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**THE USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**AUDIO-VIZUĀLO LĪDZEKĻU IZMANTOŠANA ANĢĻU
VALODAS MĀCĪŠANĀ**

DIPLOMA PAPER

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ABSTRACT

The Paper under observation is devoted to the use of audio-visual aids in English language teaching.

The aim of the author was to focus on the method under observation thus proving its various nature and implementation possibilities when teaching English. As the author assumes that the learners' attitude to language learning is constantly changing it was interesting to see how it correlates with the changes in the use of new methods which to a great extent are based on audio-visual approach. For example the use of modern technologies, mass media and thinking approach.

The theoretical part contains collected theoretical information on the methodology applicable when teaching foreign languages via audio-visual aids and examples of the author's own teaching experience when using these ideas in classroom.

The practical part of the research includes contrastive analysis of the survey data which report on the attitude to and the use of audio-visual aids in foreign language learning in German, British and Latvian schools as well as represent the novelty of practical effort in form of the author's self-designed activities ready to use in classroom.

The author has used the methods of collecting and selecting theories on audio-visual teaching methods, observing the students in their learning process, questioning respondents of three different countries, description and analysis of the theories collected as well as the survey data. The results of the research show students' approval to the use of audio-visual aids for language learning, however, it states also some problems, which suggests that there is still much space left for every teacher's creativity and courage to try new methods, to make the learning process more attractive, inspire students and gain success.

The reader might encounter with the following key-words underlying the topic of this Paper: *Visualisation, Multy-ROM, Interactive Whiteboards.*

ANOTĀCIJA

Diplomdarbs veltīts tēmai par ir audio-vizuālo līdzekļu izmantošanu angļu valodas mācīšanās.

Darba autora mērķis ir iedziļināties minētajā metodoloģijā pētot to daudzveidību un pielietojuma iespējas mācot angļu valodu.

Tā kā darba autore pieļauj, ka skolēnu attieksme pret svešvalodu mācīšanos pastāvīgi mainās, bija interesanti novērot, kā tas sasauca ar jaunu mācību metožu ieviešanu, kuras lielā mērā ir balstītas uz audio-vizuālu pieeju. Piemēram, lietojot modernās tehnoloģijas, masu medijus un domāšanas pieeju.

Darba teorētiskā daļa ietver atlasīto teorētisko informāciju saistībā ar svešvalodu mācīšanās izmantojamo audi-vizuālo metodoloģiju un piemērus situāciju izklāstam no autores pieredzes izmantojot šīs metodes savā skolotājas praksē.

Darba praktiskajā daļā salīdzināti dati, kuri atspoguļo skolēnu attieksmi pret audio-vizuālo līdzekļu pielietojumu svešvalodu stundās Lielbritānijas, Vācijas un Latvijas skolās, kā arī autores izstrādātās aktivitātes gatavas lietošanai klasē.

Darbā izmantota pieejamās literatūras vākšanas un atlasīšanas metode, lai nodrošinātu teorētisko pamatojumu pielietojot audio-vizuālos līdzekļus praktiski, skolēnu novērošana mācību procesā, triju dažādu valstu skolēnu aptaujāšana, darbā minēto teoriju un praktiskās daļas izvērtējums.

Darba rezultāti atspoguļo skolēnu atzinīgo novērtējumu, ja svešvalodu apguvei tiek pielietoti audio-vizuālie mācību līdzekļi, lai arī kā, rezultāti liecina arī par to, ka šajā jomā vēl ir daudz darāmā, iedrošinot skolotāju pielietot jaunas, kreatīvas metodes, lai celtu audzēkņu motivāciju mācīties, iedvesmotu skolēnus un nodrošinātu progresu svešvalodu apgūvē.

Lasītājs var sastapt sekojošu jēdzienu pielietojumu: vizualizācija, multimediju disks, interaktīvā tāfele.

INTRODUCTION

The current situation in foreign language teaching holds the problem of the acquisition of traditional course book based language teaching classes to students of the 21st century. We live in a time when people face a wide variety of modern technologies in our everyday life, thus we are used to perceiving information in diverse ways – via the World Wide Web, various international TV programmes, interactive CDR games, watching DVD films and using mobile phones much rather than the traditional printed books. The author of the research is not claiming on the theses that students do not read books nor use them as sources for information any more, the point here is the growing need for different methods and approaches in foreign language teaching in order to keep up with the spreading tendency thorough the world to use various technical aids.

In addition the new generation is recognised by different abilities to perceive, organize and apply information. The children of the 20th century show no interest in traditional learning strategies, it is hard to keep them organised and involved during the classes as well as to raise interest in learning grammar and reading or writing. Learning has to become more interactive to keep students involved and enable creative atmosphere in the lessons.

Students' access to world wide mass media also puts forward the need to use new teaching aids in the classroom because more and more students tend to be more informed than their teachers, especially the ones of the older generation. The teaching as well as the learning staff have to keep up with the tendencies in the world nowadays, with the increasing use of modern means of communication as the world is getting more and globalized.

Last but not least it is important to develop awareness towards different races, religions, beliefs and global issues, especially those connected with the environment and the political events, with the life of people in areas of conflict.

All those matters require deep understanding and comprehensive study that is best done via visualisation, interactive participation and adaptation of technical appliances to language learning classes.

The above mentioned addresses the following hypothesis:

Non native learners acquire knowledge with more interest and initiative when audio-visual aids are used in the process of foreign language teaching thus also raising awareness and understanding towards the issues of current importance in the world .

The theoretical goal of the research is

- to select and analyse theories available on the phenomena under study with the aim to create the theoretical framework of the study
- to collect the empirical knowledge on the subject.
- to study and outline the differences in the use of audio-visual aids in ELT in some European countries.

The practical goal of the research is

- to design lesson plans ready for use in the classroom
- to do a survey on the importance of audio-visual aids in foreign language teaching in schools in Latvia, Germany and England.

The object of the research is the use of various audio-visual aids for foreign language study.

The subject of the research is students' ability to create attitudes towards burning issues in the world and to comment on them in proper English.

The following steps shall be taken to enable the objectives put forward:

- to select linguistic, psychological and methodological theories
- to form the perspective of the research
- to select and analyse relevant theories on the theme
- to design and pilot the teaching materials
- to questionnaire students in schools in Latvia, Germany and England.
- to summarise and analyse the data of the survey

The theoretical significance of the Research is the creation of the theoretically-informative and background for further studies of the topic.

The practical significance of the research lies in the developed materials and the survey data giving an insight into the current situation of the use of audio-visual aids in schools in Latvia and abroad.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AUDIO-VISUAL APPROACH IN ELT

Observing the students of the 21st century, the globalisation process in the world and the invasion of modern technologies the author of the research dares to claim that the use of audio-visual aids in teaching is not a future vision, it is a current fact.

If we look at the question – why can the conventional, course book-based frontal teaching not have the same effect nowadays as it has had for centuries? Why is the world of study looking for new ways to teach, why are new, modern methods being developed?

The most important point according to the author of the Research is the target audience.

If we compare the classrooms of the 20th and 21st century we see that the attitude of students towards learning has changed quite a lot: students have become more independent, the classroom atmosphere is very relaxed and it is quite hard to manage lessons and keep learners involved in classroom activities via frontal teaching methods. Because of this discipline problems occur and due to no effective school rules (no doubt they are provided in every school and students know them by heart perfectly well, but are these rules also observed, are they helpful to set up a friendly learning atmosphere?) it is very challenging for a Latvian teacher with an overload of work (because of the lack of teaching stuff) to meet the requirements set in the syllabus, provide a positive learning atmosphere and keep everyone interested in the teaching material.

Another problem is the amount of knowledge and skills students have to acquire nowadays: children are supposed to learn a vast amount of material in a rather short period of time, to be able to show their language knowledge in terms of speaking, writing, reading and listening comprehension, learners are also supposed to show their attitude towards the processes in the world, they must be knowledgeable about the situation connected with the environment, politics and peace to be able to build their own viewpoint. It means that students are supposed not just to memorize facts but show awareness and foreign language competence in terms of burning issues and intercultural tolerance in the world.

Not less importance lies in the growing demand for foreign language competence, English in particular, in the labour market. If we look at secondary level classes in Latvian schools, there is a wide variety of specific courses offered for secondary school level students, such as commercially oriented, tourism oriented, language or science oriented directions and according to these there should be efficient foreign language teaching provided to teach the students not just the grammar and language items but also to help them understand and be successful in the specific field they have chosen as well as support the development of their future career.

The above mentioned suggests the following:

- students are looking forward to an entertaining, comprehensive, competitive education,
- teachers are looking forward to effective, time-saving, motivating education methods,

The author of the research presumes that audio-visual teaching methods could suit the needs for the 21st century students and teachers alike on the following conditions

- if teachers feel familiar using modern means of communication and are interested in personal development and challenging ideas,
- if the school can provide all the necessary technical appliances,
- if the course is designed according to the particular students' needs, age and abilities,
- if the classes are student-oriented, conducted in a positive manner and furnish vivacious working atmosphere.

THE NEURO-LINGUAL IMPACT ON THE PROCESS OF LEARNING

“If the child is not learning the way you are teaching, then you must teach in the way the child learns.”

Rita Dunn

The author of the Research believes that it is essential for every enthusiastic teacher to find effective teaching strategies touching their learners' minds and souls. A proverb says that learners have not chosen to be learners but teachers have definitely chosen to teach thus they should be in charge to guide their students onto the mount of knowledge. It is always easy to blame students for something they haven't done and no doubt, it is often true, lots of students are reckless and unmotivated, however, complaining doesn't bring the student-teacher relationship further nor is it an effective way of classroom interaction or helps motivate to learn. Probably it is worth for the teacher to change their attitude for students are less likely to change their. Albeit according to the authors observations, the vast majority of students start acting in the manner the teacher supposes if they feel safe at the classroom and are being positively encouraged to work.

According to recent affairs and offences in different schools in the USA, Germany also Latvia just to name some examples, it would be a literally meant problem of “safety” directly affecting the learners and teachers physical welfare if not their life, the author of the Research however would still like to draw the readers' attention to the *emotional safety and involvement* of the learners as an essential precondition for effective classroom interaction. Revell and Norman

(1997) highlight that ‘school itself can be a great source of anxiety for many students. Students learn best from ‘high challenge, low stress activities’. (Revell and Norman,(1997): 21)

The author of the Research assumes Neuro-Linguistic Programming as an indispensable precondition to achieve effective classroom interaction, create emotionally involving atmosphere and safe, positive attitudes. Moreover, according to the observations of the author of the Research, no method (audio-visual inclusive) would ever work effectively if presented in dissonance with the learners’ needs, in tense classroom atmosphere and if the students feel rather harmed or underestimated. No method would work successfully, in terms that both parties, the learners as well as the teachers, feel good about what they are doing, in terms of treating a student as a whole – a personality. Revell and Norman (1997) admit that ‘the teacher’s job is to teach the students in such a way as to help them to learn the subject. We are educators and while teaching language we, are also communicating our values and beliefs’ which means we actually serve as audio-visual examples to our students. (Revell and Norman,1997: 19)

It is essential to link students to the good because knowledge as such can be used in very diverse and opposite directions. Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a way to avoid that.

Revell and Norman (1997: 14) present Neuro-Lingual Programming as an attitude to life, a collection of techniques and strategies for assisting effective communication, personal growth, change and learning which is based on a series of underlying assumptions about how the mind works and how people act and interact to achieve intra-personal and inter-personal excellence. The *neuro* part is concerned with how we experience the world through our senses and represent it in our minds through our neurological processes. The *linguistic* part, on the other hand, is concerned with the way the language we use shapes, as well as reflects, our experience of the world.

Revell and Norman (1997) say:

“We use language – in thought as well as in speech – to represent the world to ourselves and to embody our beliefs about the world and about life. (..) We can also use language to help other people who want to change.”

(Revell and Norman,1997: 14)

According to the above mentioned authors, communication can be verbal (‘in speech’) as well as non-verbal (‘in thought’). This suggests, that teachers serve as audio-visual materials themselves, teachers are not just what they say but also how they say it, and the “how” can have even greater

impact on the learners perception as the words a teacher says themselves. Audio-visual communication embody both – verbal and non-verbal teaching.

According to Professor Albert Mehrabian's research (Revell and Norman,1997: 91) communication is more non-verbal than verbal.

Here psychologist Albert Mehrabian shows that 55% of our message is communicated bodily, 38% through our tone of voice, and only 7% through the words we use. His research concentrated on the message conveyed in any communication by body language (posture, facial expression) and tone of voice, which was in addition to any words spoken. It was originally conducted by asking American college students the question 'How do you know if someone likes you?' Physical appearance was found to be of critical importance.

Professor Mehrabian's research suggests that information perceived through the visual channel of the learners is the most lasting one and according to Revell and Norman, it belongs to non-verbal communication. The author of the research would therefore like to emphasize on the implication of these findings into affective language learning. The following suggestions could be very efficient and affect foreign language learners mutually - consciously and non-consciously alike. Revell and Norman (1997: 96) suggest:

- On the walls of the classroom have a display of visual materials which is both informative and beautiful. Change the display regularly. Enlist students' help.
- Highlight materials you want students to follow. In speaking use pauses or changes of voice tone. In writing, you can do it graphologically (bold type, chalks in different colours, letters of different size).
- Have songs or music playing while the group is involved in an activity.
- Have frequent changes of activity during lessons, including quiet time, when students 'switch off ' to allow better non-conscious processing. Such pauses might well be accompanied by music or movement.
- Use storytelling, metaphor, relaxation and guided fantasies.
- Overload students sometimes with more information than the conscious mind can cope with so that the non-conscious mind has to step in and help out.

The above mentioned suggestions will have the desired effect only if chosen in correspondence with the learners needs, language competence, sensory styles, are appropriate to their age and the author of the research would also like to add – the general temper of the group and willingness to cooperate. According to the experience of the author of the research, one and the same linguistic

features might need to be presented in different ways to students of the same school, the same age group underlying the same curriculum just because there is a different audience each time. For example, the students of 11.K will not gain much from the type of activities which work well with the 11.A because the students of 11.K in comparison with 11.A have less English competence, are much slower witted and need much more encouragement and lack motivation thus the 11.K might be more challenging for the teacher.

This suggests that a teacher should have a close look at the target audience if possible before or/and while the teaching for different learners might require varied changes in the use of audio-visual media and the process of teaching.

SPECIFICS IN THE USE OF TEACHING MEDIA ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT LEARNERS

Learner differences might underlay their preference to perceive the world, their learning style, their age, motivation and cultural background just to mention some of the characteristics. In what follows the need for diverse teaching aids.

Harmer (2004: 46) quotes Revell and Norman (1997) claiming that most people, while using all the primary representational systems to experience the world (the visual –through seeing, auditory – through hearing, kinaesthetic – through movement of the body, olfactory - through smell and gustatory – through taste), still have one ‘preferred primary system’. Some people are particularly stimulated by music and sound when their primary preferred system is auditory, whereas others, who have visual as their primary preferred system, respond most powerfully to images. The extension of this is that a visual person is also likely to ‘see’ music.

Dede Teeler (2000), for example suggests that “kinaesthetic students behave differently when introduced to the Internet as a language learning tool from predominantly visual learners. The latter needed a demonstration on what to do before leaping into Internet tasks, unlike their kinaesthetic colleagues who just get on to do it”

(Teeler, 2000: 60-61).

This suggests that the ability and readiness to operate with audio-visual aids, such as the Internet, requires not only a well developed visual perception system, as it initially might be assumed but also the bodily-kinaesthetic potency.

According to the observations of the author of the research, a very little number of students still have difficulty using digitally operated systems such as the Internet, mobile phones, a range of virtual games and devices. Lots of children of very young age (four and five years old) discover

digital systems without reading the instructions and manage them more quickly than average adults whose daily work is not connected with digitally operated devices. This is one more substantiation that evidences the readiness of the learners of the 21 century to use audio-visual aids successfully.

In relation to learning styles it might also be of use to mention the *Multiple Intelligence theory*. To the seven most known intelligences (see the chart below) the Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner (1993) according to Harmer (2004: 46 -47) has added an eight intelligence which he calls *Naturalistic intelligence* to account for the ability to recognise and classify patterns in nature.

Daniel Goleman in his work “Emotional Intelligence” (1999) describes the ability to emphasise, control impulse and self-motivate. According to the study of the book and the observations of the author of the research, this is the intelligence, 21st century students tend to lack most of all. However, the absence of this kind of intelligence might turn out to be crucial for the learning process and classroom cooperation, in particular concerning motivation and impulse control. This to a great extent correlates with the statistics showing Latvian students’ low motivation to learn (including school attendance, student-teacher relationship and school results).

Harmer (2004: 47) states that different intelligences predominate in different people, it suggests that the same learning task may not be appropriate for all of our students, as the example with the two different 11th former groups shows in chapter 1.1. While people with strong logical/mathematical intelligence might respond well to a complex grammar explanation, a different group might need the comfort of diagrams and physical demonstration because their strengths is in the visual/spatial area. Other students who have a strong interpersonal intelligence may require a more interactive climate if their learning is to be effective.

Murray Loom, a teacher at the Giralang primary school in Canberra, Australia, produced the following chart to show what the original seven intelligences might mean for his students:

Type	Likes to	Is good at	Learns best by
Linguistic Learner “The word player”	Read, write, tell stories	Memorising names, places, dates and trivia	Saying, hearing and seeing words
Logical/ Mathematical Learner “The questioner”	Do experiments, figure things out, work with numbers	Maths, reasoning, logic and problem solving	Categorising, classifying, working with abstract patterns/ relationships
Spatial Learner “The visualiser”	Draw, build, design and create, daydream, watch movies	Imagining things, sensing changes, mazes, puzzles, reading maps	Visualising, dreaming, using the mind’s eye, working with colours, pictures
Musical learner “The music lover”	Sing, hum tunes, listen and respond to music	Picking up sounds, remembering melodies, noticing rhythms, pitches	Rhythm, melody, music
Bodily/Kinaesthetic learner	Move around, touch and talk, use body language	Physical activities (sport, dancing, acting)	Touching, moving, interacting with space, processing knowledge through bodily sensations
Interpersonal Learner	Have lots of friends, talk to people, join groups	Understanding people, leading others, mediating conflicts	Sharing, comparing, relating, cooperating, interviewing
Intrapersonal Learner	Work alone, pursue own interests	Understanding self, focusing inward on feelings, following instincts, being original	Working alone, individualised projects, self-paced instruction, having own space

Harmer, J.(2004) English Language Teaching. Longman

Taken from ‘How to use Gardner’s seven intelligences in a class program,’ presented by M. Loom at the Internet site for the University of Canberra in Australia, which can be found at <http://crilt.canberra.edu.au>

Extending the problem of tailoring teaching to match the personalities in a classroom, the methodologist Tony Wright (1987: 117 – 118) describes four different learner styles within a

group. The *enthusiast* looks to the teacher as a point of reference and is concerned with the goals of the learning group. The *oracular* also focuses on the teacher but is more orientated towards the satisfaction of personal goals. The *participator* tends to concentrate on group goals and group solidarity, whereas the *rebel* while referring to the learning group for his or her point of reference, is mainly concerned with the satisfaction of his or her own goals. This according to the author of the research corresponds with audio-visual teaching when a teacher sets up groups of students to work on the same computer, for instance, because of the possible lack of technical items in some schools. This knowledge should also be taken into account when building up teams for a video project or a similar activity.

Harmer (2004: 43) quotes Willing (1987) mentioned in Skehan (1998: 247 -250) claiming that other researchers have tried to describe student learning styles identifying individual behaviour they have observed. They produce circumstances, of course, which never quite describe any particular student, however, give us some pointers to the kinds of people we have in our classrooms:

- **CONVERGERS** – these are by nature solitary students who prefer to avoid groups, and who are independent and confident in their own abilities. Most importantly they are analytic and can impose their own structures on learning. They tend to be cool and pragmatic.
- **CONFORMISTS** – these are students who emphasise learning ‘about language’ over learning to use it. They tend to be dependent on those in authority and are perfectly happy to work in non-communicative classrooms, doing what they are told. A classroom of conformists is one which prefers to see well-organised teachers.
- **CONCENTRATE** learners in comparison to conformists are interested in language use and language as communication rather than language as a system. They enjoy the social aspects of learning and like to learn from direct experience. They enjoy games and group work in class.
- **COMMUNICATIVE** learners are language use orientated. They are comfortable out of class and show a degree of confidence and willingness to take risks which their colleagues may lack. They are much more interested in social interaction with other speakers of the language than they are with analysis of how language works. They are perfectly happy to operate without the guidance of a teacher.

Analysing Willing's idea Harmer (2004: 43) concludes claiming however we choose to categorise learner styles, an understanding that there are different individuals in our classes is vitally important if we are to plan the kinds of activity that will be appropriate for them. We need to balance the interests of individuals against what is good for the group and to be aware of certain individual traits when putting students into pairs and groups.

The age of students is a major factor in terms of *how and what* to teach, says Harmer (2004: 37). People of different ages have different needs, competences and cognitive skills; we might expect children of primary age to acquire much of a foreign language through play, for example, whereas for adults we can reasonably expect a greater use of abstract thought.

For the author of the research embodies the wish to investigate the appropriacy of teaching aids for secondary school students, she would like to focus on teenagers.

According to Harmer (2004: 39) teenagers, if they are engaged, have a great capacity to learn, a great potential of creativity and a passionate commitment of things which interest them. The author of the research agrees with Harmer that there is almost nothing more exciting than a class of involved young people at this age pursuing a learning goal with enthusiasm. Our job, therefore, must be to provoke student engagement with material which is relevant and involving. At the same time we need to do what we can to bolster our students' self-esteem, and be conscious, always, of their need for identity.

According to the teaching experience of the author of the research, discipline problems in teenage classes occur more often than it is the case with teaching young adults, aged 17, 18. There is a great difference in the individual and collective behaviour of teenage students – those showing interest and motivation in individual after school classes (potenciated by the Ministry of Education in Latvia and offered by the author of the research) on the other hand turned hard to organise when attending their conventional classes together with their peer students. This problem was also one of the most determinant to search for answers to the question: how to engage a group of teenage students, of the 21st century in addition, and achieve good results via providing them with involving, educative and entertaining activities.

Analysing the reasons: why teenage students, in particular, may be disruptive in class, Harmer (2004: 39) states that apart from the need for self-esteem and the peer approval they may provoke from being disruptive, there are other factors too, such as the boredom they feel - not to mention the problems they bring into class from outside school. They may push the teacher to the limit, but they are much happier if the teacher actually manages to control them, and if this is done in a supportive and constructive way so that he or she 'helps rather than shouts' (Harmer, 1998: 2).

To conclude the idea “students must be encouraged to respond to texts and situations with their own thoughts and experience, rather than just by answering questions and doing abstract learning activities. We must give them tasks which they are able to do, rather than risk humiliating them”

(Puchta and Schratz, 1993: 4)

In correspondence with sources studied by the author of the research there is no equipollent recipe in terms of the use of learning materials particularly to teenage students, the application of the visualization method and modern audio-visual aids, however, seems to be one of the most affective still. It remains the question of courage to try new techniques and go new ways to bridge the students with the knowledge. A successful classroom interaction requires not only excellent language knowledge from the teacher’s side but further more humanistic approach, good psychology and observation skills, as well as a lot of adventurism for self development and motivation to educate.

Last but not least is the problem of raising students’ motivation. The author of the research would like to point out that without motivated students any teacher will almost certainly fail to achieve the desired success. According to the authors experience teaching secondary school students at a vocational school and a state gymnasium there is surprisingly almost the same motivation level in both cases. If vocational school students don’t feel motivated to go to school because they have started earning good money already during their official school practice, the vast majority of state gymnasium students claim, their parents want them to attend a gymnasium more than it is their own dream. The above mentioned is just a branch of the whole tree that embodies motivation, and no doubt, in different schools the problems connected with students motivation differ slightly nevertheless the general question: What can a teacher do to motivate his/her students, still remains.

Exploring theories on the notion of *motivation* Harmer (2004: 51) claims that ‘*motivation* is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something.’ He quotes H. Douglas Brown (2000) to point out that ‘a cognitive view of motivation includes factors such as the need for exploration, activity, stimulation, new knowledge and ego enchantment’ (Brown, 2000: 160-166)

Marion Williams and Richard Burden suggest that *motivation* is a ‘state of cognitive arousal which provokes a decision to act as a result of which there is sustained intellectual and/or physical effort so that the person can achieve some previously set goals’ (Williams and Burden 1997: 120).

Harmer quotes Williams and Burden claiming that the strengths of motivation depends on how much value the individual places on the outcome he or she wishes to achieve. Comparing adults' and children's motivation they say that the goals of adults may be clearly defined or vague. Children's goals, on the other hand, are often more amorphous and less easy to describe, but they can still be very powerful.

Harmer (2004: 51) gives an accepted distinction between two types of motivation:

- EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION is caused by any number of *outside* factors, for example, the need to pass an exam, the hope of financial reward, or the possibility of future travel.
- INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, by contrast, comes from *within the individual*. Thus a person might be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process itself or by a desire to make themselves feel better.

The author of the research agrees with most researchers and methodologists that intrinsic motivation is especially important for encouraging success. Even where the original reason for taking up a language course, for example, is extrinsic, the chances of success will be greatly enhanced if the students come to love the learning process.

Looking for ways to initiate motivation, the author of the research has come to the conclusion that there is a body of interconnected tools that are supplementing each other with signals for motivation. Everything in the classroom and outside it, the teacher and student rapport has an impact on the learning process, ob produced consciously or subconsciously. There are also areas which for, the teacher, are almost impossible to influence, such as the students' social or/and cultural background, for instance. Still, there is a lot a teacher can do to motivate students, for example:

- set short - term goals; the author of the research uses to compare the process of language learning with body building because both require ongoing training, a little step towards the goal every day;
- create a physically-attractive learning environment by decorating the walls of the classroom with all kinds of visual material or change the atmosphere through music, the support of fresh air and appropriate light. There are activities when the use of soft light might turn out to be more effective than total lighting. The teachers in Sutton High Sports College (UK), for example, use to close the curtains in the beginning of every language class to enchain the students' attention;

- provide students with a variety of subjects and exercises to keep them engaged, introduce some movement when possible, fix the new learning material via different kinds of activities (switch from speaking to writing, from group to individual work, from memorization to creativity, from theoretical to practical use);
- according to the author's observation, one and the same activity should not take very long time thus the other students might get bored and waste time doing nothing, if not trying to call somebody on their mobile phones. The pace and the level of difficulty should be appropriate to the learners' abilities and language knowledge.

The author of the research doesn't profess that these are the most effective strategies and there doubtlessly will be great outcome and success when the above mentioned is borne in mind. The author of the research has made an attempt to give some helpful media to raise students motivation which have turned out to work effectively with students. Furthermore, 'the measure of a good lesson is the student activity taking place, not the performance of the teacher' (Harmer,2004: 56).

RAISING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS VIA AUDIO-VISUAL ACTIVITIES

As the world is getting more and more globalized, it is important to pay attention to intercultural awareness and tolerance. The possibility to move countries easily has resulted in a multi-cultural society especially in well developed countries which lots of people choose to settle down seeking for better socially-economical living conditions.

According to Revell and Norman(1997) as 'language teachers we necessarily have to take into account intercultural differences. Language reflects the way people think. There are certain underlying cultural beliefs and values which express themselves in the way people behave and speak.

They go on explaining the behaviour of different nationalities, claiming that it often seems bizarre or unreasonable. 'The British view of Italians, for example, is often that they are pushy or rude. They don't wait their turn in a queue. This offends British 'beliefs' in 'fair play' and 'politeness'. However, Italians usually don't mind if people get something before them. They also seem to be much more generous in giving to others than the British, who tend to keep a careful score of whose turn it is to give and how much. So it could be agreed that British tend to place far too much emphasis on 'superficial' politeness.

Actually, it is possible to compare any nationality with another to figure out the differences in their attitude to life and way to perceive the world, what is the most important matter, from the point of view of the author, is to prevent young people making generalisations, acting according to stereotypes and prejudice. It is to a great extent in the hands of the teacher to link students towards intercultural understanding and the best way to achieve it were, of course, via international projects, video-conferencing and communication. Particularly *communication before action* would be crucial in a vast majority of conflicts of any cause and most of all – none at all.

Mass media is a powerful instrument that provides students with a wide variety of events, especially news from all the world, attitudes and knowledge. It is neither good nor bad to watch TV, for instance, it is always the question of choice and our personal attitude against the information we are presented with.

Taking into consideration the latest 21st century affairs, connected in particular with environmental, religious and political issues, it is important to create attitudes via understanding and communication not stereotyping and prejudice. However, to enable the creation of an opinion the first step to be taken is knowledge, if students have no competence in terms of burning issues in the world or their own country, there can't be any further success in raising awareness. In addition, students are supposed to be able comment on different important events and affairs but if they lack this particular information, they will most likely fail to fulfil this kind of task successfully. And then it is definitely not the problem of language, not the problem of *how to say* but far more *what to say*.

Taking into account students' little interest in reading newspapers, the teacher straining to help their students to create attitudes is forced to search for other media to provide his/her students with the knowledge needed to organise a classroom discussion about the nature of terrorism, for example.

The authors Revell and Norman (1997) claim that 'a worthwhile exercise is to look – ideally on video – at behaviour from the target culture which seems 'odd' or 'wrong'.

- Start from the assumptions that 80% of what you see has a rational explanation in any culture.
- Watch the sequence of behaviour and write down precisely and objectively (without pre-judgement) what you see people actually doing.
- Write down what you think their underlying beliefs and values might be.

- Write down the underlying beliefs and values in your culture which you think are being ignored or violated.
- Then look at the sequence of behaviour again (possibly from a longer excerpt) and identify things people do which satisfy your own culture's beliefs in a different way.'

Whatever task is chosen by the teacher, it is important to try not to drive students to one right or wrong view, namely – the teacher's. A teacher is there not to make students to hate or love something, a teacher is to help the students to create their own attitudes on the basis of the knowledge and activities the teacher provides. According to the observations of the author of the research, it is very helpful to ask the simple question: *why* and to make students justify their choice for a statement via argumentation.

AN INSIGHT INTO DIFFERENT TYPES OF AUDIO-VISUAL ACTIVITIES

Exploring the field of audio-visual teaching the author of the research has come to no concrete definition that explains the notion. The above mentioned appellation *audio-visual* activities obviously originates in the channel through which the language is being perceived.

Kramiņa(2000) says: “Just the same way as the users of language switch their roles and activities they switch also the channel through which communication takes place:

- the *auditory channel* – speaking and hearing;
- the *visual channel* - reading and writing.”

(Kramiņa,2000: 21)

The author of the research would like to unite both of the mentioned channels to make use of them from the learning point of view. The continuation of the paper under discussion is devoted to the exploration of the sphere of diverse variations in the use of aids and media affecting students’ auditory and visual channels. This includes the application of different audio-visual sources , devices and teaching activities.

There is a number of audio-visual media to learn a language, such as the use of CD player for playing back and recording students’ voices, the Internet as source for information as well as means of international communication, videoing in terms of gaining information via watching and creative work, film-making projects, for example, mass media (TV, the radio), the use of interactive white-boards and audio-visual course books like “Cutting Edge” from Longman or Headway. The author of the research attempts to observe also the visualisation method because it is an interesting way to encourage students’ creativity.

Finally there should be added that the audio-visual teaching method has scarcely been investigated yet, different websites and literature offer information on the use of one of the mentioned features but there is a lack of investigations presenting the use of different audio-visual teaching techniques.

THE VISUALISATION METHOD

Language teachers use a variety of teaching aids to explain language meaning and construction, engage students in a topic, or as the basis of a whole activity, says Harmer (2004: 134), such as pictures or graphics – whether drawn, taken from books, newspapers and magazines, or photographs and illustrations – to facilitate learning. Some teachers also use projected slides,

images from an overhead projector or projected computer images. Teachers also draw pictures on the board to help with explanation and language work (Harmer,2004: 134). The above mentioned author claims that ‘the use of pictures is very powerful and has the advantage to engaging students’ in classroom activities, for example, they can be used for creative language use. We might ask students to write a description of a picture; we might ask to invent the conversation taking place between two people in a picture; ask questions in a particular role-play activity or answer questions as if they were the characters in a famous painting.

The choice and use of pictures is very much a matter of personal taste, however, to engage students, they should be linguistically useful, appropriate for the class they are being used for. If they are too childish students may not like them, and if they are inappropriate they can actually offend people.

To avoid this it might be entertaining, for a change to, to make use of the ‘resources within us (Revell and Norman,1997: 69) . Jill and Charles Hadfields (1999: 4) explain the notion *visualisation* as follows: ‘this means asking learners to close their eyes and imagine a scene.’ They give an example of a visualisation activity:’ You can prompt students with questions as they do this;

“Close your eyes. I want you to think of your family. What are they doing now? Think of your mother...Where is she?...What is she doing? Don’t answer, just imagine.”

(Jill and Charles Hadfields, 1999: 4)

It is important to tell the learners that they don’t have to respond to the questions in words, only in mental pictures. Hadfields advise to ‘talk slowly and gently, giving the learners plenty of time to think. Because everyone imagines a different scene, this activity gives the learners plenty of opportunity for real communication as they describe their scene.

Revell and Norman (1997: 68) go further and offer a guided fantasy task which leads students through an imaginary garden and offers a picturesque palette of different colours, smells and images (see appendix).

The importance of the visualisation approach lies in the application in the target language. If the activity remains in an imaginary, mute level it will only affect the process of being creative but will not reflect in the language, whether speaking or writing. Revell and Norman (1997: 74) encourage to a post-imagination activity to transform the activity into words:

- Location: Where is your picture?
- Distance: How close or far away is it?

- Size: How big or small is it?
- Colour: Is it in colour or black and white?
- Movement: Is it moving (like a film or video) or still (like a photo)?
- Shape: Is it square? Rectangular? Triangular? Round? Indefinite?
- Associations: Can you see yourself in the picture or are you looking through your own eyes?
- Other: What else have you noticed?

Communicative visualisation activities like this are also very interesting from the point of view of how different people imagine ‘the same object’. As an example the author of the research has carried out the following imagination activity, adapted to a foreign language class from the field of psychology, with surprising results. The author asked a group of secondary level students imagine a road that leads to a house, open the door, go up the stairs, come into the room in front of the stairs... After the activity students were asked to describe what they “saw” (to practice the use of different adjectives) and what the things in the house looked like, the rooms (light, tidy/not, furnishing, colours, sounds, was there anyone in the room etc.), for example. They were asked to go into detail as far as they could. The outcome was never the same among the students of this group but there still were some similarities noticeable. The students liked this activity, especially the description part because it was interesting and surprising for them to discover that many different kinds of one and the same object, which actually was an other for every participant. Because these students were bound by this activity and guided in the target language, they forgot to switch over to their native tongue as it occasionally happens.

Revell and Norman (1997: 76) give some suggestions to overcome possible problems with mental picturing: ‘try putting your mental image on a TV screen. Adjust the brightness knob or the volume. There are knobs to make other changes too. Or you can change the camera angle, have split screen, have still or moving pictures, run the sequence backwards or forwards, faster or slower.’

One more benefit of the visualisation activities, besides its entertaining character, linguistic adoption and creativity, lays in their infinity. According to Revell and Norman (1997: 76) ‘the only limitations are ones you have put on yourself. If you can’t do something, just say ‘Yes, I can’. Imagine how it would be if you could do it, and then do it! ‘ This kind of activity is very useful for understanding grammar, when introducing conditional 2 and 3, in particular, when

explaining past perfect and present/past perfect continuous forms. A very beloved example to picture a past perfect scene for the author of the research and her students is the following one:

- When I entered the room I saw that my cat *had eaten* all the roses of the birthday cake.
(Imagine a fat cat laying next to it, purring satisfyingly with butter roses in its stomach!

Or the following kind of task to introduce present perfect continuous:

- Look at different images, for example the chalk-white hands of the teacher, the messy desk of the teacher in front of the classroom in the middle of the lesson, ‘your’ little sibling covered in chocolate, dirty footprints in an office room at early morning? Students are supposed to imagine these things and guess – who has been doing what?

According to the observations of the author of the research, students who have difficulty imagining, show greater lack understanding grammar structures and what they are for; their results are poorer and their attempt to memorize and cram grammar results in a disaster. It is essential to help students comprehend grammar because it can’t learnt by heart.

Lastly, ‘the more changes you can make, the more control you will have over your imaging. Your imagination is the limit. Have fun. Play. And notice the effect’

(Revell and Norman, 1997: 76).

TEACHING WITH VIDEO

Many teachers ‘enliven’ (Harmer,2004: 282) their classes with off-air material or tapes produced for language learning. These materials can be presented in form of a film (feature films or documentaries), separate situations and excerpts, news, for instance, or can be created by students themselves.

Exploring the communicative value of video films, Jack Lonergan (1984) claims that ‘the outstanding feature of video films is their ability to present complete communicative situations. The combination of sound and vision is dynamic, immediate and accessible. This means that communication can be shown in a context, and the many factors in communication can be perceived easily by viewers – and language learners.

The speakers in dialogues can be seen and heard.(..) The language learner can readily see the ages of the participants; their sex; perhaps their relationships one to another, their dress, social status and what they are doing; perhaps their mood or feelings. Further paralinguistic information, such as facial expressions or hand gestures, is available to accompany aural clues of intonation.

Similarly, the setting of the communication is clear: the language learner can see on the screen where the action is taking place. This information may help to clarify whether the situation is very formal, or perhaps informal.’

Jeremy Harmer (2004: 282), on the other hand, gives more structured reasons to justify the attraction of this dimension of learning experience:

- *Seeing language- in- use* : this greatly aids comprehension, since for example, general meaning and moods are often conveyed through expression, gesture and other visual clues. Thus we can observe how intonation can match facial expressions. All such paralinguistic features help viewers to see beyond what they are listening to, and thus interpret the text more deeply.
- *Cross-cultural awareness*: video uniquely allows students a look at situations far beyond their classrooms. This is especially useful if they want to see, for example, typical British ‘body language’ when inviting someone out, or how Americans speak to waiters. Video is also of great value in giving students a chance to see such things as what kinds of food people eat in their countries and what they wear.
- *The power of creation*: when students use video cameras themselves they are given the potential to create something memorable and enjoyable. The camera operators and directors suddenly have considerable power. The task of video -making can provoke genuinely creative and communicative uses of the language, with students finding themselves ‘doing new things in English’(Cooper,1991: 6).
- *Motivation*: for all the reasons so far mentioned, most students show an increased level of interest when they have a chance to see language in use as well as hear it and when this is coupled with interesting tasks.’

The above mentioned criteria are the most crucial to offer video-teaching classes. The author of the research is eager to add that another positive aspect to say ‘yes’ to teaching with video is the development of modern technologies increasingly intruding Latvian schools thus the equipment problem is not that undermining any more.

Thank the rapid improvement of the demonstrative technologies in comparison with those used in 19th, 20th centuries, DVDs have occupied the place of conventional video to a great extent. In what follows a much easier use in terms of recording; a teacher does not necessarily need to waste time to rewind the whole module in order to find a particular scene, DVDs are to be operated much quicker and easier which saves the precious time left for teaching English, for

example. Another advantage lies in the accessibility of DVDs, any teacher, having a computer (and it is scarily possible to do the job of a teacher without a computer nowadays) can practice freely with the DVD material when planning the lesson and preparing tasks or use it to increase intercultural confidence, for example, or for further self-education.

Before paying closer attention to different classroom activities using videos, the author of the research considers it reasonable to mention the three basic types of video. Harmer (2004: 284) extracts the following types:

- *Off-air programmes*: programmes recorded from a television channel. They should be engaging for our students, comprehensible and of a sensible length. The best programmes and excerpts are ones which we can use for a range of activities including prediction, cross-cultural awareness, teaching language, or as spurs for the students' own creativity. It is also important to be informed about the copyright restrictions to avoid serious consequences.
- *Real-world video*: videotape material such as feature films, exercise 'manuals', wildlife documentaries or comedy. There is no reason why it couldn't be used in the classroom that there are no copyright restrictions.
- *Language learning videos* – published to accompany course books. There are also free-standing language learning videos available. The main advantage of specially made videos is that they have been designed with students at a particular level in mind. They are thus likely to be comprehensible, designed to appeal to students' topic interests, and multi use since they can not be used for language study, but also for a number of other activities as well.

Video material can support the whole lesson or used as part of an activity, for example, to introduce a discussion.

The author of the research has investigated several sources offering video teaching activities; as a result, the most interesting, motivating and up-to-date video teaching techniques seem to be those presented by Harmer (2004: 286 -287), because they have been designed to awaken the students' curiosity, through prediction activities, so that afterwards, when they finally watch the video sequence in its entirety, they will have some expectations about it:

- *Fast forward*: the teacher presses the 'play' button and the fast forwards the video so that the sequence shoots pass silently and at great speed, taking only a few seconds. When it is

over the teacher can ask students what the extract was all about and whether they can guess what the characters are saying.

- *Silent viewing(for language)*: the teacher plays the tape at normal speed, but without the sound. Students have to guess what the characters are saying. When they have done this, the teacher plays the tape with sound so that they can check to see if they guessed correctly.
- *Silent viewing(for music)*: the same technique can be used with music. Teachers show a sequence without sound and ask students what kind of music they would put behind it and why. When the sequence is the shown again, with sound, students can judge whether they chose the same mood as the director/composer.
- *Freeze frame*: at any stage during a video sequence we can ‘freeze’ the picture, stopping the participants dead in their tracks. This is extremely useful for asking the students what they think will happen next or what the character will say next.
- *Partial viewing*: one way of provoking the students’ curiosity is to allow them only a partial view of the picture on the screen. We can use pieces of card to cover most of the screen, only leaving the edges on view; we can put little squares of paper all over the screen and remove them one-by-one so that what is happening is only gradually revealed. A variation of this is to use a large ‘divider’ to allow either half of the class to see only their half of the screen. They then have to say what they think the people on the other side saw.
- *Pictureless listening(language)*: the teacher covers the screen, turns the monitor away from the students, or turns the brightness control right down. The students then listen to a dialogue and have to guess such things as where it is taking place and who the speakers are. Can they guess their age, for example? What do they think the speakers actually look like?
- *Pictureless listening(music)*: where an excerpt has a prominent music track, students can listen to it and then say – based on the mood it appears to convey – what kind of scene they think it accompanies and where it is taking place.
- *Pictureless listening(sound effects)*: in a scene without dialogue students can listen to the sounds to guess the scene. For example, they might hear the lightning of a gas stove, eggs being broken and fried, coffee being poured and the milk and sugar stirred in. They then tell ‘the story’ they think they have just heard.

- *Picture or speech*: divide the class in two so that half of the class faces the screen, and half faces away. The students who can see the screen have to describe what is happening to the students who cannot. This forces them into immediate fluency while the non-watching students struggle to understand what is going on, and is an effective way of mixing reception and production in spoken English. Halfway through an excerpt the students can change round.

These are just some of the video-watching based activities Jeremy Harmer (2004: 284-293) offers. Most of the activities are based on guessing information which is supposed to keep the students curious and involved.

IMPLEMENTING MODERN TECHNOLOGIES AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH

Nowadays the world has become more and more technical, people are surrounded by different kinds of technological procedures in their every-day life when buying a train ticket or withdrawing money from their bank account as there is no person to speak to if problems arise, for example. This suggests that it is important to keep up with the modern tendencies of the 21st century. The same idea refers to schools and teaching methods. According to Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 8) the use of technology in teaching becomes as natural as the use of books or pens and paper, and there are many reasons for this:

- Internet access – either in private homes, or at Internet cafes – is becoming increasingly available to learners.
- Younger learners are growing up with technology, and it is a natural and integrated part of their lives. For these learners the use of technology is a way to bring the outside world into the classroom. And some of these younger learners will in turn become teachers themselves.
- English, as an international language, is being used in technologically mediated contexts.
- Technology, especially the Internet, presents us with new opportunities for authentic tasks and materials, as well as access to a wealth of ready-made ELT materials.
- The Internet offers excellent opportunities for collaboration and communication between learners who are geographically dispersed.
- Technology is offered with published materials such as course books and resource books for teachers.

- Learners increasingly expect language schools to integrate technology into teaching.
- Technology offers new ways for practising language and assessing performance.
- Technology is becoming increasingly mobile. It can be used not only in the classroom, lecture hall, computer room or self-access centre, it can also be used at home, on the way to school and in Internet cafes.
- Using a range of ICT tools can give learners exposure to and practice in all of the four main language skills – speaking, listening, writing and reading.

The above mentioned authors also introduce the term *digital native* that has been coined to refer to someone who grows up using technology, and who thus feels comfortable and confident with it – typically today’s children. This is an additional point which puts forward that teachers are supposed to be familiar with technologies and change the teaching methods they used years ago to fit learners’ needs nowadays, as the teacher still has to carry out the most challenging duty to raise learners’ motivation.

USE OF THE INTERNET

The *Internet* – alias the *Net* – is also known as cyberspace, the information superhighway, the online community, the electronic library and the digital revolution, as Teeler and Gray (2000) put it, these are all series of creative metaphors trying to define it. It has been hyped as the most significant development in communication tools since the invention of the printing press and then condemned as the end of civilisation. In fact, the Internet is a network of people and information, it contains more than 100,000 independent networks –public and private- are currently connected to form this vast global communications system. Teeler and Gray (2000: 1)

In this part of the research the author would like to take a closer look at the process of introducing the Internet into teaching. A number of guidebooks for teaching English using the Internet have been issued recently, yet the author considers Gavin Dudeney’s and Nicky Hockly’s (2007) the most handy one. It is a step-by-step guide through the theory as well as the practical implementation of technologies in teaching English, offering sample activities, especially useful for teachers who are not very familiar with the wide variety of teaching sources offered by the Net.

Using *websites* is one of the easiest and least stressful ways of getting started with technology in the classroom. The *web* is a source of content which can be used as a window to the wider world outside your class, and is – of course – a readily available collection of authentic material. There is an amazing array of topics, offering to choose from authentic (written for Internet surfers in

general) sources or ELT-specific sites (made by, and for, teachers), monolingual or multilingual sites, sites with multimedia or just simple texts. Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 27)

The above mentioned prizes the Internet as a “treasure chest” for teachers offering not only diverse ELT materials, but also encouraging them to develop self-designed materials to fresh their course-book-based lessons up with something that the students of the generation of the 21st century are more likely to accept. This may also bridge the way over the generation gap ensuring that both, “teachers and students see the use of the Internet as an intrinsic part of the learning process” (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007: 28) contributing to learners’ motivation, thus a teacher is more likely to be respected by the students than one showing no confidence in terms of modern teaching aids at all.

According to the daily school-life observations of the author of this Paper, it is crucial to link the students to the awareness of the Internet as a means of learning English thus the vast majority of learners are very keen on using the Internet as a ‘time wasting machine’, as students put it, ‘for relaxation after school’ which involves playing cruel and nonsensical computer games. The author of the research sees the role of a teacher particularly in the duty to involve students into entertaining activities distracting students’ attention from the above mentioned misuse of the Internet, producing a generation of consumers without creativity and the will to explore, discover and invent something new in order to make life better. It is the teachers’ part to show students how much they can do on their own, and support them on their way to everybody’s individual success and improvement. Last but not least, it is vital, as Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 28) put it, that learners appreciate the Internet as useful, as well as entertaining tool in the classroom, and that it can contribute to their language development in a variety of ways, for example by giving them the opportunity to build up vocabulary or improve their listening skills. Lower-level classes can be engaged with visual multimedia materials, the use of songs and video materials.

As to learners independent studies, there are plenty of ELT websites which provide valuable opportunities for more controlled language work and are often a great help to learners who need to brush up on certain aspects of the language or to prepare for an exam. Such sites are often ideal for homework.

Authentic sites, on the other hand, can be chosen to fit learners’ interests. This is a key factor in keeping motivation high. They can be guided towards being comfortable with understanding the content of a site and identifying what they need to know or find out without getting bogged down in having to understand every word on the screen, as Dudeney and Hockly put it (2007).

Teeler and Gray (2000: 62) suggest teachers to carefully decide on their objectives before designing an Internet based activity, and ask themselves the following questions that might help them to smoothly plaster the road to their teaching aim:

- What are you hoping students will get out of the activity?
- Why do you want to do this activity on the Internet rather than through other media?
- How long do you expect the activity to last: part of a lesson, several lessons, all year?
- Who are your students going to communicate with: each other, another class in the same school, another school in the same city, students in another country, a native speaker, a company or another organisation?
- Are you planning on using this activity with more than one class and / or level?

There is a certain portion of experimentation anticipated as ‘there is no one correct tool for every activity or every group of students’ (Teeler and Gray, 2000: 62).

The above mentioned authors also advise teachers to look through the course books they are using at lessons, ‘pinpointing the activities that did not seem to work well, that did not challenge the students or engage their interest for whatever reason. Analysing the shortcomings of these activities will frequently suggest an area of the Internet to use for a task: letters that go nowhere hint at email; out-of-date newspaper articles imply use of the Web, as do discussions of films never seen; debating or defending commonly held opinions craves a synchronous multicultural medium such as *chat* or *discussion boards*’ (Teeler and Gray, 2000: 62).

The author of the research finds the idea to involve students into planning the course content, suggested by Teeler and Gray (2000: 82), to be valuable as the students would feel a certain degree of importance contributing to the designing of the learning material for themselves, thus motivating them to study harder and with increased interest. The authors also believe it to be a good idea to start the first day of the course asking students discuss the proposed syllabus uttering their comments, suggestions and developing arguments, why they think one or another topic requires the implementation of the Internet.

It is essential that students as well as teachers are equipped with good searching skills thus ensuring that the technology enhances the learning experience rather than impeding it. The author of the research would like to emphasize on the three most used *search engines* in terms of getting access to *websites*. Although the students often appear to be technically skilled (they know what buttons / keys to push to get forward) due to their ICT classes, yet the teacher ought to take some time to ensure, his or her students quickly find exactly what they are looking for. This might

avoid the students spending hours preparing their homework, and in the end causing more negative feelings about surfing the Net for English than making them feel positive – motivated to work. This suggests that students with good practical searching skills might nevertheless lack a bit of theoretical information in terms of finding the most effective websites. Here it could be the teacher's part to inform the learners about what information there actually is stored on the websites and how it is organized.

Dudeny and Hockly (2007: 30-31) claim that *Google* (www.google.com) the most well-known website, currently indexing over twelve billion web pages. So how to find exactly what one wants? To achieve precise results, the user should define the keywords properly or use the “phrase search” technique which involves wrapping part of a phrase in interved commas, thus ensuring that Google will treat the words not as individual entities, but will actually look for sentences on web pages which contain those words in that particular order. The ultimate trick with Google is to try to imagine the web page one is looking for, and then try to visualize the content that is on this ideal page. This technique will help decide on exactly what to search for. Teeler and Gray (2000) give a more technical guidance how to navigate the web calling it the *point-and-click technology* explaining how to pass the mouse in order to connect the wanted link or website. Teeler and Gray (2000: 13-15)

Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) is called a *subject guide*. In comparison to Google, “Yahoo! was never intended as a keyword search engine, but rather a way of browsing titles. Users will have a notion of what they are looking for, but not necessarily the exact title” (Dudeny and Hockly, 2007: 31). According to this, Yahoo! divides its content into subject areas, and subdivisions of those areas. Instead of a keyword search from the main page, users browse the section which best reflects their interests, and then search. The above mentioned authors also claim that it is worth noting that Yahoo! Search results can often be more accurate than Google results as they tend to lead searchers to the first page of a website, rather than dropping them indiscriminately into the middle, were the chances of confusion are higher.

Ask (www.ask.com) allows real language search, this means, the users can type simple questions as search queries. The website does not actually analyse or indeed understand the question, but it rather selects the keywords from the query.

There are some interesting activities offered to introduce the topic of searching the Internet in class. One of the examples given by Dudeny and Hockly :

- Produce a trivia quiz or short ‘treasure hunt’ type activity for the learners. Give them a set of questions and allow them to use the three search pages to find the answers. Make it into

a timed quiz, with the first team to finish bringing the activity to an end. Then go over the answers and help them to see how to improve their search skills.

- Another variation of this activity includes learners then making a quiz for another team to do. They must be able to find the answers themselves before they hand over the task to the other team.
- The whole class could make a quiz for the teacher to do as homework. This can be a highly motivating task for learners, as they pit themselves and their Internet skills against the teacher's.

Dudeny and Hockly also give a list of other sites worth considering when searching for movies (www.imdb.com) or books (www.amazon.com), as well as a command of sites related to teaching materials, projects and presentations, software allowing to search for MP3 format song files, TV, news, sports, video clips and other subjects. (Dudeny and Hockly, 2007: 33)

Finally, the author of the research would like to focus on further aspects to bear in mind when choosing websites and planning lessons using the Internet. The most important one is how to evaluate, how useful and appropriate the sites are for the classroom. The above mentioned authors offer various standard criteria for judging websites in terms of

- *accuracy* – check qualifications, experience of the person who wrote the page in the ‘about me’ link;
- *currency* – whether the content is up-to-date, especially about factual information;
- *content* – whether the site is interesting and stimulating for the learners;
- *functionality* – is the site easy to use? Are there any broken links. A teacher should also check how quickly the page loads, check sound, video and animation work.

Functionality will be a category with consequences for all teachers. Not only can it be very frustrating to follow through the content of a site to be met with broken links and missing information, but it can be equally frustrating to wait twenty minutes for a short video to download due to the speed of your connection. Careful preparation and investigation in the lesson planning stage can go a long way towards making the learners’ experience enjoyable and trouble-free. (Dudeny and Hockly, 2007: 35)

Another useful tool in terms of setting up audio-visual classes implementing the use of modern technologies and the Internet is the so called social software. As the author of the research considers this a valuable contribution to modern language teaching and learning ways, the

following part of the Paper is devoted to three examples of the software, which allows people to connect, communicate and collaborate online, such as *blogs*, *wikis* and *podcasts*.

According to the definition given by Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 86-87), a *blog* is essentially a web page with regular diary or journal entries. The term is short for *web log*. The most common type of blog is kept by one person, who will regularly post comments, thoughts, analyses, experiences of daily life, interesting links, jokes or any other form of content, to a web page. Blogs may consist of written text only, or they may include pictures or photos – photoblogs – or even audio and video. Most blogs will allow readers to comment on blog entries, thereby creating an online community around a common topic.

There are also such kinds of blogs specifying on education, called *edublogs*. They cover a wide range of topics, from musings on educational policy and developments to learner compositions, and *tutor blog* via which teachers can provide their learners with news and comments on issues, extra reading practice or homework, online links, a summary of a class for learners who were unable to attend, study tips and so on.

The author of the research would like to highlight the *personal* approach when using blogs to practice language skills whether during the lessons or individually at home, as all bloggers can attach their photos to the blog. It is also a useful way of keeping in touch with the learners during off-school time like holidays, for example, when it is necessary to continue work on a project, research, or there are other activities in progress that students might need assistance for. The same kind of software is used in Australia, where students of some schools communicate with their teachers on huge distances because it is actually not possible for them to attend schools and meet the teacher every day in person.

Blogs are helpful tools in terms of raising socio-cultural awareness as it is possible to contact people from different parts of the world. As Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 90) claim, they provide a ‘real-world’ tool for learners with which to practise their written English. The sociable nature of a blog might assure students write accurately as a blog is publicly available on the Internet. In theory anyone can read the blog, although only invited members can be given permission to add comments.

When evaluating blogs as written assignments, the criteria will probably include those used to evaluate more traditional, paper-based forms of writing, such as accuracy, fluency, coherence and relevance, but they may also include criteria related to the visual nature of this electronic medium, such as the effective use of visuals, or visual presentation overall, and other areas like the lengths of postings and awareness of audience.

The author of the research would like to mention that there is a clearly noticeable difference between students' presentation skills reflecting the above mentioned criteria or rules to ensure a good outcome. The author has tried this type of audio-visual lesson material to raise students' awareness in terms of the cultural heritage of Britain, where it was the students' task to find useful Internet sources to give a presentation on one particular topic (they could choose from a list, prepared by the teacher). It was frequently the crucial point whether the student had used quality visuals, and spoke to the audience the way they felt involved, which ensured excellent results leaving those, not having chosen their video jugs carefully enough or using blurred images, behind. See appendix for further reference.

If teachers consider to try *audio and video blogs*, they will face the need for access to audio or video equipment, as well as editing software and sufficient space on a web server to store the multimedia files. Audio equipment will include a headset with microphone, and video equipment a digital video camera or webcam, although webcam images tend to be of poorer quality overall, claim Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 93). However, the author of the research considers them a good way of involving students into more practical language work, thus contributing to their motivation and team-work skills as well as making students feel proud of what they have produced, especially if they are given the opportunity to demonstrate their work to their peer students in other countries, in frames of an international project for example.

Further on, a *wiki* in comparison to a blog, is like a public website, or public web page, started by one person, but which subsequent visitors can add to, delete or change as they wish. Instead of being a static web page like a blog, a *wiki* is more dynamic, and can have multiple authors. A *wiki* is like having a publicly accessible word processing document available online, which anyone can edit. The term comes from the Hawaiian word for 'quick' (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007: 86).

In terms of using a *wiki* for learning purposes, it can be kept as an internal class project, and given the public nature of the Internet. It is possibly worth asking other classes / learners (for example in the same school) to take a look at the *wiki*, and possibly to contribute to it. Knowing, that the *wiki* will be viewed by readers outside the classroom, and will be available on the Internet for public scrutiny, is an added incentive for learners.

Finally, as with blogs, setting up a *wiki* is a straight forward process, with no specialist technical knowledge needed (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007: 98).

In terms of *podcasts*, the theory says: "a *podcast* is an audio and / or video file that is 'broadcast' via the Internet and can be downloaded to a computer or mobile device such as an MP3 player for

listening / viewing. The word *podcast* comes from combining *iPod* and *broadcast*, iPod being the brand name for the Apple portable MP3 player (Dudeny and Hockly, 2007: 86)

Typically, a *podcast* will consist of a 'show' which is released either sporadically or at regular intervals, for example every day or once a week. A *podcast* can be on any topic, and can include music and video. Video podcasts are also known as *Vodcasts* or *PodClips*. A *podcast* can last anything upwards a few minutes to an hour or more. *Podcasts* can be authentic – for example, BBC radio shows are often downloadable as podcasts – or specially made for language learners. A podcast directory aimed specially at teachers and learners of English is Englishcaster (<http://www.englishcaster.com>) as Dudeny and Hockly claim (2007: 98).

The above mentioned authors also outline two main uses of *podcasts* in teaching. Firstly, learners can listen to podcasts made by others and, secondly, they can produce their own podcasts.

- Language teachers can encourage learners to find a podcast on a topic that interests them and get them to subscribe and then listen to it regularly in their free time;
- High-level learners can subscribe to authentic podcasts, for example sites such as BBC News (<http://www.bbc.co.uk>)
- More demanding, but perhaps more rewarding, is the option of learners actually producing their own podcast, which is then stored on the Internet, or they can produce a series of regular podcasts on a variety of topics, much like a radio show.

This approach is becoming increasingly common in tertiary education, for example for professors to record lectures as podcasts, so that students who miss a class can download the lecture for later listening on their computers or mobile devices like an MP3 player. Podcasts are also used in teacher training or for self-study purposes.

EFL/ESL podcasts are available for all levels of learners, covering a wide variety of topics, from vocabulary items to discussions on topics of interest, to jokes and to learning songs. (Dudeny and Hockly, 2007: 99)

Last but not least, it is a good idea to have a clear time frame for creating a podcast or working on a blog project, such as a term or semester or a couple of months to avoid the blog fatigue, or blogfade from setting in. If learners' interest does not flag after this time, the projects can always be continued or the teacher might want to experiment using these software opportunities for different purposes. Dudeny and Hockly (2007)

INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARDS IN ELT

This section of the research is devoted to the implementation of *interactive whiteboards* as audio-visual means of classroom practice when teaching English.

Firstly, it is important to have a closer look at what this teaching aid actually can be used for, and how it contributes to learners' progress in terms of English language knowledge.

The new Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English explains the notion as 'a large board, for example in a classroom, which is connected to a computer so that information from the computer can be shown on it and controlled by touching the board. (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: 2009)

The author of the research considers the definition offered by Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 122) to be the most expository, paying special attention to the aspect of the *interactivity* of the whiteboard. The above mentioned authors claim that an IWB is made 'interactive' by being linked to a computer which uses special IWB software. The three essential components needed to use an IWB are the whiteboard itself, a computer which has IWB software installed and a data projector (or 'beamer') which projects the image from the computer screen onto the whiteboard. What makes the interactive whiteboard different from a normal whiteboard is that the teacher uses a special pen (or their finger with some makes of the board) to manipulate content on the whiteboard itself, rather than using the mouse to manipulate images on the computer screen, which the teacher can also do. The latest IWBs can also be used with a wireless tablet PC (a smaller, hand-held computer) instead of a larger desktop or laptop computer. This has the added advantage that it can be passed around so that learners can manipulate the whiteboard from the tablet PC.

As it is possible to manipulate the items of the whiteboard from any point of the classroom (if there is access to the wireless tablet mentioned above), the teacher is not 'attached' to their computer any more in order to move the mouse to control the screen. This is, in addition, beneficial for teachers who spend long hours in front of the classroom in the bright light of the overhead projector, for example teachers of Maths, Physics, Latvian and Biology in Dobeles State Gymnasium, as their lessons to a large extent are based on the use of interactive whiteboards and the light harms their eyesight.

This does not suggest that spending some time in the light of the projector is completely avoidable, it is, however, a chance to have a time off during the lesson.

In terms of learners, "IWBs look and sound impressive" as Dudeney and Hockley (2007: 123) put it. This classroom tool offers a full-size colour screen, with video, CD audio, pictures,

interactive exercises like those found on a CD-ROM, access to the Internet, and more, all instantly accessible at the touch of the IWB pen. This pen can be used to write over the images on the screen, highlighting things in different colours, using a variety of fonts and styles to write in, or use a pen to hide and reveal images on the screen. Items can be moved around the screen, and previous lessons content can easily be kept and retrieved, as everything is saved on the computer. This means that huge bank of resources is always available at the touch of a pen.

The author of the research has observed that even if a teacher is not familiar with technologies and does not make use of the vast majority of the resources and tools available on the IWB software, it is still worth trying because, for example, of the opportunity to have any number of boards to write on without cleaning them, which saves time, as it is the only way use the conventional ones (whether those to write on with pens or chalk).

Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 123) agree that the experiences and opinions of teachers who have used IWBs in the classroom tend to be positive. Teachers point to increased teacher and learner motivation through the introduction of a new multimedia tool into the classroom. IWBs are particularly effective for the 'heads up' presentation stages in a lesson, as the teacher can have learners all looking at and concentrating on the screen at the same time.

However, the opinions in terms of the effectiveness of teaching with IWBs differ. Dudeney and Hockly (2007) report on research results that suggest – “IWBs can directly affect learners' motivation and attention levels, but there is no direct correlation between heavy use of IWBs and increased test scores” (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007: 124).

This suggests that although learners may enjoy IWBs as tools, there is no direct evidence to show that it actually improves their English. As with any new tool, it is as well to keep in mind some of the disadvantages associated with IWBs, namely their high cost and the fact that teacher training in how to use IWBs effectively is often ignored, claim the above mentioned experts in addition.

According to the author of the research under observation, her practise of IWBs shows that:

- it is more motivating with younger students as they are eager to interact, that means, they do not hesitate to come to the board to write on it, to do the tasks (use the text marker tool in different colours to highlight certain word or tense forms, for example, or use the pen tool to write names of animals next to / on the pictures on the screen);
- students clearly become aware of how much their handwritings have actually become worse, messy, at times, hardly possible to read. They tend, thus to remain sitting instead

of volunteering to come to the IWB and practise, even if they probably want it, yet what they do not is to make themselves objects of laughter;

- as children nowadays have become used to having different kinds of technologies around them, many of them ‘skip’ the ‘wow’! effect of introducing this modern teaching machinery. They tend to show boredom, however, when offered the choice to work with the course book or practice the use of articles, for example, they still choose the board. This suggests, IWBs are effective as ‘refreshing’ and activating tools enabling audio-visual performance to communicate the content of a lesson to the full (for example, attaching a 10-minute video jug on Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum when working on a task on the use of articles with the same title), this is, to the author’s point of view, also a good way of implementing items connected to the history and culture of Great Britain, and it does not take a lot of time, however offers the students ‘to take a short breath’ while learning grammar, which is mostly not a beloved part of language acquisition;
- Finally, the author strongly supports the introduction and use of new and diverse teaching aids and methods, as it still appears to be the teacher’s part to be responsible for students’ interest, thus a modern teacher should search for methodology applicable to the generation of the 21st century, which is, to no extent, an easy task.
- In addition, according to the register available in the school where the author of the research is employed, there are just a few cases when the IWB available to all the teaching staff has been used as an interactive learning tool, in most cases it has been used as a screen for showing movies, demonstrating educational materials or giving presentations, which is also good in terms of visualisation the subject yet not the purpose of the *interactive whiteboard*.

Some ELT publishers now produce IWB software to be used in conjunction with course books. These are usually interactive versions of the course book itself, which can be displayed and manipulated on the IWB, rather than additional activities such as those traditionally found on course book related CD-ROMs.

CD-ROM AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

In this part of the research the author is going to define the above mentioned type of courseware, explore the use of it according to the theory, as well as reveal some practical aspects of the use of CD-ROMs for individual language acquisition.

CD-ROM is the short form for 'Compact Disc Read Memory', it looks exactly like as audio CD but contains multimedia files that are programmed to use text, images, audio and video to provide interactivity. CD-ROMs are often included free or at little extra cost with course books and work books. CR-ROMs accompanying courses typically have content related to each course unit, providing learners with extra reading and listening materials, recording functionality to practise pronunciation and speaking, and with grammar and vocabulary activities like matching vocabulary to definitions, drag and drop exercises, gap-fills, crosswords, games and quizzes. Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 113)

The author of the research uses course books from the "Solutions" series (Tim Falla, Paul A Davies, 2007), developed for different language levels in forms 7, 8 and 10 equipped with MultiROMs for every student. Although the students claim to like the new course books and the interactive CD-ROMs, there is a tendency to use their computer for other kinds of activities than practising their English skills on the CD-ROM (more factual information in the practical part of the research).

However, the author of the research supports the inclusion of CD-ROMs as course book attachments thus offering an opportunity to those who prefer to study on their own as well as those students requiring extra exercise.

Dudeney and Hockly agree, that CD-ROMs are preliminary designed for learners to work on alone as follow-up to a lesson, either in a school self-access centre or at home. They can include features such as allowing learners to choose their own path through the CD-ROM materials by making their own 'lesson plans'- choosing which activities to do and in what order to do them. Many course book CD-ROMs also have testing materials incorporated, so that learners can check their own progress, as well as a grammar reference section and mini-dictionary. Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 113)

A good example of using a CD-ROM for language learning purposes is the B.A.L.T.I.C. It has been developed within the framework of the European Council project "Copernicus" in 1998 under the guidance of Prof. Ingrida Kramina.

The author of the research has had the opportunity to practice English using this CD-ROM, and thus can evaluate its usefulness and motivating quality from a learner's point of view. The author of the research advocates the attractive manner of presenting the process of foreign language learning to the target audience – the language student. As some of the interim goals in the course book on B.A.L.T.I.K. suggest it Kramina (1998: 7) :

- while studying the learner will experience neither stress nor feeling of inferiority;

- the learner will develop his language skills gradually at his own pace, receiving encouragement from the programme;
- the learner will be able to work at the development of the relevant subskills constituting the speaking skill, i.e., the programme presents the learner with the opportunity of developing his pronunciation skills bringing them as close to the level of the native speaker as possible;
- the learner will work at the development of his/her phonetic skills using the technical facilities presented by the programme;
- the development of the phonetic aspect of the speaking skill will enable the learner to avoid or overcome the difficulties usually experienced when listening to the target language without textual support.

In terms of the audio-visual facilities of this particular means of learning English independently, it offers:

- to listen to the text in English and try to understand it;
- to look at the visual support by the pictures;
- to record the learner's voice and hear his / her recordings;
- to listen to native speakers and compare the learner's own pronunciation with the presentation of the native speakers.

Finally, the author of the research would like to recite the words personally addressing every user of the B.A.L.T.I.C. :

“From this moment YOU are the lord and master of your time, of YOUR patience. YOUR motivation is supported by YOUR personal wants and needs and YOU decide why YOU are learning the language”

(Kramina, 1998: 10).

The success of this CD-ROM is stated by the author of the project Ingrida Kramina as follows:

“The pilot study and the feedback from the students representing different learning styles prove to the fact that the created programme answers students needs more adequately than a traditional course book does”

(Kramina, 2000: 178).

Analysing the reasons for learners' approval Kramina (2000: 179) quotes Reid (1997) claiming that there are four main groups of learners that acquire the knowledge in different ways: reflectors (concrete-passive), theorists (abstract passive), pragmatics (abstract-active), and

activists (concrete-active). Each type of learners needs different kinds of activities at a lesson. This suggests that the origins of learners' interest in CD-ROM assisted language learning may lie in the method that treats every learner as an individual, meeting his / her needs in terms of language learning and certain intelligences, as well as offering the learner free choice of setting the pace, learning style and content, "thus avoiding the 'mass instruction' approach, when a group of individuals are brought together in classroom or laboratory and treated as multiple copies of one 'average' individual" (Kramina, 2000: 179).

MASS MEDIA AS A HELPFUL TOOL IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

(TV, THE RADIO)

"The English language is not fixed but constantly changing. The media, TV, radio and newspapers, reflect that change. For that reason alone they deserve their place as part of an English course"

(Tomalin, 1990: 100)

The radio has been a means of communication for centuries, providing information and friendship to the listeners all around the world, especially those left without much human company. It is also not praised to actually be a means of modern communication nowadays as the Internet and television to a huge extent have taken its place. The author of the research, however, considers the radio as a useful stimulus for language learning developing students' creativity, listening and speaking skills.

It is at terms surprising to listen to students answers during the speaking part of their School-leaving Exam in the end of form 12 in Latvia, they show great difficulty describing the benefits of the radio, mentioning any every-day-life situations it might prove to be useful or even share their personal experience and the role of this mass media in their everyday lives. Although young people are frequently surrounded by music, it is MP3 players the most part of them use and they download the songs they listen to from the Internet. Nevertheless, the radio does not deserve to be forgotten or undervalued.

There are two basic ways of exploiting radio broadcasts for language learning:

- it can be used in class where the students listen to a programme as a task;
- as individual listening routine at home.

Barry Tomalin (1990: 81) claims that it is important to build up a habit of *regular* radio listening.

This offers:

- the availability of a native speaker or, depending on the station, a proficiency level model of English grammar, vocabulary and, above all, accent;
- topics and areas discussed on the radio have the effect of bringing the outside world into the classroom;
- the psychological effect of simply listening to a foreign language over the radio, the ear becomes attuned to the sounds of English and the students' overall proficiency in understanding the language improves.

The above mentioned author comments on listening to radio broadcasts for foreign language learning, stating that 'it does not matter if you do not understand it. Just listening without understanding can unconsciously help the student get the rhythm and sound of English speech' (Tomalin, 1990: 82)

M.A.R.I.D.I. Quick Teacher is also based on language acquisition using unconscious memorizing.

The author of the research would like to share interesting findings gained via the daily pedagogical practice of English language teaching, especially teaching speaking and conversation. One of the students had a very unusual manner of speaking - the intonation and pronunciation of this student resembled the speaking manner of the time of the 18th century. The author of the research found out that the student uses to spend a lot of time watching Jane Austen films in English and her speaking manner to a huge extent had become like this of the actors performing the characters of Jane Austen's novels. This correlates with Tomalin's idea of adjusting the rhythm and the sound of English speech via listening to it frequently, thus proving to the claim that students copy the speaking manner they are accompanied by.

Tomalin (1990: 83) also highlights the usefulness of radio broadcasts as up-to-date material and a source for *real language practice*. The author continues claiming that "a lot of what students are asked to say in class is pure routine. The stimulus of radio should give the class an opportunity to *use* the language' not repeat chunks the students have learnt by heart all over the time (Tomalin, 1990: 83).

The author of the research can add to this problem thus there are often the same ideas / example sentences to spot in students papers after a test which the teacher has given to them during the learning process. This suggests, some students remain unable to adjust the vocabulary they pick up in classroom to develop and communicate their own ideas. The radio could therefore be an

opportunity for language learners to encourage the extension of using their vocabulary, to enrich it.

An other benefit that the author of the research would like to draw attention to is that via listening to the radio, in particular newscasts, the student can firstly, gain information and prepare for school leaving exams, and secondly, one can do it while pottering around the house doing any household chores, for example. Thus the radio becomes a lot of a time-saving activity plus one, as a result, is informed about what is going on in the world. Students are often asked to share their point of view on any topical issues in their home countries or countries abroad, and it is hardly ever possible to receive a confident answer as the student does not have any idea / does not know about the recent issues. On the other hand, there are such learners who use to watch news, are, however, unable to communicate their ideas in the target language, English for the exam. The radio provides solutions for both of the problems – it is informative and at the same time offers the necessary vocabulary to put it in English. In addition, as news broadcasts are usually hourly, one can hear the same news items, the same words again which helps to memorize useful chunks.

Radio broadcasts also offer to hear a vast variety of voices and acoustics while course book CD-ROMS mainly have the same speakers on the record. This is another useful reason why the radio should be used for exam practice. Exam listening tasks contain different background sounds (the murmur of a market place, students in a classroom where one is being interviewed, noise of the traffic in a street where someone asks for the way etc.) As a radio programme often has them as well, a student can get his ear attuned to these background noises in order to overhear them and actively listen just to the information asked for the exam task.

Tomalin (1990: 81-101) suggests the following activities to implement the radio as a ,means of foreign language teaching:

- a log book (the class make a list of programmes they have heard on the radio putting down the day/ time; country/station; evaluating how difficult it was to understand the programme marking each one by 1(for the easiest) to 5(for the most difficult) and adding their comments on the content of the broadcast);
- a feedback discussion after listening to a programme in class when students express their impressions while they are still fresh, practice asking questions and reporting back someone's words (Reported Speech);

- reading follow-up. After a broadcast on, the teacher can introduce a text on the same topic as heard on the radio;
- members of the class might like to write to the broadcasting station, saying that they heard the broadcast and giving time , wavelength and frequency. The class could write and express their appreciation of a broadcast or criticisms of it;
- script writing. Students are asked to predict the next episode of a series and write the next script, or part of it, using the same characters in the series;
- to make the sound characters (of a series, for example) become visible, the students could draw them and probably send them to the radio station;
- teaching a pop song. In this case the students choose an English or American pop song, work out the lyrics, and then write a script in which they play the song in short bits and explain what the words of the song mean.

The author of the research would like to add her own the following ideas to the ones already described by Tomalin above:

- email native speakers asking for explanations of words heard on a radio broadcast. Students use to take part in various international projects thus making new friends abroad. This might be a good opportunity to use, and ask for some, probably slang or contemporary English words' explanations / example sentences which the students could discuss and share their gains later in class;
- in teams of 3-4 write a script for the video of a pop song describing the setting, the characters and the actions that might be taken, as well as giving arguments, why particularly their ideas could be the best. Some students might be the jury to decide upon the winner;
- while listening to songs, students could make notes to report on the authors feelings when writing one particular song. This works well even if there is no lyrics at all (classical music), or to modify the same activity, ask the students explain what the author of the song meant by each line, what ideas he/ she wants to communicate;
- after listening to an interview with a writer, for instance, the students might like to share their approval of a book already read, or just the ideas the author communicates on that broadcast, or thank him / her for raising the student's interest in reading the book.

The author of the research believes this brings real language practice into classroom, as it makes the students be part of real communication with real people for a real purpose which thus adds to the learners' motivation.

An example of bringing these ideas into life is that some of the students taught by the author of the research have already written to the authors of books they love reading. One girl of form ten has been writing lyrics for already existing melodies of pop songs, her lyrics are of course different from the original as this student dresses her personal feelings into her own texts.

Tomalin (1990) suggests to use such radio stations as the BBC External Services and the Voice of America. Broadcasts like BBC English by Radio (with beginners and elementary level students), BBC News (with more advanced students).

Last but not least, the author of the book *Video, TV & Radio in the English Class* states that “radio is not as effective for direct teaching as video; however it is more easily accessible, and this makes it an excellent self-access tool” (Tomalin, 1990: 82).

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRACTICAL PART OF THE RESEARCH

This part of the Paper is devoted to the author's practical work, which involves:

- descriptions of audio-visual activities designed and approved by the author during her English classes;
- the analysis of the activities practised in classroom;
- data collected via questioning Latvian, English and German students on the application of audio-visual teaching aids for foreign language studies in their schools abroad;
- the author's suggestions on the data provided.

The aims of the practical part are to share the author's ideas in terms of foreign language teaching activities.

To investigate on the method of audio-visual approach in Latvian, English and German schools.

The number of students questioned in each country: 20

The age group: Forms 10 -11 (16-17 year-olds)

The schools participating: E. Glika Alūksne State Gymnasium and Daugavpils State Gymnasium (Latvia), the students of Bournemouth and Avonbourne Schools (Great Britain) . Students of Otto Hahn Gymnasium and Immanuel Kant Gymnasium (Germany).

The author of the Paper under observation has been practicing foreign language teaching at schools for 7 years which involves teaching German to primary school students and teaching English to primary and secondary school students more recently.

The author advocates innovative methods, the learning via understanding process not learning by heart, the implementation of thinking approach and the use of modern technologies into teaching foreign languages as far as it helps to communicate the subject thus is not just for pleasure or interferes with the discipline in classroom or does not meet the study goals. The author tries to offer different learning strategies thus the students can choose the most appropriate one for their individual development.

The time spent practising foreign language teaching at diverse schools suggests that there are no ready-made patterns of teaching for long-term use as:

- every group of students is different, with specific preferences and abilities;

- students learning skills and motivation differs not only according to their age group as widely discussed in literature, but it also depends on the time they live in and social environment, as well as their origin;
- the role and status in society of a teacher has dramatically changed during the last few years which affects students' attitude to teaching and schools in general.

The author of the research has visited schools in Great Britain, Norway and Germany and observed foreign language classes as well as using different teaching methods when teaching other subjects. This has widened the author's horizon and has been a beneficial contribution to her further practice as a foreign language teacher.

The author has actively participated in two international projects and acquired useful experience in terms of group management, culture studies and developing new ideas to improve native learners' foreign language knowledge, motivation and cultural understanding and tolerance.

SELF-DESIGNED LESSON PLANS READY FOR USE IN CLASSROOM

1) Welcome to the real life game. This activity has been designed for 9th formers with the aim to practise conversations making the surrounding possibly alive, close to situations that might happen in real life. To achieve this and visualize the environment the teacher has made use of different tools and aids available in the classroom, such as the map of London, CDs, brochures, catalogues, the desks are also placed differently if needed to provide each pair of students with enough space.

This activity was tried and shown to the colleagues of the author practising in the same region as an open lesson. It was considered to be successful and provide the students with motivation as everybody was happy to take part.

The appendix part holds the hand-outs for this activity.

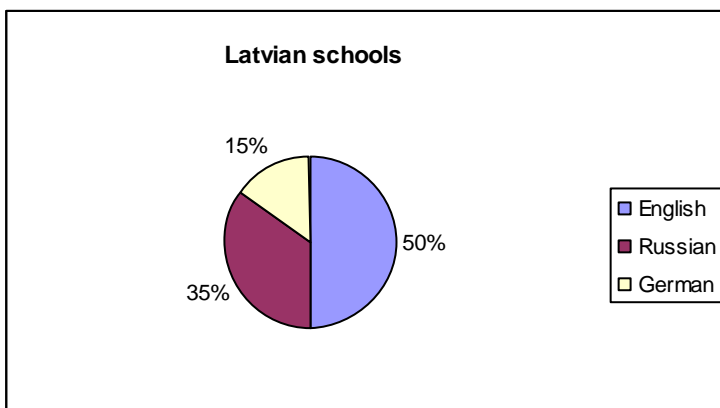
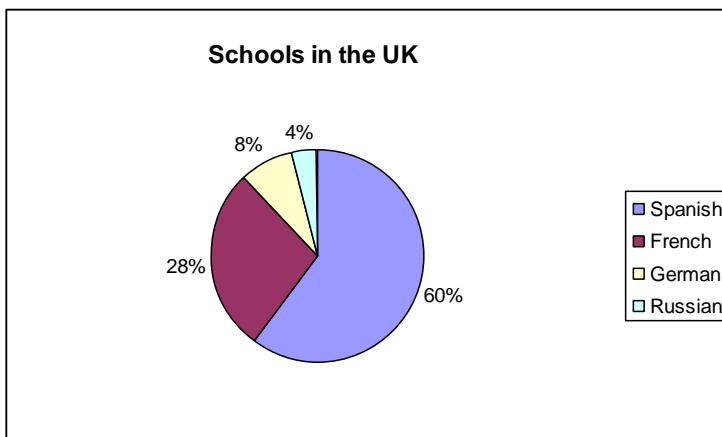
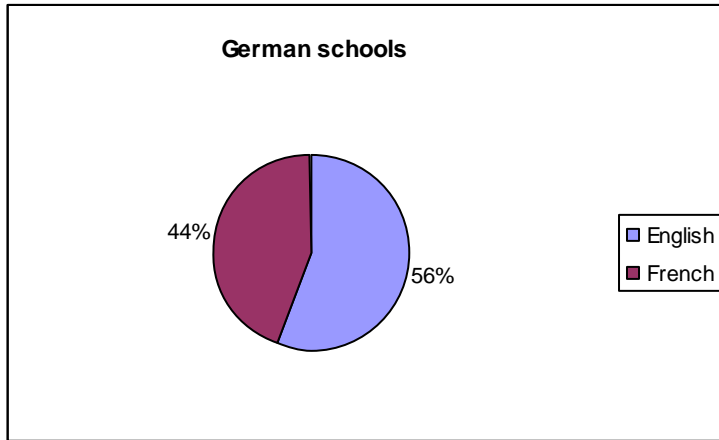
2) Cultural Heritage of Great Britain. The implementation of culture studies was processed via choosing the topic for a presentation (the teacher's offer, students' own choice), students' presentations using the technologies available in the school, while-listening evaluation papers (filled in by the students), feedback test to check the students knowledge after the presentations and the value of the introduction of the audio-visual approach in terms of visualising cultural heritage.

The evaluation paper as well as the test available in the appendix part.

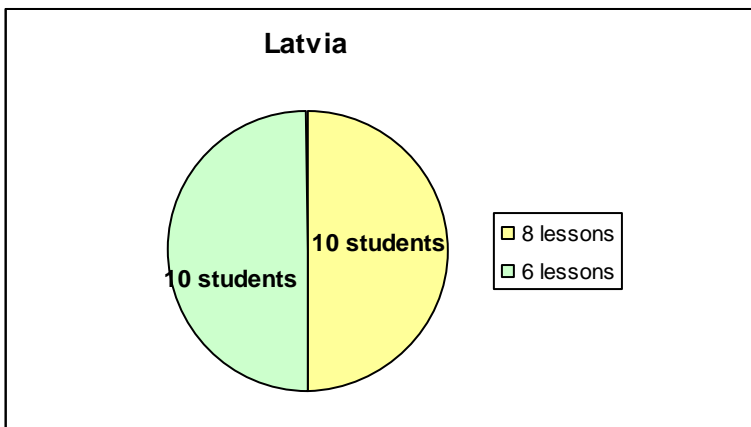
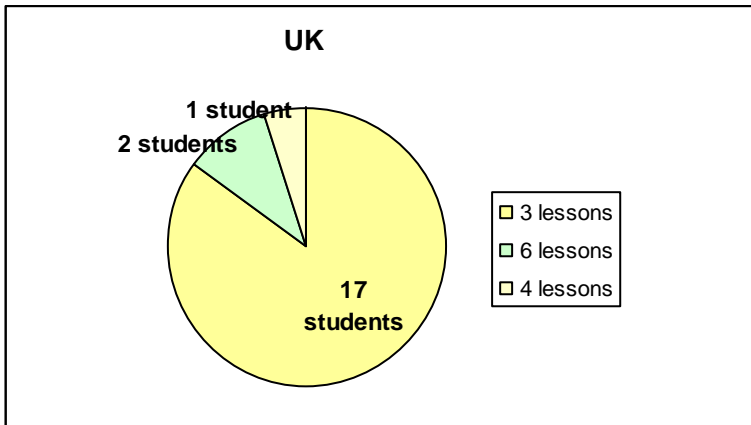
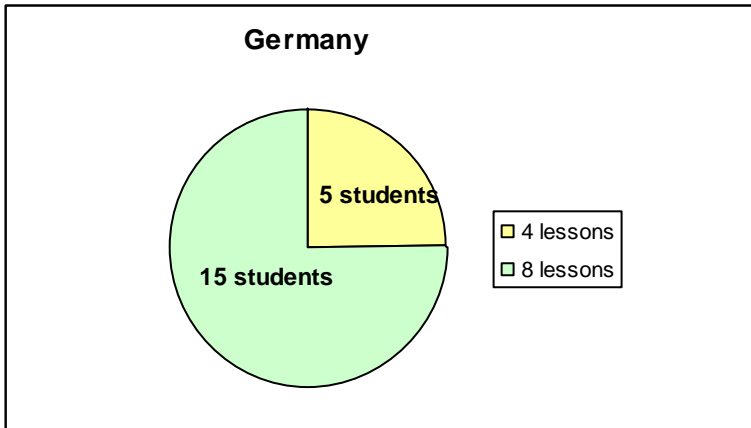
3) Post-watching questionnaire on the film “The Elephant”. Designed for upper-intermediate students to raise their awareness in terms of current issues affecting the world, like young people without respect, the influence on cruel computer games on students’ minds. It was interesting to read the various opinions on the movie as well as the feedback which showed students interest in topical problems of the 21st century.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY ON THE USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS IN ELT IN LATVIAN, BRITISH AND GERMAN SCHOOLS

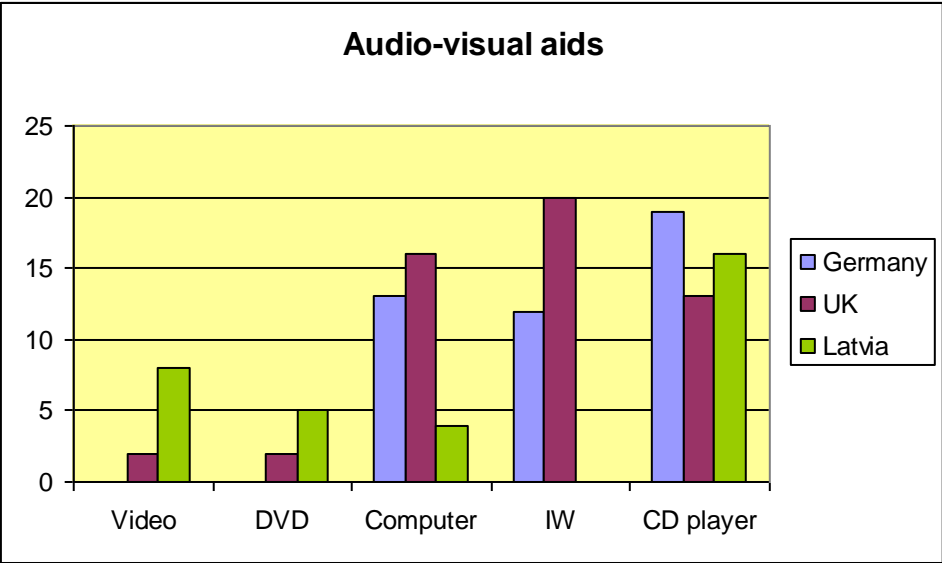
The first diagram shows what foreign languages are taught in each country and the percentage of students leaning each of them.



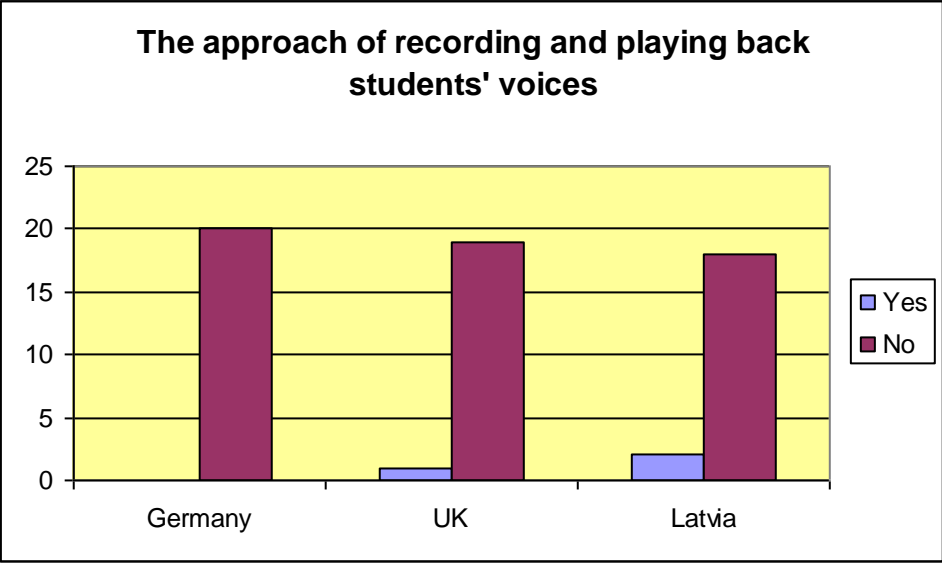
The second diagrams represents the amount of foreign language lessons per week students have in the three countries.



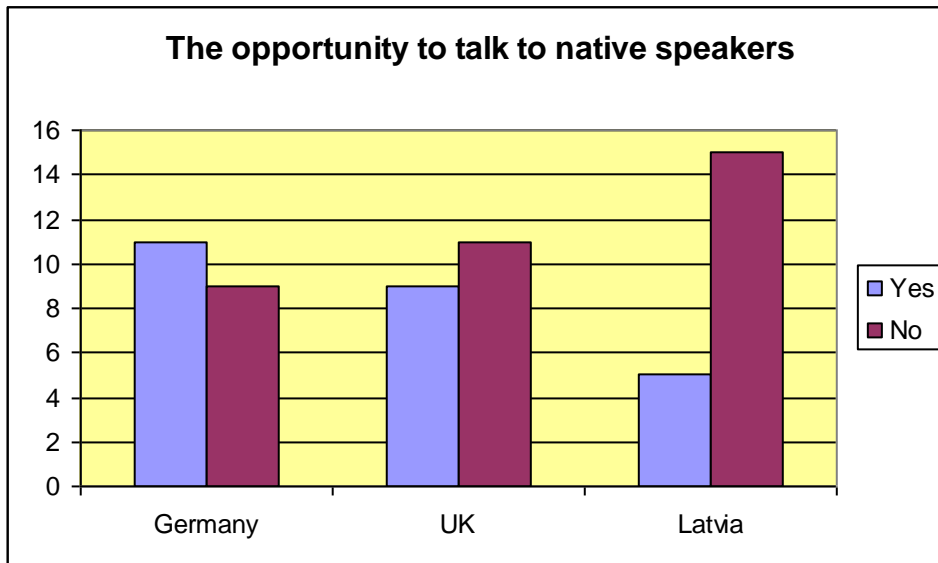
This chart reflects on the variety and frequency of the use of audio visual aids at lessons. Here it is also evident which of the aids are the most popular.



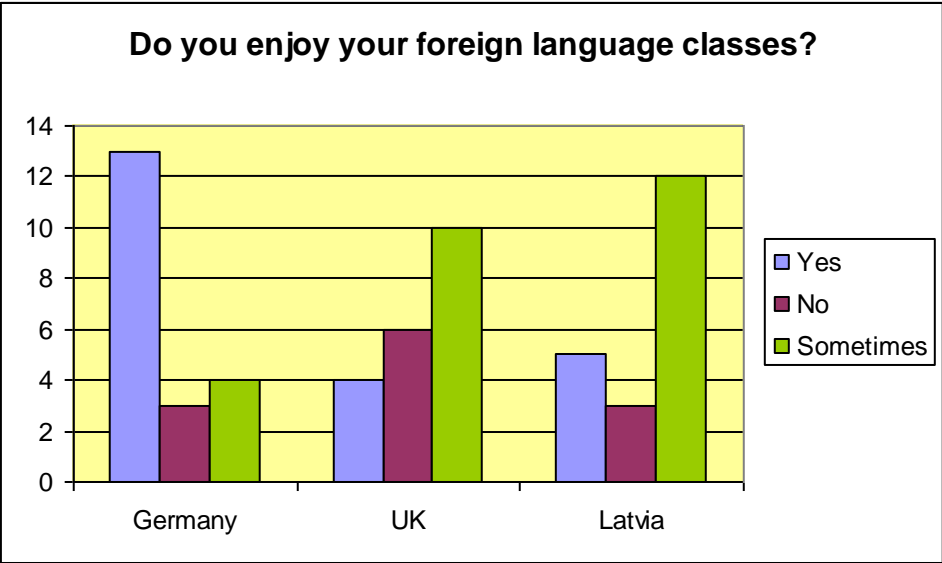
The author of the research has included the question about strategies used when implementing audio-visual teaching methods. This chart shows the analysis on learning via recording students' voices and analysing the weak points afterwards.



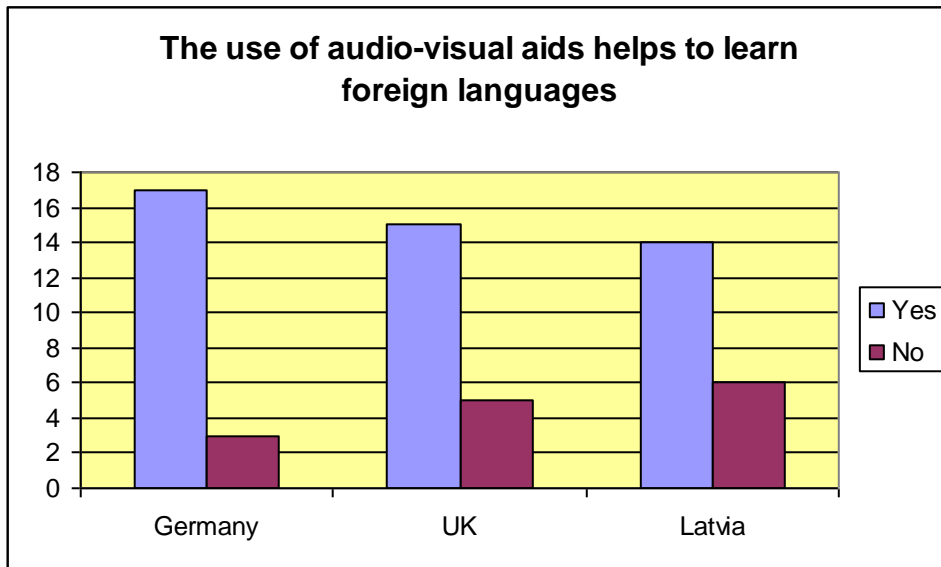
The author wished to have a look on the opportunity to talk to native speakers of the target language. This chart shows that German students enjoy the most multi-cultural environment in terms of using the target language in real life situations.



Here the author investigates students' attitudes towards foreign language classes. The chart suggests that there are great contrasts in terms of students' approval in the three countries.



This is the most effective evidence to reflect on students attitude towards using audio-visual aids for study purposes. It clearly shows the majority's support.



CONCLUSIONS

The author of the research is concerned that the process of writing the Paper under observation has provided her with essential background information and inspiring theories and methods used in foreign language teaching applicable for further foreign language teaching practice.

Due to the work and personal interest in the subject of the Diploma Paper the author has increased the amount of pedagogical literature owned by her.

The author is not truly satisfied with the outcome of her research work as the author has been extremely over-loaded with practicing teaching at schools, and uses to search for new methods and strategies thus spending a vast amount of time on self-development.

Learners are most likely to study diligently if they feel safe, involved and the teacher focuses on their individual needs and abilities. Ideally, there should be something for everyone to be motivated to attend classes in terms of activities, and as the learners of the 21st century differ a lot from those of previous generations, they are more impatient, lack concentration skills, have different social needs, the application of audio-visual aids might be very sufficient to raise the motivation of these students.

However, experts' theories analysed and the survey data suggest that the hypotheses might be taken as proved. The majority of students in Latvia and abroad support the implementation of audio-visual aids when learning foreign languages.

The author is considering to continue work on the Paper as there are many aspects left without discussion and exposition, furthermore – the use of audio-visual aids is a topic of the author's interest, and as the author is constantly participating in various project activities and attending courses on modern technologies, innovative teaching methods and class management, she has started work on the collection of self designed and developed materials which might be the basis for a book in the future to encourage other colleagues and share experiences

THESES

- The attitude of students towards learning has changed quite a lot in the 21st century: students have become more independent, the classroom atmosphere is very relaxed and it is hard to manage lessons and keep learners involved in classroom activities via conventional frontal teaching methods.
- Teachers are educators and while teaching language they are also communicating their values and beliefs' which means teachers actually serve as guides to a learner.
- Mass media is a powerful instrument that provides students with a variety of information, especially news from all the world, attitudes and knowledge.
- Via listening to the radio students can easily attune their ear to different voices, intonations and accents plastering the way to better results in listening tasks in the exams.
- Students' motivation and positiveness is raising when allowed to use Internet sources and computers as they are familiar to these technologies and feel more confident to use them for language learning.
- Multi-ROMs are valuable inventions to practice foreign languages with individual guidance available when using the materials.
- Students must be encouraged to use CD-ROMs for self-study purposes as there is a tendency to spend a lot of time on the computer, however, not for foreign language practise.
- The visualisation method helps to bring real life situations of English use into classroom via using appropriate realia, and adjusting real-life situations to practice conversations, dialogues.
- Students in Latvia, Germany and England convincingly advocate the use of audio-visual aids in foreign language classroom.
- It is important to bear in mind that audio-visual aids are use for language practice not actually entertainment and a teacher should analyse the methods to prove their effectiveness in terms of students' English knowledge.

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Bakalaura darbs „The Use of Audio-visual Aids in ELT” (Audio-vizuālo līdzekļu izmantošana angļu valodas mācīšanā) izstrādāts LU Moderno valodu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

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20.05.2009.

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Vadītāja: lektore Ilze Baiža

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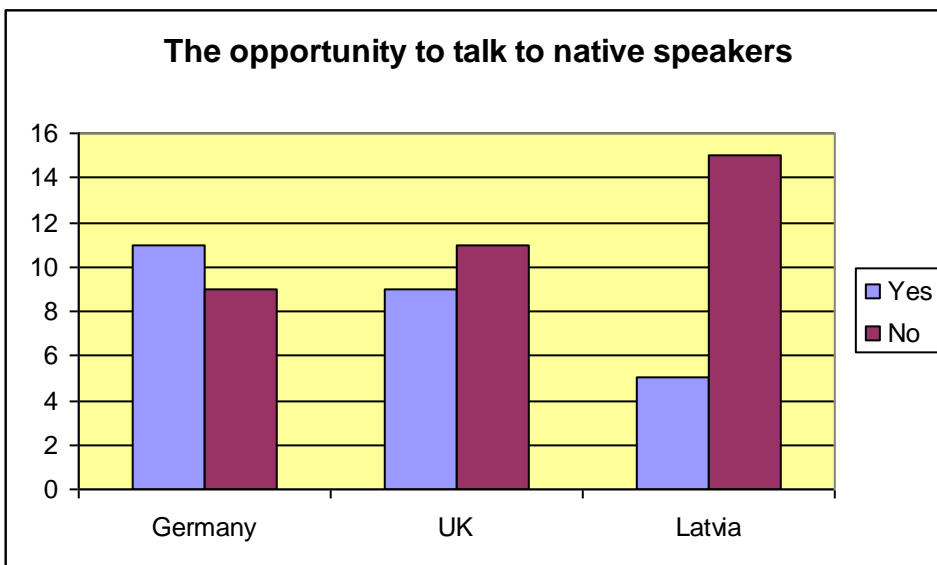
Studiju metodiķe: Valentīna Goldmane

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Darbs aizstāvēts bakalaura gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē

..... prot. Nr., vērtējums

Komisijas sekretāre:



The use of audio-visual aids helps to learn foreign languages

