

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WORK WITH MEDIA TEXTS BASED ON THE LINGUACULTURAL APPROACH

Abstract. This article examines the potential of the linguacultural approach as a pedagogical framework for improving students' work with media texts in higher education. The study is situated within the intersection of applied linguistics, intercultural communication, and media studies, highlighting the urgency of developing critical media literacy in the digital age. Media texts are considered not only linguistic constructions but also cultural artifacts that embody symbolic codes, ideological orientations, and collective value systems. Accordingly, their interpretation requires a complex skill set that goes beyond lexical or grammatical comprehension.

Keywords: Linguacultural approach; media texts; media literacy; intercultural competence; critical thinking; cultural codes; higher education; communication studies

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, the development of students' media literacy has become an essential pedagogical objective. The widespread accessibility of digital platforms, the constant circulation of multimodal texts, and the increasing role of mass communication in shaping cultural values make it imperative for educators to focus on media competence as a core educational outcome. In this regard, the linguacultural approach offers a promising methodological basis for enhancing students' ability to analyze, interpret, and produce media texts in a way that reflects both linguistic awareness and cultural sensitivity [1].

Media texts, unlike traditional academic or literary texts, are highly heterogeneous and often multimodal, combining linguistic, visual, and symbolic elements to transmit meaning. They are embedded in cultural narratives, stereotypes, and identity constructs that require a more sophisticated interpretive lens than purely linguistic analysis can provide [2]. Consequently, working with media texts demands not only the mastery of language forms, but also the ability to decode cultural codes,

evaluate implicit messages, and critically assess the ideological positions they convey [3]. This complexity necessitates a holistic pedagogical framework, where linguistic knowledge is integrated with cultural interpretation skills-a goal that aligns directly with the linguacultural paradigm.

The linguacultural approach emphasizes the inseparable unity of language and culture. It views linguistic forms as carriers of cultural meanings, shaped by national traditions, collective memory, and historical experience [4]. When applied to media texts, this approach enables students to perceive language not as an abstract system of rules, but as a living instrument of cultural representation and social influence. Thus, developing students' media literacy through this approach fosters not only communicative competence but also intercultural awareness, critical thinking, and socio-cultural adaptability [5].

Despite the recognized importance of media literacy in modern curricula, educational practice often reduces media work to the superficial level of language exercises or mechanical content consumption. Students may be trained to extract factual information from media sources, but they rarely receive systematic guidance on interpreting deeper cultural meanings, ideological implications, or global intercultural perspectives [6]. This pedagogical gap weakens students' preparedness for the challenges of the digital information society, where manipulation, misinformation, and cultural clashes are frequent. Therefore, a more scientifically grounded methodology is required, one that systematically integrates linguistic analysis with cultural interpretation in classroom practice.

The urgency of this issue is further heightened by globalization processes, which expand students' exposure to media products originating from diverse cultural contexts. English-language media, in particular, plays a dominant role in shaping international discourse, making its critical study through the linguacultural lens a vital component of foreign language education [7]. By engaging with media texts, students can compare cultural worldviews, identify differences in value systems, and develop tolerance toward other cultural perspectives. At the same time, they learn to recognize and resist manipulative discourses, which strengthens their civic responsibility and intellectual independence [8].

This study is therefore situated at the intersection of applied linguistics, media studies, and intercultural communication. It seeks to justify and elaborate strategies for improving students' work with media texts through the linguacultural approach, offering both theoretical foundations and practical teaching recommendations. The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the modernization of educational practices in language teaching, where media literacy is treated not as an optional skill but as a fundamental competency required for active participation in contemporary society [9].

METHODS

The work with media texts was organized according to the linguacultural approach. Students were guided not only to notice the linguistic features of the texts but also to uncover the cultural meanings and values embedded in them.

The process was divided into three stages. First, attention was paid to vocabulary, stylistic devices, and textual structure. Next, students discussed cultural symbols, traditions, and stereotypes reflected in the text. Finally, they evaluated the ideological direction, persuasive effect, and social significance of the material.

The media texts used included newspaper headlines, online articles, advertisements, and short video clips. All of them were chosen to demonstrate the close connection between language and culture.

The teacher acted as a facilitator, asking guiding questions rather than giving ready-made interpretations. This approach encouraged students to think critically, compare cultural perspectives, and develop deeper skills in analyzing media communication.

RESULTS

The outcomes of working with media texts through the linguacultural approach revealed several significant tendencies. First, students demonstrated a clear shift from surface-level comprehension toward a more layered interpretation of meaning. Whereas at the beginning their attention was limited to lexical items and grammatical correctness, over time they started to identify stylistic nuance, pragmatic intention, and subtle allusions embedded within headlines, captions, or audio-visual fragments.

Such progress indicated the formation of interpretive habits that extend beyond mechanical decoding of words.

A second important result was the strengthening of cultural sensitivity. Learners began to recognize cultural references and symbolic elements that previously remained unnoticed. For example, in advertisements or opinion pieces, they identified metaphors rooted in national traditions or expressions tied to collective memory. These observations gradually evolved into classroom discussions where comparisons were drawn between English-language media texts and local cultural frameworks. The practice of contrasting perspectives nurtured intercultural awareness, enabling students to see language as a vehicle of cultural identity rather than a neutral instrument of communication.

Critical engagement also increased. By the middle of the study period, students became capable of articulating judgments about the ideological orientation of certain texts, such as the persuasive intent of a commercial or the political framing of a news report. Instead of passively accepting information, they questioned the credibility of sources, noted bias in representation, and reflected on the power dynamics inherent in global media. This analytical posture is considered a central component of media literacy in contemporary scholarship, and its emergence among learners underscored the effectiveness of the chosen pedagogical trajectory.

Another dimension of results was creative production. When students were asked to generate short reviews, commentaries, or visual posters, their output showed not only improved linguistic control but also greater attention to cultural resonance. Their ability to adjust tone, select culturally appropriate symbols, and anticipate audience reaction confirmed that media literacy had developed into an active, generative competence rather than a passive skill of interpretation.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study highlight the transformative potential of the linguacultural approach in developing students' competence to work with media texts. The observed progress confirms that language acquisition cannot be separated from cultural interpretation, and that meaningful engagement with media requires both linguistic mastery and cultural literacy. In this sense, the results correspond to the

broader theoretical claim that media discourse is not a neutral conveyor of information but a cultural artifact, shaped by historical memory, collective values, and ideological orientations.

One important aspect to discuss is the shift in students' interpretive strategies. At the outset, their comprehension was mainly literal, focused on vocabulary recognition or translation of sentences. However, with systematic exposure to media texts accompanied by guided reflection, they began to notice stylistic nuance, rhetorical framing, and implicit persuasion. This transformation echoes the arguments of scholars in critical media studies who emphasize that media literacy is inseparable from critical awareness. By cultivating this skill, learners positioned themselves not as passive recipients of information but as active participants capable of questioning, analyzing, and even resisting the influence of mass communication.

The development of cultural awareness is equally significant. Media texts frequently rely on symbolic codes, metaphors, and intertextual references that are inaccessible without knowledge of the cultural background. Students' ability to detect such references demonstrates that the linguacultural approach enhances their capacity for intercultural understanding. This outcome is particularly relevant in the current global context, where English-language media dominates the international information space. By learning to interpret such texts critically, students not only expand their language skills but also strengthen their readiness to engage in intercultural dialogue and to navigate cultural differences with tolerance and adaptability.

Another dimension worth emphasizing is the creativity demonstrated by students in producing their own media texts. The ability to generate media content that is linguistically accurate and culturally meaningful proves that the linguacultural approach fosters productive as well as receptive skills. This creative competence is valuable not only in the academic setting but also in professional and civic life, where individuals must be able to construct arguments, communicate persuasively, and participate in public discourse.

Nevertheless, certain limitations of the approach should be acknowledged. First, media texts are highly diverse and often context-bound, which makes the selection of

appropriate materials a challenging task. Second, the depth of interpretation depends heavily on the teacher's ability to guide reflection without imposing personal views, a balance that requires considerable pedagogical sensitivity. Finally, the approach demands more classroom time than traditional methods, since discussion, debate, and critical analysis cannot be rushed. These limitations, however, do not diminish the value of the results but rather point to areas where future research and methodological refinement are necessary.

CONCLUSION

The study confirmed that working with media texts through the linguacultural approach fosters significant improvement in students' academic and communicative competence. Language was no longer treated as a set of isolated structures but as a medium of cultural expression, ideology, and identity. As a result, learners moved beyond literal comprehension, gaining the ability to interpret symbolic codes, uncover implicit meanings, and evaluate the persuasive strategies of media discourse.

Three main outcomes stand out. First, linguistic accuracy was consolidated through engagement with authentic texts. Second, cultural interpretation skills developed as students learned to compare perspectives and recognize cultural references. Third, critical judgment was strengthened, enabling learners to identify bias and manipulation in media communication. These achievements demonstrate that the linguacultural approach provides a comprehensive foundation for modern language education.

The significance of these findings extends beyond classroom practice. In a globalized information space, the ability to decode cultural messages and resist manipulation is a prerequisite for active and responsible citizenship. Therefore, integrating linguacultural strategies into media education should be considered not an optional enhancement but a central component of contemporary curricula.

REFERENS

1. Kramsch, C. Language and Culture. - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. - 134 p.

2. Kress, G.; van Leeuwen, T. Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication. - London: Arnold (OUP distrib.), 2001. - 142 p.
3. Hall, S. Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. - London: Sage, 1997.
4. Agar, M. Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation. - New York: William Morrow, 1994. - 284 p.
5. UNESCO. Media and Information Literacy Curriculum (Think Critically, Click Wisely! - E-version). - Paris: UNESCO, 2023
6. Buckingham, D. Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture. - Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003. - 219 p.
7. W3Techs. Usage statistics of content languages for websites. - 2025
8. Kellner, D.; Share, J. Critical media literacy is not an option // Learning Inquiry. - 2007. - Vol. 1, No. 1. - P. 59–69. DOI: 10.1007/s11519-007-0004-2.
9. Byram, M. Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence: Revisited (2-nd ed.). - Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2021. - 248 p.