Thinking Globally: Ict Teaching Perspectives

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Abstract

This work was encouraged by the contemporary global processes taking place in the world labor market. These processes impose new demands on the modern specialists, and in particular on the future teachers of foreign language. These changes lead to the necessity of modernization of the foreign language education targeted at the development of the competences necessary for the teachers of «the new formation». Current study was aimed at examination of the effectiveness of the implementation of ICT for the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence. This research lasted for two months and involved two groups of third-year future teachers of a foreign language taking the ESP course. The research participants comprised 15 students in control group (CG) and 16 students in experimental group (EG). In the course of the study CG was taught according to the standard ESP syllabus with the use of the ESP course-book. In EG in addition to the standard program was implemented ICT. The research results were obtained from the comparison of the EG and CG course achievements by means of pre- and post-tests. The research results have shown that the use of ICT in the foreign language teaching facilitates the development of the cross-cultural professionally – reflective competence.

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1. Introduction

The globalisation of the world labour market is leading to the need for changes in our traditional life setting. The rapid pace of development in the processes of international integration requires an increase in the amount of well-educated specialists. The entrance of Kazakhstan onto the international scene of socio-economic market relations leads to the necessity of undertaking obligations to the global community. These obligations also impact on the sphere of education.

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One of the main goals of the Governmental Programme for the Development of Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 (2010) is the training of highly qualified specialists in the sphere of ICT. There are also great gains planned in the professional development of future teachers of foreign languages because these languages are an important instrument of international cooperation. Under the given circumstances there is a strong need for the modernisation of the system of foreign language education.

Thus, the traditional educational system targeted at the development of students’ knowledge is losing its authenticity and is gradually being substituted with approaches which lean towards teaching that is focused on the development of the students’ personalities, leading in turn to creative self-expression. That is why our goal is the introduction of a new educational model which leads to specialists of the new approach who will possess the requisite competences that guarantee their ability to meet the demands of the world’s labour market.

The introduction of the competence approach into the modern system of foreign language education allows for the development of the system of competences necessary for the teacher of a foreign language of the new formation because it is based on the humanitarian and culture-oriented methodologies (Kunanbayeva, 2010). We assume that the implementation of the modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) will contribute to the process of the modernisation of Kazakhstani foreign language education and facilitate the development of the set of competences necessary for the future teacher of the foreign language.

For this reason, current research is being steered towards an examination of the impact of ICT on the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence of the future teacher of the foreign language. The general research method for this study is an experiment aimed at estimating the effectiveness of the stage-by-stage implementation of the process of development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence as an integral part of the professional development of the future teacher of the foreign language. We will present the research objectives and hypothesis for the current study. After that there will be a description of the participants and the research site, the method and procedures of data collection and analysis, followed by the presentation and discussion of the research findings.

2. Research Objectives

The main objectives of the current study were – professionally reflective:

- to specify the theoretical model of the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence of the future teacher of the foreign language through the use of ICT in context-based teaching (Bordovskaya, 2011);
- to empirically check the effectiveness of the use of ICT in foreign language teaching for the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence of the future teacher of a foreign language.

3. Research Hypothesis

The leading research hypothesis was that the process of the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence of the future teacher of a foreign language would be more effective if:

- the foreign language education was based on competence, learner-centred and cognito-linguo-culturalogical approaches;
- the leading technology was the use of ICT in professional-context teaching;
- a mechanism to initiate context-based communication goals and operational settings was used.

Then, there would be the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence leading to the final achievable learning outcome – the development of the intermediator of intercultural communication, “who is capable of adequate intercultural communication in various vocational and daily situations, and who is aware of the communicative-behavioural culture and the national mentality of native speakers, possible where teaching occurs outside the linguocultural and sociocultural environment, due to the realisation of the cognito-linguoculturalogical, learner-centred and competence approaches”. (Kunanbayeva, 2010).
4. Methodological Framework

The methodological framework for the current study is based on the theory of competence education and its methodological principles (Zimniaya, 2006; Kulibayeva, 2006); the theory of cross-cultural communication, competence-based theory and cognito-linguo-culturalological methodology (Kunanbayeva, 2010; Chakhlikova, 2009); the theory of context-based teaching with the use of ICT (Bordovskaya, 2011; Dudeney & Hockly, 2007; Sysoev & Evstigneyev, 2010).

Competence education is the attempt to balance education with the demands of the market. This puts the main emphasis on the students’ ability to solve problems occurring in the course of an activity, thus reducing the value of the pure storage of theoretical knowledge. The theory of cross-cultural communication is based on the cognito-linguo-culturalological methodology which is targeted at the development of the intermediator of intercultural communication, able to perform cross-cultural communication in different professional situations mirroring real life situations. The theory of context-based teaching with the use of ICT is targeted at the preparation of people for new conditions of life and work in the new informational environment. It is aimed at the development of the competences that would help students use ICT in their future job and gain the new world view through the prism of modern technology.

Current research is guided by the following methodological principles: the communicative principle, which implies the possession of the complex of norms and traditions of the communicative behaviour of the target language’s native speakers; the cognitive principle, which directs the process of the formation of the “intermediator of intercultural communication” through the creation of visual images, supporting schemata, associations, creation of conflicting situations targeted at the development of the mental constructions in the consciousness of the students; the conceptual principle, which is responsible for the acquisition of the new linguistic culture by the students within the conditions of the information educational system. This includes the electronic educational resources such as: audio, video, multimedia information about the linguistic, cultural, ethnical, sociological and other peculiarities of the world’s population; the socio-cultural principle, which is targeted at the comparison of native and foreign society; and then there is the developmental-reflexive principle which is aimed at self-development through self-assessment by the students (Kunanbayeva, 2010).

In addition to the principles listed above, this study also implements the principle of systematisation that allows for the integration of ICT into the system of foreign language teaching to increase its interactive capacities. There is also the principle of the synthesis of the content that allows the integration and structuring of the content of foreign language education to correspond to the social demands of the information society (Chakhlikova, 2009). Add to this the principle of activity which views the development of professional qualities as the process taking place in professional pedagogical activity. The principle of continued professional development views professional pedagogical activity that encourages the teacher to undergo constant professional development and adopt the principle of professionalisation that presupposes the use of the foreign language as essential for the achievement of professional goals (Zhumabekova, 2010).

5. Research Design

The research was conducted in the Ablai Khan Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages and lasted for two months. The research was conducted in three stages. In the first stage the theoretical framework for the research was established and existing literature on the problem of the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence was analysed.

In the second stage the methodological model of the development of cross-cultural professionally reflective competence was worked out, incorporating ICT.

At the third stage experimental work was included to check the effectiveness of the methodology of the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence with the implementation of ICT.

6. Research Participants
The participants were 31 students of the Ablai Khan Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages, all studying English for Specific Purposes (ESP). All of them were female. The age range was 20-21 years old. In the course of study all research participants were assigned to two groups: experimental and control. In the experimental group there were 16 students and in the control group, 15. The selection of third year students as participants was conditioned by the required level of the students’ level of proficiency in the conditions of the competence approach based on the professional model of the specialist.

7. Research Procedures

The experiment was conducted with two groups of ESP students. One of the groups was the experimental group (EG) the second group was the control group (CG). In CG the classes were conducted according to the regular ESP syllabus. In the EG, in addition to the regular ESP syllabus, ICT was implemented. In each group the lessons were conducted five times a week. The classes with the EG were conducted in the multimedia room that was equipped with an interactive board and an LCD projector that allowed for the implementation of ICT in the lessons. In addition to the equipment in the classroom, the researcher brought her own laptop and speakers. The classes with the CG were conducted in a regular classroom not equipped with ICT. To listen to the audio files that were indicated in the ESP course book the researcher also used her own laptop in the CG because the regular classroom did not provide the conditions for working with audio and video files.

The classes in the CG were conducted by the researcher with the use of the ESP course book. In the EG the researcher taught the same ESP content as in the CG but with the help of ICT. The ICT technologies implemented during the experiment included: Nicenet, podcasts, electronic journals, and Audacity.

The research led to the creation of an electronic class with the help of the “Nicenet” application and the research participants were asked to sign in to this class. “Nicenet” was used for the presentation of the schedule of the course assignments, distant communication between the research participants and the researcher and feedback on the classes and assignments from the participants. In addition, it allowed the researcher to send personal comments to the participants and give feedback on the latter’s comments.

Electronic journals were used for the collection of students’ reflections on class assignments, learning students’ opinions about different assigned topics, for example “teaching philosophy”. These electronic journals were emailed to the researcher on a regular basis.

“Podcasts” were implemented for the presentation to the students of authentic information relevant to their course in the form of audio and video files downloaded from the Internet. “Audacity” was implemented for the development of students’ speaking skills. It was used to afford the research participants the opportunity to record their speech, with the opportunity of the further listening to it so that the students could analyse their progress by themselves. Students’ recordings were also sent to the researcher so that she could check the students’ progress and at the same time save classroom time owing to the possibility of simultaneous participation including all the students on one and the same task without disturbing each other’s performance.

The experiment was structured in the following way: 1) diagnostics. At this stage the pre-test was conducted to check the level of development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence in EG and CG; 2) experiment. During this stage in EG, ICT was implemented; 3) analytics. Here the post-test was conducted in EG and CG to check if the implementation of ICT in the process of ESP teaching made a difference in the level of development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence in comparison to the teaching given according to a standard ESP syllabus without the use of ICT.

8. Data Collection

Before conducting the experiment, both groups were asked to complete a pre-test to reveal their level of proficiency as well as the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence in EG and CG. This pre-test contained five sections. Each section included the task of checking the level of development of each of the sub-competences, such as: cognitive, conceptual, information-accumulating, linguo-cultural, and reflexive-developmental which constitute the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence.
After conducting a number of classes in EG with the use of ICT, and in CG without it, students of both groups were asked to complete the post-test to check their progress in the development of their cross-cultural professionally reflective competence. The structure of the post-test was the same as the structure of the pre-test and consisted of five tasks where each task was aimed at measuring the development of a particular sub-competence.

9. Data Analysis

The research data was analysed by means of calculating and comparing the results of the pre- and post-test in EG and CG. First of all the average results of the pre- and post-tests were calculated for every sub-competence in the EG and CG. After that, the total score was calculated for the pre- and post-tests for EG and CG. Finally, the pre- and post-test results of EG and CG were compared.

The average grade was calculated according to the following formula: 

\[ Ca = \frac{\sum n_1}{N} \]

where:

- \( Ca \) – stands for the coefficient of the development of the professional communicative abilities;
- \( \sum n_1 \) – stands for the sum of the received points; and
- \( N \) – stands for the number of participants.

10. Research Results

The pre-test and post-test results for the EG are presented in Table 1. In this table there are the results achieved by the research participants during the pre- and post-tests according to the level of development of each sub-competence, and the total score for the level of development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence.

| Subcompetence         | Criteria                          | Points | Pre-Test Results | Post-Test Results |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|------------------|-------------------|
| Cognitive              | Information component             | 20     | 13,6             | 15,2              |
|                        | Linguistic component              |        |                  |                   |
| Conceptual             | Information component             | 20     | 15,9             | 17,5              |
|                        | Linguistic component              |        |                  |                   |
|                        | Logical-compositional component   |        |                  |                   |
| Information-accumulating| Information component            | 20     | 16,7             | 17,2              |
|                        | Logical-compositional component   |        |                  |                   |
|                        | Argumentative component           |        |                  |                   |
| Linguocultural         | Information component             | 20     | 17,1             | 18,0              |
|                        | Cultural component                |        |                  |                   |
|                        | Linguistic component              |        |                  |                   |
| Reflexive-developmental| Reflexive component               | 20     | 12,2             | 14,9              |
|                        | Sociocultural component           |        |                  |                   |
|                        | Linguistic component              |        |                  |                   |
|                        | Argumentative component           |        |                  |                   |
| Total score:           |                                   | 100    | 75,5             | 82,7              |

In Table 2 there are the results of the pre- and post-tests for the CG. The results of the pre-test indicate that EG and CG initially have approximately the same level of development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence. Though the CG showed a slightly lower score from the very beginning, the results of the post-test indicate that the EG increased its score in comparison to the pre-test by 7.2 points and in comparison with the final results of the CG by 6.7 points. The CG also increased its score in the post-test in comparison to the pre-test by 2.5 points. However, the CG lost 0.1 point in the conceptual sub-competence.
Table 2. The results of the pre-test and post-test of the CG

| Subcompetence                  | Criteria                        | Points | Pre-Test Results | Post-Test Results |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|------------------|------------------|
| Cognitive                     | Information component           | 20     | 14,6             | 14,8             |
|                               | Linguistic component            |        |                  |                  |
| Conceptual                    | Information component           | 20     | 16,3             | 16,2             |
|                               | Linguistic component            |        |                  |                  |
|                               | Logical-compositional component |        |                  |                  |
| Information-accumulating      | Information component           | 20     | 15,8             | 16,1             |
|                               | Logical-compositional component |        |                  |                  |
| Linguocultural                | Information component           | 20     | 15,0             | 15,7             |
|                               | Cultural component              |        |                  |                  |
|                               | Linguistic component            |        |                  |                  |
| Reflexive-developmental       | Reflexive component             | 20     | 11,8             | 13,2             |
|                               | Sociocultural component         |        |                  |                  |
|                               | Linguistic component            |        |                  |                  |
|                               | Argumentative component         |        |                  |                  |
| Total score:                  |                                 | 100    | 73,5             | 76               |

### 11. Interpretation Of The Research Results

Analysis of the results has shown that the EG achieved better results in the post-test in comparison to the CG. The difference in the final score is 6.7 points. Such a difference confirms the hypothesis of the current study that the implementation of ICT into the foreign language education facilitates the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence. The results of the CG show that the currently existing foreign language teaching methodology also develops the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence, but it would be more effective if foreign language teaching involved ICT technologies such as: “Nicenet”, “podcasts”, “electronic journals”, and “Audacity”.

### 12. Discussion And Conclusions

The results of the current study prove that the implementation of ICT into the foreign language educational system leads to a more effective development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence in comparison to teaching according to a standard programme. This could be explained by the possibilities that are provided by the implementation of ICT into the foreign language education.

ICT allows access to sources of authentic information, removes geographical boundaries, encourages learners’ motivation for self-development, creates opportunities for self-evaluation, and imposes on students a responsibility for their own learning. Though current research confirms the research hypothesis, its results are in no way conclusive and there is a need for further investigation in the area because of the number of limitations to this research.

Among such limitations is the limit on time. Most probably, research lasting longer would show a more distinct influence of ICT on the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence. Another limitation of the current study was the small number of research participants, which is why the results of the study do not allow us to make any statistically significant claims.

Considering the limitations of the current study we suggest that future research into the use of ICT in foreign language teaching be conducted with a larger amount of participants, and for a longer period of time. As for possible research topics in this area, we could advise study of the influence of every technology implemented in the currently ongoing study of the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence of the future teacher of the foreign language, to find out which of the implemented technologies (Nicenet, podcasts, electronic journals,
Audacity) are the most effective. This, as well as comparing the effect of the aforementioned technologies on every separate sub-competence.

Summing up, the implementation of ICT into foreign language training leads to progress in the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence and allows us to become competent participants in the global labour market. Thus, the use of ICT is a step forward in foreign language education and the development of specialists of the new formation who meet the demands of the global community. However, the issue of ICT in foreign language education needs further research.

13. Literature Review

Global changes lead to changes in educational goals. In the current circumstances, the competence approach has great authenticity because it is based on humanitarian and culture-oriented methodologies that are targeted at the development of the system of competences (Kunanbayeva, 2010). Zimniya (2006) characterises the competence approach as a way to achieve the education of the new quality, to point out the directions, key points, and content of the educational process. Kunanbayeva (2010) defines this approach as the attempt to balance the educational system with the demands of the market, putting the main emphasis on the students’ ability to solve problems occurring in the course of the activity by developing a particular competence as a learning outcome, thus reducing the value of the pure storage of theoretical knowledge.

Earlier research has revealed that students do not possess enough awareness about the culture of the target language of the country which is why the concept of cross-cultural communicative competence was introduced to foreign language education, with the development of the intermediator of intercultural communication a key learning aim. (Kunanbayeva, 2010).

Taking into account all the existing models and structures of cross-cultural communicative competence, Kulibayeva (2006) concluded that for effective foreign language teaching it is enough to consider the following sub-competences: linguistic, strategic, discursive, and sociocultural, which allow us to treat cross-cultural communicative competence as a separate competence.

The process of integrating Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into education is gradually gaining more and more validity. Kruchinina (n.d.) defines ICT as methods, facilities, and processes allowing for the collection, processing, storage and diffusion of information, with the goal of its further involvement in the educational process. Tinio (n.d.) presents ICT as the tools that allow for changes in education. According to her, ICT includes: radio, television and other new digital technologies such as computers and the Internet.

Another definition views ICT as a system of processing information in its broad meaning. In education, ICT is understood as technical sources for independent work with any type of information that is required for the teacher or the student and is searched, processed, transmitted, and so on, as well as pedagogical sources that help to optimise the professional-pedagogical activity of the teacher in the process of education. This facilitates the process of achieving educational goals. ICT could also be presented as a complementary source for the resolution of concrete scientific problems by teachers and students (Bordovskaya, 2011).

Dutton & Pelta (1996) claim that the end of the Twentieth Century was marked with the rapid development of ICT. Thus, ICT innovations like personal computers, cellular phones, the Internet, satellite television and others has become an integral part of our everyday life. On the other hand, such an intensive development of ICT raises many questions about employment concerns and the growing distance between those who have access to information and those who do not (Dutton & Pelta, 1996). Tinio (n.d.) argues that the appearance and rapid development of a new global economy is leading to the necessity of a lifelong learning approach, instead of just viewing learning as a transmission of information from a teacher to a student within a set period of time.

According to Sysoev and Evstigneyev (2010), nowadays a lot of attention is paid to the problem of the informatisation of teaching and the preparation of students to live and work in the new conditions of the information media through the development of the new competences necessary for effective functioning in the new learning environment. For the time being, there is enough scientific background to view the process of the informatisation of education as one of the innovative approaches in the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence.
Gilmore (2008) states the development of modern ICT has greatly changed teaching and learning processes. Many more educational establishments use the Internet to increase their presence in the digital environment, and are creating a digital environment in their classrooms. She claims that the involvement of the Internet can increase student-teacher communication and collaboration, and provide the lessons with additional resources and information for student idea exchange and presentation. The Internet also allows them to access information from all over the world without leaving the classroom or their house, which saves a lot of time and makes the research or study process more rapid.

Gilmore (2008) also notes that the Internet provides students with the opportunity to contact the teacher via email and ask questions or submit a task without coming to a personal appointment. Thus, we can conclude that ICT and in particular the Internet, is eradicating geographical borders and saving teachers’ and students’ time. This simultaneously improves the interaction and collaboration, making a teacher more accessible for the students. Gilmore & and Halcomb (n.d.) support Gilmore’s (2008) claim that the introduction of the Internet into education reshapes the students’ learning process providing them with more control and a wide range of learning materials. Reddi & Mishra (2003) see the strength of ICT as the opportunity to present difficult concepts in a simpler way.

Gilmore (2008) adds that besides the Internet there are other forms of ICT that have great potential for enhancing the educational process among which she names Smart Board. This, in addition to the functions of a regular classroom board, could fulfill the functions of a computer screen. Its touch screen design allows for the use of computer applications directly on the Smart Board. According to her, the introduction of modern ICT into the educational process raises students’ motivation to learn making them active participants of their learning, as well as helping teachers to address all the learning needs and styles of their students.

However, although the Internet provides many benefits for the teaching process, A. Gilmore (2008) also reminds us of its possible drawbacks. First of all, she raises the issue of security. With the introduction of the Internet into the teaching process, teachers could lose control over their students. According to A. Gilmore (2008), teachers will not be able to monitor whether their students are really working on the task and if they are retrieving information from reliable sources. In this regard, Gilmore & Halcomb (n.d.) argue that the implication of ICT imposes more control on the teacher. According to them, the teacher should be very careful when giving instructions and careful when creating their lesson plans. Newhouse (2002) supports the claim made by C. Gilmore & Halcomb (n.d.) that the introduction of ICT into the educational process leads to further re-evaluation of the teacher’s role in the classroom. He further lists the ways in which teachers could impact on the ICT learning environment (Newhouse, 2002).

According to Newhouse (2002), teachers should create a balance between the roles they play and be ready for a reduction in the influence they have on their students. He also states that the implication of ICT causes an increase in interest towards teaching experimentation, which requires additional communication and collaboration with the administration and other teachers. It also takes more preparation time and energy, and more time to familiarise students with the new learning environment. He summarises the impact of ICT on teaching as more learner-centred, more cooperative and collaborative, more active and providing access to more information and sources (Newhouse, 2002).

Collins (cited in Newhouse, 2002) argues that though the use of ICT could lead to some changes in the teaching and learning process, teachers would always remain the instruction leaders because many of the features of the traditional organisation of the educational process would not be changed, because in spite of it all, there is always the need for human-to-human interaction. However, Riel (cited in Newhouse, 2002) as well as C. Gilmore & Halcomb (n.d.), insists that the integration of ICT into the educational process requires more skills and awareness from the teachers so as to be able to direct their students through the huge amounts of information.

Another problem with the involvement of ICT in teaching, according to A. Gilmore (2008), is its high cost which could lead to inequality in access to ICT between wealthy and poorer societies. However, she describes organisations such as “Internet 4Classrooms” and “4Teachers.org” which provide teachers with free software, as well as the efforts of ICT manufactures to develop effective educational products at lower costs. One more drawback of ICT in the teaching process is teachers’ lack of training in the use of ICT (Peddi & Mishra, 2003). Pelgrum (2001) speaks of the barriers of bringing ICT into the educational process. Among them is the lack of hardware and teacher training in the use of ICT (Pelgrum, 2001) that to a degree coincides with Peddi’s & Mishra’s claim (2003). Nevertheless, Peddi & Mishra (2003) state that nowadays there is a lot of effective educational software which is easy to use and does not require any special training for teachers.
The issue of the informatisation of Kazakhstani foreign language education has been raised by Chakhlikova (2009). She represents the process of the informatisation of foreign language teaching as the process that supplies the system of foreign language teaching with the methodological and empirical background for the development and implication of the modern technologies (Chakhlikova, 2009). Using ICT creates the conditions for authentic professional communication and the stimulation of the creative energy of the future teacher of a foreign language, as well as the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence through the context of integrating educational and future professional activities. The involvement of ICT in the process of teaching facilitates the development of the communicative and informational competences, and at the same time promotes the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence.

With the spread of the integration of ICT into teaching, the development of informational competence is becoming very important (Sysoev & Evstegneyev, 2010). ICT is promoting the development of a special environment in educational establishments, intensifying the communication of the educational subjects, and contributing to unmediated communication through the integration of modern technologies (Bordovskaya, 2011).

According to Chakhlikova (2009) the use of ICT in foreign language teaching is one of the most effective ways for the development of cross-cultural communicative competence because it allows for the rational organisation of communicative and cognitive activity, helps to establish the socio-cultural background and makes the foreign language the transmitter of a culture which leads to the personal development of the student. This raises the level of his or her creativity and develops their ‘critical thinking’. ICT raises students’ motivation by providing them with a feeling of independence and responsibility for their actions (Kisby, n.d.).

In spite of all the benefits that could be gained from the implication of ICT into EFL education, many teachers feel frustrated and uncertain as to whether to use it in their classes or not. Kisby (n.d.) explains this by stating that teachers fear that classes could be noisy, or that students could take advantage of the ICT and use class time for surfing websites irrelevant to the lesson. In addition, teachers are unsure that the facilities will work in the right way, and if the students would be interested in the tasks.

Dudeney & Hockly (2007) add that teachers could feel frustrated that their students are more knowledgeable about the modern technology than they are. At the same time they point out that the new generations of learners are growing up with technology and that it is a natural part of their life, (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007) which is why they expect teachers to use ICT in their teaching. They state that the Internet creates new opportunities for the development of authentic tasks and materials, as well as providing teachers with access to a great amount of ready-made foreign language teaching materials. And besides teaching resources, ICT presents many opportunities for assessment (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007).

So in conclusion, ICT is gaining more popularity among contemporary educators and learners. Though the use of ICT could have some drawbacks and require additional training for teachers and students, as well as involving additional costs for administration, it offers far greater benefits to the learners, such as for example: allowing access to sources of authentic information, removing geographical borders, making learners more responsible for their learning and in turn more motivated. Taking into account all the benefits of ICT for the educational process it is also viewed as an efficient tool for the development of the cross-cultural professionally reflective competence.

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