refers to "information in the form of graphics, audio, video, or movies. A multimedia document contains a media element other than plain text" (Greenlaw & Hepp, 1999, p. 44). In this context, multimedia offers a "multi-sensory experience" by presenting information through more than one mode of information. Literature provides evidence that words and pictures combination increases learners' understanding (Mayer, 2001). Providing information through more than one mode of information is seen as an approach to encourage learners' diversified learning strategies (Morrison, Sweeney, & Heffernan, 2003). In other words, multimedia tools satisfy EFL learners' different learning styles and paces. To conclude, multimedia tools provide information through different media and in different formats, which help EFL learners in their learning process.

Multimedia resources develop learners' understanding, learning process, reasoning and communication (Scaife & Rogers, 1996). According to cognitive studies, 88% out of 94% of learned knowledge refers to information processed through visual processing information channel (WANG, 1992). Thus, the visual processing channel is the most "informed" channel. Multimedia tools increase EFL learners' motivation since they provide "... authenticity to the classroom situation, reinforcing for students the direct relation between the language classroom and the outside world" (Brinton, 2001, p. 461). In other words, multimedia tools provide EFL learners with authentic situations of language use. Authentic language use situations represent natural instances of the language (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1993).

2.2 Intercultural Awareness

Intercultural awareness refers to the individuals' discernment of cultures' equality. Actually, intercultural sensitivity refers to the willingness to comprehend another culture. In comparison, intercultural awareness represents the acquisition of "cultural conventions" that shape individuals' society way of speaking and thinking. In contrast, intercultural adroitness represents the "skills" required to behave according to specific cultural conventions (Chen & Starosta, 1998).

Intercultural awareness implies considering others' world's conceptions and perspectives (Byram, 2000). In other words, EFL learners need to fully understand their own culture, the target

culture, the differences and similarities between both cultures. For this purpose, EFL learners need to be provided with real language use situations that demonstrate native speakers' interactions. One possible way is using authentic materials that provide native speakers' concrete situations of language use. Multimedia tools cover text, audio, video, and animations. Thus, multimedia tools refer to authentic materials.

The word "authentic" in EFL classrooms represents "language samples ... that reflect a naturalness of form and an appropriateness of cultural and situational context that would be found in the language as used by the native speakers" (Rogers and Medley, 1988, p. 468). In other words, authentic materials provide language use instances in specific social contexts, thereby increasing EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Authentic materials are said to develop aural language (Thanajaro, 2000). Further, authentic materials became known for their significant impact on developing EFL learners' communicative competence (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Wilcox et al., 1999). Authentic materials refer to materials that provide real-life examples of language use like videos, magazines, audio, newspapers, and animations. These materials refer to multimedia tools. Thus, multimedia tools significantly impact EFL learners' intercultural awareness.

3. Experimental Study

3.1 Research Question

This research article seeks to answer the following research question: Do multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness? Such a research question aims at identifying the potential impact of multimedia tools on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. For this

purpose, two research instruments are used.

3.2 Sample

This research deals with six EFL teachers and thirty first-grade EFL learners at the English department of BADJI Mokhtar University Annaba, Algeria. The participants' selection uses a simple random sampling technique.

Table N°1. EFL Teachers Participants' Characteristics

	Gender	Experience	Technological knowledge
Teacher 1	Male	15 years	Advanced
Teacher 2	Female	18 years	Advanced
Teacher 3	Female	25 years	Advanced
Teacher 4	Female	23years	Advanced
Teacher 5	Male	30 years	Average
Teacher 6	Female	30 years	Average

Table N°.2 EFL Learners Participants' Characteristics

EFL Learners	30 EFL learners
Male	14
Female	16
Grade	First grade students at the department of English, University of Badji Mokhtar Annaba
Learning Disabilities	/
Behavioural Disabilities	/
Psycho-neurological Disabilities	/
Technological Knowledge	Advanced

3.3 Research Objectives

The present research focuses on multimedia and EFL learners' intercultural awareness. This research aims at demonstrating any potential influence of multimedia tools on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Besides, it seeks to identify how multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Moreover, it attempts to depict EFL learners' and EFL teachers' opinions

regarding multimedia influence on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Last but not least, this research aims at identifying multimedia pros and cons.

3.4 Research Instruments

Research instruments represent the different instruments used in a study to collect data from the participants. Thus, this research opts for two research

instruments for data collection, namely questionnaires and interviews.

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are used to collect qualitative data to answer the research question: Do multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness? Interviews are used to collect data from EFL teachers. This research opts for unstructured interviews to encourage EFL teachers to provide their personal opinions and experiences without being guided or limited. Interviews represent a "face-to-face" interaction between the interviewer and interviewee where the interviewer collects data, experiences, and information from the part of the interviewee (Cresswell, 2012).

3.4.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are used to collect quantitative data to answer the research question: Do multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness? Questionnaires are used to provide data from EFL learners. A "questionnaire" is defined as the research tool through which a researcher collects "primary data" (Manion et al., 2011).

3.5 Procedure

The present research uses a semi-experimental procedure. The study focuses on multimedia and EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Moreover, this research went over three phases.

Phase 1:

The researcher explains the concepts of multimedia and intercultural awareness to the participants to get familiar with them. Then, the research provides multimedia

tools like (video, tapes, and animations). The EFL learners participating in the study are exposed to multimedia tools for six weeks.

Phase 2:

Then, the researcher provides the EFL learners participating in this research with the first research instrument that is the questionnaire to fill in.

Phase 3:

The researcher collects data from EFL teachers through the use of interviews. EFL teachers are interviewed separately, and each interview lasts for 30 minutes.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Interviews Results

Interviews results represent qualitative data. Interviews results reflect teachers' opinions regarding multimedia influence on EFL learners' intercultural awareness.

Table N°3. EFL Teachers Attitudes toward Multimedia Tools and EFL Learners' Intercultural Awareness

Theme	Frequency	Percentage	Sum of the answers	Mean	Standard deviation
Multimedia use in EFL classrooms	04	66, 66%	35	5	1
Multimedia tools to teach oral expression	04	66, 66%			
Multimedia tools are helpful for EFL learners	06	100%			
Multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness	04	66, 66%			
Multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness through combining several media	05	83, 33%			
Video and audio combination efficiency	06	100%			
The real-life situation of language use	06	100%			

Table N°3 shows EFL teachers' interviews' results. According to table N°3 results, four EFL teachers out of the six participants (66, 66%) are used to integrate multimedia tools in their EFL classrooms from time to time. The second interview's question results reveal that four EFL teachers out of the six participants (66, 66%) are used to integrate multimedia tools into their EFL classrooms; teach oral expression. But it may be helpful for grammar, text study, study skills and civilization courses. Further, the third interview's question results show that the six EFL teachers (100%) consider that multimedia tools represent valuable learning materials to EFL learners. The six EFL teachers view that multimedia tools help develop EFL learners' four language skills.

According to the fourth interview's question results, four EFL teachers out of the six EFL teachers participating in this study (66, 66%) agree that multimedia tools significantly influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Then, the fifth interview's question results show that 5 EFL teachers out of the six participants (83,33%) claim that multimedia tools may influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness through the combination of more than one mode through videos and audio simultaneously, by providing authentic situations of language use. According to the interview's sixth question results, all the six EFL teachers (100%) agree that the combination of videos and audio is the most effective. In the interview's seventh question results, the six EFL teachers (100%) view that

multimedia tools significantly influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness because they provide language use examples from real-life situations. Thus, all the teachers participating approve multimedia tools' impact on EFL learners' intercultural awareness.

To conclude, the EFL teachers participating in this study share positive attitudes toward multimedia tools integration in their EFL classrooms, and they do not show any reluctance for using multimedia tools. Moreover, the EFL teachers participating in this study consider that multimedia tools are helpful for EFL learners and may positively impact EFL learners' intercultural

awareness through the combination of more than one medium of information. Moreover, multimedia tools tend to provide real-life situations of language use. Thus, EFL learners will be exposed to authentic situations of communicative events. The sum of the answers is 35 ($\Sigma=35$). The mean is 5 ($\bar{x}=10$), and the standard deviation is 1 ($\sigma=1$).

4.2 Questionnaire's Results

The Questionnaire's results represent quantitative data measured with SPSS software. They are used with EFL learners to analyze their opinions regarding multimedia influence on their intercultural awareness.

4.2.1 Are you familiar with multimedia tools?

Table N°4. EFL learners and multimedia tools

Sum of the answers	Yes	No	Neutral	Mean	Standard deviation
30	30 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10	17,32

According to table N°4 results, Thirty EFL learners are participating in this study. All the thirty EFL learners participating in this study (100%) claim that they are familiar

with multimedia tools. The sum of the answers is 30 ($\Sigma=30$). The mean is 10 ($\bar{x}=10$) and the standard deviation is 17,32 ($\sigma=17,32$).

4.2.2 Are you used to deal with multimedia tools in your classrooms?

Table N°5. Multimedia tools in EFL classrooms

Sum of the answers	Usually	Rarely	Never	Mean	Standard deviation
30 (100%)	20 (66, 66%)	06 (20%)	04 (13, 33%)	10	8,71

The sum of the answers is 30 ($\Sigma=30$). According to table N°5 results, twenty EFL learners out of the thirty participants

(66, 66%) claim that they usually deal with multimedia tools in their classrooms. However, six EFL learners out of the

thirty participants (20%) declare that they rarely use multimedia tools in their classrooms. Simultaneously, four EFL learners (13, 33%) report that they have never used multimedia tools in their EFL classrooms. The mean is 10 ($\bar{x}=10$) and the standard deviation is 8, 71($\sigma = 8, 71$).

4.2.3 If yes, which modules?

Thirty EFL learners are participating in this study. The third question results show that twenty participants out of the thirty EFL learners (66, 66%) are used to deal

with multimedia tools in oral expression, grammar, study skills, and civilisation sessions. However, six EFL learners (20%) claim that they have used multimedia tools in oral expression and text study sessions. Whereas, four EFL learners out of the thirty participants (13, 33%) do not provide any answers. The sum of the answers equals 30($\Sigma= 30$). The mean is 10 ($\bar{x}=10$) and the standard deviation is 8, 71($\sigma = 8, 71$).

4.2.4 Do you like using multimedia tools in your EFL classrooms?

Table N°6. EFL learners' attitudes

Sum of the answers	Yes	No	Neutral	Mean	Standard deviation
30 (100%)	26 (86, 66%)	04 (13, 33%)	0 (0%)	10	14

According to table N°6 results, the sum of the answers is 30 ($\Sigma= 30$). Twenty-six EFL learners out of the thirty participants (86, thirty participants (13, 33%) report that they do not like multimedia tools in their

66%) claim that they like using multimedia tools in the classroom. However, four EFL learners out of the EFL classrooms. The mean is 10 ($\bar{x}=10$) and the standard deviation is 14($\sigma = 14$).

4.2.5 Do you consider that multimedia tools influence your intercultural awareness?

Table N°7. Multimedia tools and EFL learners' intercultural awareness

Sum of the answers	Yes	No	Neutral	Mean	Standard deviation
30 (100%)	25 (83, 33%)	05 (16, 66%)	0 (0%)	10	13,22

The sum of the answers equals 30 ($\Sigma= 30$). Table N°7 results indicate the twenty-five EFL learners of the thirty participants (83, 33%) report that multimedia tools significantly affect their intercultural awareness. However, five EFL learners

out of the thirty participants (16, 66%) view multimedia tools as not affecting their intercultural awareness. The mean is 10 ($\bar{x}=10$) and the standard deviation is 13, 22 ($\sigma = 13, 22$).

4.2.6 How does multimedia influence your intercultural awareness?

Table N°8. Multimedia tools impact EFL learners' intercultural awareness

Sum of the answers	More than one mode of Information	Authentic situations of language use	Neutral	Mean	Standard deviation
30 (100%)	20 (66, 66%)	10 (33, 33%)	0 (0%)	10	10

According to table N°8 results, twenty EFL learners out of the thirty participants (66, 66%) view multimedia tools as influencing their intercultural awareness by combining more than one mode of information through videos, animations. In addition, ten EFL learners out of the thirty

(33, 33%) claim that multimedia tools develop their intercultural awareness by providing authentic language use situations. The sum of the answers is 30 ($\Sigma=30$). The mean is 10 ($\bar{x}=10$) and the standard deviation is 10 ($\sigma=10$).

4.2.7 Do you encourage the use of multimedia for EFL learners?

Table N°9. Multimedia use in EFL classrooms

Sum of the answers	Yes	No	Neutral	Mean	Standard deviation
30 (100%)	28 (93, 33%)	02 (6, 66%)	0 (0%)	10	15,62

The sum of the answers is 30 ($\Sigma=30$). According to the last question results, twenty-eight EFL learners out of the thirty participants (93, 33%) encourage multimedia use. However, Two EFL learners out of the thirty participants (6, 66%) do not feel the need to promote multimedia usage. The mean is 10 ($\bar{x}=10$) and the standard deviation is 15, 62 ($\sigma=15,62$).

4.3 Discussion

This research deals with multimedia tools and EFL learners' intercultural awareness. This study's main objective is to scrutinize the multimedia influence on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. For

this purpose, teachers' interviews and learners' questionnaires were used. Thirty EFL learners and six EFL teachers are participating in this study.

First and foremost, the interviews' results represent qualitative data. However, the questionnaires' results represent quantitative data. According to interviews' results, EFL teachers are not used to integrating multimedia tools in their EFL classrooms regularly. However, they consider that multimedia tools are helpful for EFL learners. It is essential to mention that EFL teachers believe that multimedia tools significantly influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness.

In other words, EFL teachers argue that multimedia tools may provide authentic situations of language use, thereby developing EFL learners' intercultural awareness. EFL teachers claim that combining more than one source of information may be fruitful and effective in enhancing EFL learners' learning outcomes and developing their intercultural awareness. Secondly, the questionnaire's results indicate that EFL learners are not used for multimedia tools regularly.

Nevertheless, they like and enjoy using multimedia in their EFL classrooms. Moreover, questionnaires results show that EFL learners approve that multimedia tools significantly influence their intercultural awareness. According to EFL learners, using different media of information enhances their chances to develop their intercultural awareness.

Furthermore, EFL learners view that combining audio, videos, and animation represents practical teaching support that develops intercultural awareness. Thus, EFL teachers and EFL learners encourage multimedia tools to develop learners' intercultural awareness. Therefore, this research's findings reveal that multimedia tools positively impact EFL learners' intercultural awareness.

5. CONCLUSION

Recently multimedia is becoming significantly popular among university learners. Thus, this research focuses on analyzing the eventual influence of multimedia on EFL learners' intercultural

awareness. This research article attempted to answer the following research question: Do multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness? Therefore, unstructured interviews and questionnaires were selected for data collection. According to this research's findings, multimedia tools significantly influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness.

Moreover, the findings indicate that EFL teachers and EFL learners encourage multimedia for developing EFL learners' intercultural awareness. According to the results, multimedia tools provide authentic situations of language use. Thus, it enhances EFL learners' intercultural awareness, language appropriateness, and language learning in general. Moreover, the results reveal that using more than one mode of information represents a fruitful and effective way to enhance EFL learners' intercultural awareness and the language learning process in general. To conclude, this research article highlighted the positive multimedia influence on EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Furthermore, this research sheds light on the importance of multimedia tools for language learners. However, this research gave birth to further researchers in the field.

6. Bibliography List :

Brinton, D. M. (2001). The use of media in language teaching. In Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.),

Teaching English as a second or foreign language (pp. 459-475). Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.

Byram, M. (2000). Assessing intercultural competence in language teaching. *Sproforum*, 18 (6), 8-13.

Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1998). A review of the concept of intercultural awareness. *Human Communication*, 2 (1), 27-54.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Guariento, W., & Morley, J. (2001). Text and task authenticity in the EFL classroom. *ELT Journal*, 55 (4), 347 - 353.

Greenlaw, R., & Hepp, Eß. (1999). *In-line / On-line: Fundamentals of the Internet and the World Wide Web*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Manion, L., Cohen, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7th ed.). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203720967>

Mayer, R. (2001). *Multimedia Learning*. Boston: Cambridge University Press.

Morrison, M., Sweeney, A., & Hefferman, T. (2003). Learning styles of on-campus and off- campus marketing students: The challenge for marketing educators. In *Journal of Marketing Education*, 25, 3, 208-217.

Rogers, C., & Medley, F. (1988). Language with a purpose: Using authentic materials in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 21, 467-478.

Scaife, M., and Rogers, Y. (1996). External Cognition: How Do Graphical Representations Work.

International Journal of Human Computer Studies, 45, 185-213.

Thanajaro, M. (2000). *Using authentic materials to develop listening comprehension in the English as a foreign language classroom*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia

Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia.

WANG, A. S. (1992). *Cognitive psychology*. Beijing: Pecking University Press.

Wilcox, B., Morrison, T., & Oaks, D. (1999). Computer corpora and authentic texts: Toward more effective language teaching. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 38(4), 415-423.

7. Appendices

A. Interview

1. Are you used to integrate multimedia tools in your classrooms?
2. If yes, for which modules?
3. Do you think that multimedia tools are helpful for EFL learners?
4. Do multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness?

5. How do multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness?
6. Which tools are more influential?
7. Why do consider that multimedia tools influence EFL learners' intercultural awareness?

B. Questionnaire

1. Are you familiar with multimedia tools?

Yes	No	Neutral

2. Are u used to deal with multimedia tools in your classrooms?

Usually	Rarely	Never

3. If yes, which modules?

4. Do you like using multimedia tools in your EFL classrooms?

Yes	No	Neutral

5. Do you consider that multimedia tools influence your intercultural awareness?

Yes	No	Neutral

6. How does multimedia influence your intercultural awareness?

More than one mode of information	Authentic situations of language use	Neutral

7. Do you encourage the use of multimedia for EFL learners?

Yes	No	Neutral

Thank you for your cooperation!