

USING VIDEO MATERIALS IN ENHANCING STUDENTS SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract: *With the advancement of technology, the use of video to facilitate language teaching and learning is also popular among language teachers. Besides its ability to offer learners with content, context, and language, video could also be creatively exploited by language teachers through various ways and for various language teaching and learning purposes. This article aims also at identifying and determining the positive effects of using videos in motivating learners, and how teachers can use them to improve and enhance their students' communicative skills. Keywords: Videos, authentic, communicative, motivation, language teaching.*

Most advocates of video in language teaching have focused on helping students to understand the content of a video sequence or on using video to present language models. The hypothesis is that teachers need to change the essentially passive viewing habits of students to create a climate conducive to learning. Because it can present a total communicative situation, video has been recognized as a valuable resource for intensive language study. A relatively recent trend is to use the medium to stimulate oral and written communication among students (Stempleski & Arcario, 1992). Harmer raised earlier this designation that the video is the best tool that enables learners not only to listen the language but to see it, too. Moreover; videos enclose visual hints such as gestures and expressions that are considered as a guidance for learners to go beyond of what they are listening in order to infer the video's content. Therefore, it supports and helps the students for more comprehension (Harmer, 2001). Canning explained this valuable tool as in following quote: "Video is at best defined as the selection and sequence of messages in an audio-visual context" (Canning, 2000). Since students are directly in contact with the video, they can easily associate between the images and the words, which help them, learn new vocabulary, culture, pronunciation, and even allow them to check their use of the target language. The video is a sort of communication device that enables students to view the form and speech of the foreign language discourse from the beginning to the end by the use of authentic language and the rate of speech' speed in different contexts. Chung & Huang clarify more this idea by noting that: "As more complete video instructional packages are made available to foreign language teachers, they search for ways to make students' learning experience more active and interesting, similar to those that occur in the real world" (Chung & Huang, 1998) Integrating the video material in foreign language classes permits students via video's content, to guess the information, infer/construct them, and analyze the foreign culture that is brought into their learning context.

Video materials as language sources in teaching speaking skills

Many teachers ask why we should use and integrate the video as a part of our teaching method, since we are able to manage well the classroom and get our students motivated through their positive achievement. It is true that many students -with the classical way of teaching through gestures and board use- can achieve positively and become more successful in writing and listening skills; however, most of them become weak and achieve poorly when they come to communicate (in writing or speaking). For that reason, many researchers tackled the advantages and benefits of using the video as an educative tool in FL classes. Dr. Samir M. Rammal acquiesces the benefits of using the video by clearly stating the following arguments: - The video is the best motive in the ELT environment, since it offers students a new experience of real feeling of realizing learning with authentic materials. So when they comprehend the video content and the teacher's objective behind using it, they became familiar with what is happening in the native speakers' circumstances. - Videos endow learners with real language used by native speakers in their everyday interactions and communications. This evidence enables students to learn easily the spoken discourse that comprises sounds, utterances, and the conveyed meaning that can be coded through the non-verbal explanatory body language. - Through watching a video, students can acquire best the cultural aspects that go together with their foreign language in its appropriate context (Rammal, 2006).

Videos assist EFL learners to decode the implemented meaning that can be better understood without difficulties. In addition, when students pay attention to the native speakers' pronunciation and their use of language, it may save them from feeling shy or embarrassed while speaking to native speakers. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the visual hints simplify the meaning since the speakers use both verbal and non verbal language patterns. The use of videos in language teaching is increasing and became a common feature these latest years. This may go back to its powerful impact on students' motivation, the improvement of their communicative skills, and its advantages in teaching and learning. Harmer argues that the video is used for many reasons and adds new positive things in the learning experience. He also points out the advantages of using this valuable tool in the following subsequent arguments: - Seeing language-in-use and cross-cultural awareness: the video brings the real world into the class and which offers students authentic features of the second language. Students have the chance to see and to listen to the pronunciation and accent of native speakers as well as they can notice and determine their beliefs, traditions, and culture. In other words, it is an aid to teach and learn the language in its culture. - Motivation: It is obvious that the video is best used in motivating students and raising their interest to see and learn the language in use. When they hear and see the target language they can easily comprehend the different meanings and moods through native speaker's mime, gestures, and facial expressions. - Getting everyone involved: learning with videos create a sense of belonging, collaboration, and involvement through communicative

activities that are practiced either in pairs or in groups - Relaxation: it is obvious that the video is a source of entertainment and relaxation through playing music after a long course, for instance, but this should not be overdone since the video is an active process (Harmer, 2001). Language learners watch English videos not only in class, but also at their home. They watch documentaries and movies and only some of them consider this an occasion to develop their communicative skills (especially speaking) through listening to the native speakers. The writing skill is also developed when the video is provided with subtitles in English; this would help students to be sure about the spelling of new introduced vocabulary. In addition, watching English movies provide students with a chance to increase their background of the English language outside the classroom.

The teacher's role has changed and continues to change from being a boss teacher, authoritarian and dictator into becoming a leader teacher, facilitator, and inventor of learning processes. According to Susan Stempleski incorporating videos in teaching English may become mystifying for many learners; since it includes visual element, audio experience, and spoken language. Teachers, of course, occupy a great role in determining whether video's use in the classroom has affected positively or negatively students' enhancement in the language classroom (Stempleski & Arcario, 1992). Teachers should take into their consideration that the selection of the video would be done with specific conditions, in order to maximize the chances of realizing the main aim of motivating students. They have to select the video according to their objectives, their students' level, and their needs (for example, the teacher cannot use a video with difficult pronunciation plus no subtitles).

In addition, she argued that: The teacher is there to choose appropriate sequences, prepare the students for the viewing experience, focus the students' attention on the content, play and replay the video as needed, design or select viewing tasks, and follow up with suitable post viewing activities. Teachers should guide and stimulate their students' attention to be focused on the video content to be more comprehensible. This will excite students to become active -not passive- learners (through increasing their level of participation) and reduce the number of reluctant students, and then teachers should not forget to use the video as a key tool in addition to the others tools as an integrative part of the language curriculum. To select a video material teachers have to be certain of its content that should be apposite to the learners' interest, needs, and of course their level. Moreover, the teacher has to choose the video that can be used fittingly and assist their students for successful achievement in the duration of practicing the given tasks, since majority of videos are stuffed with lots of cultural aspects.

Video activities in class The teacher uses and integrates the video to introduce different activities in order to improve his/her students' communicative skills. As it was mentioned by Jim Scrivener videos playback activities that teachers rely on are

divided into three general types. They are: preview, viewing, and follow up activities. Each lesson working with the video incorporates those activities (Scrivener, 2005).

Preview activities They concern what the students do before watching the video. The primary purpose of previewing activities is to prepare students to see the video by means of activating schema—that is, tapping students' background knowledge or tying newly introduced information to materials previously introduced in a thematic unit. In all cases previewing activities are meant to aid comprehension of the video in addition to enhancing the thematic unit. Teachers should select and adapt activities that evolve naturally out of the video and meet the needs of the students as well as fit the goals of the class (Stempleski & Arcario, 1992). There are four distinctive preview activities: - Students take a look at the worksheets that they will use during watching the video. - Students have to guess what will come from the given information or images. - Students will discuss the topic dealt with in the video. - The language focuses on vocabulary, function, and grammar that is mentioned in the video content. Here are some examples of pre-viewing activities:

Brainstorming. Students working in groups, consider a problem or issue related to the video, and let loose a hail of possible solutions or suggestions, in random order as they occur to them. A rapid activity like this one activates background information, preparing the students for the video screening.

Video title discussion. Students examine the title of the video and speculate on the content of the video. This quick activity can be completed in small groups or as a class, the former allowing for more discussion and participation.

Vocabulary Matching. In this activity students match the words to the pictures that they will come across while viewing. They should give their own definitions and predict how they can be connected with the film they are going to watch.

Viewing activities It concerns what students do while watching a video. They are activities practiced during viewing the recording. Viewing activities help students focus on important features of the video or on character or plot development at crucial junctures in the video (Stempleski & Arcario, 1992). They have many forms: • Activities can be listening, looking or interpreting. • The instruction of the activities might be oral or in a worksheet. • Activities may focus specifically on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation or functions that can be observed through focusing on gestures, facial expressions, and body language of the native speakers.

Vision on/ Sound off Students view a scene with the sound turned off. They then predict the content of the scene, write their own script and perform it while standing next to the television. After the performances students watch the scene with the sound on and decide which group was the funniest or the nearest to the original. This is a good fun exercise. It is very graphic with plenty of gestures to stimulate the imagination. Good for intermediate levels.

Post viewing activities They deal with what the students do after watching the video. The teacher has plenty choices of activities that can be done after viewing

activities. For example: - Ask the students to write a letter from one character -from the video- to another (they develop their writing skill). - Play a scene of a video or even its continuation. Students become creators through their imagination and they are responsible for their learning. In addition, they develop their speaking skill. - Through discussion and interpretation, the teacher makes a connection between the video's content and students' real life and experiences. - Study the new language introduced in the video. - Both teacher and students discuss and decide of what should be do in the next session.

Order the events After watching the clip, give students a set of event cards (no more than ten), in pairs or individually. Each card should contain one or two sentences of events from the movie clip. These can be as significant or insignificant as you want, depending on the length of the clip and what the focus of the lesson is. Students have to rearrange the events into the correct order.

Observe and write Students view a scene (this always works better if there is a lot happening) then write a newspaper article on what they have witnessed. This lesson is based on the fight scene from Bridget Jones's Diary, students work for a local newspaper and have to write an article on a fight between two men over a beautiful, young girl. Pre-viewing and while-viewing tasks allow them to work on new vocabulary, while the post-viewing task gives them plenty of practice on past tenses. Good for intermediate levels.

Agree/disagree activity . Students react individually to a series of statements related to the video. After comparing responses in small groups, students comment on a statement with which they either agree or disagree.

Alternative ending In this activity, students are encouraged to practice story-writing techniques, in the present or future tense, depending on what suits your lesson. Don't worry if some students have seen the movie already—knowing how the story really unfolds will only enhance their creative prospects. Remember to be clear that they cannot simply write the real ending of the movie! Play part of a movie—as short or long as you want—which can be from any point in the movie. Afterwards, put students in small groups to create a new ending. They can write it out, or present it in a graphic novel style with pictures and words. The presentation part of the class involves the groups reading their alternative ending to the group. Top marks for the wildest, wackiest ideas! Whatever the kind of activity, the teacher has to work harder not to let their students mentally switched off, make them think and increase their desire to challenge. Then, let them work together either in pairs, groups, or whole class through communicative activities. With those types of activities, teachers can motivate their students and improve their communicative skills, especially speaking. The activities can vary from one teacher to another depending on his/her teaching method, objectives, and students' needs and abilities.

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