

## BENEFITS OF USING VIDEO IN ELT

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| ABSTRACT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | KEYWORDS                                                                                                 |
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| This article discusses the effectiveness of using video in English Language Teaching. Several works of scientists on this subject have been investigated. Different views of the technique (by scientists) were shown as examples. The researcher investigates the implementation of video in teaching English language by a few methods. Besides that, author tries to show the usage of it in the classroom, as well as, advantages and disadvantages of the technology. | language ; learning process; language teaching; video materials; skill; authentic materials; technology. |

Since the use of video materials in language teaching began to become widespread in the early 80s (Tuffs and Tudor 1990:29), many educators have since been concerned about the nature of videos and their place in the language classroom. One of the issues that has been discussed by some researchers and educators is the difference between video texts and written texts and, consequently, between, for example, reading a book and watching a film.

Many scholars have acknowledged the power of visual media in children's lives. For example, Stempleski and Tomalin (1990:3) assert that: 'Children [...] feel their interest quicken when language is experienced in a lively way through television and video.' Marsh and Millard (2004), in their turn, examined in depth children's engagement with television, video and film. Opposing critics' views on the destructive force of television, Marsh and Millard (2004:223) found more similarities than differences in reading printed matters and televisual texts. According to Marsh and Millard (2004:223), the common feature of reading both a book and a televisual text is that reading develops social, cognitive and emotional skills, although each in their own way. Besides, reading both printed and televisual texts involves orchestration of a range of skills – phonic, graphic, syntactic and semantic, or aural, visual and semantic respectively. Also, linear narratives occur in each medium as well as non-linear texts. Moreover, readers are active meaning-makers, who are socially, historically, politically, economically and culturally situated. They fill the gaps in the text and can re-read texts. However, televisual texts can be more ephemeral, if they are not taped and stored, while printed texts can be revisited over time. Another important difference between reading printed and televisual texts is that the former obviously make meaning through printed words and symbols, while televisual texts use images, symbols, sounds, spoken and written words. On the whole, Marsh and Millard (2004) believe

that televisual and printed texts share a number of common features which can successfully be used in the language classroom.

In a similar way, Mirvan (2013:62) believes that, in reading both a written text and a visual text, learners predict, make connections, ask questions and interpret, as well as make meaning through the details of character, theme, plot, mood, conflict and symbolism. At the same time, Mirvan (2013:65) stresses that while the meaning of a novel is controlled by the writer, the meaning that viewers get from a film is the result of a mutual effort by a large number of people.

Arguably the most important findings of Marsh and Millard's research, however, are the ones concerning the link between books and films. Marsh and Millard (2004:222) rely on Browne's (1999) study of her own daughter's juxtaposing of visual and printed versions of the same texts. Browne concluded that watching videos helped her daughter to gain confidence and enjoyment in books. Working with both film and text versions of the same text can hence be valuable for developing understanding of plot, setting, character and themes. According to Marsh and Millard (2004:222), videos can familiarise children with the language of books and can provide them with a more concrete picture of characters and make visible characteristics which were implicit within the printed narrative. Moreover, media can be an essential tool for making pupils read, because the latter may be motivated to read the texts which relate to their television, film and video consumption. The most widespread example is the case of the Harry Potter books, which became extremely popular after film adaptations. In addition to Marsh and Millard, Vetrie (2004:41) also has a positive view on developing pupils' literacy skills with video: 'Film can be used to increase literacy skills if it is taught as literature.' Similar to Marsh and Millard (2004), who emphasise the fact that the moving image plays a central part in children's cultural life, Vetrie (2004:39) also believes that, since film is pupils' most popular 'popular' culture', it can be used to increase their literacy skills through reading film as text, especially in the case of at-risk pupils, who, by virtue of their circumstances, such as low socioeconomic status, are statistically more likely than others to fail academically.

Video technology is becoming increasingly popular in education because of the rapid technological advancement (Lewis and Anping 2002:122; McNulty and Lazarevic 2012:51). However, the availability of modern equipment, such as a personal computer or a DVD player, is not the only reason for the use of video in the language classroom. The other important reason is that teaching with video can have a number of educational benefits.

The main advantage is that videos provide teachers and pupils with so-called 'potential learning outcomes'. According to Berk (2009:2), the most significant potential learning outcomes are as follows: videos attract pupils' attention, focus pupils' concentration, generate interest in class, energise or relax pupils for learning exercises, improve attitudes toward learning, increase understanding, foster creativity, stimulate the flow of ideas, provide an opportunity for freedom of expression, serve as a vehicle for collaboration, inspire and motivate pupils, make learning fun, and decrease anxiety and tension on scary topics.

In addition, videos that are produced in the country of the foreign language provide viewers with authenticity. Thus, Ishihara and Chi (2004:30) state that: '[...] because they [feature films] are not designed for instructional purposes, they reflect authentic use of the target language.' Nunan (1999:27) defines authentic materials as spoken or written language data that have been produced in the course of genuine communication, and not specifically written for purposes of language teaching. Such authentic materials can be represented by TV and radio broadcasts, feature films, cartoons, magazine

stories, hotel brochures, bank instructions, TV or newspaper advertisements, song lyrics, and the like. Joy (2011:8) refers to Brosnan et al. (1984) when emphasizing the importance of authentic texts in their 'naturalness' and hence their ability to connect pupils to the real world. Since it is not realistic for teachers to use only authentic materials in the classroom, Nunan (1999:27) finds it important that learners read and listen to authentic materials of different kinds as often as possible. This will help learners make the important connections between the classroom world and the world beyond it. Moreover, in Peacock's (1997:153) research, the use of authentic materials resulted in overall class motivation, which implied that authentic materials seemed to increase learners' concentration and involvement in the learning activities more effectively than artificial materials. Similarly, McNulty and Lazarevic (2012:49) claim that the most prominent feature of the use of video-based activities is that they contribute to the overall learning motivation.

Videos as authentic materials also bring intercultural awareness to the classroom. The foreign language teacher needs to consider the fact that teaching a foreign language does not consist of teaching, for example, only vocabulary and grammar, but also teaching the target cultures. Otherwise, the whole teaching process may appear to be useless and artificial. However, teachers have very limited time available in the classroom and there are curriculum constraints, and hence the inclusion of cultural lessons often comes second in language teaching. Teaching with video, on the other hand, provides teachers with the opportunity to develop pupils' cultural awareness and make them acquainted with the target cultures in addition to training the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and increasing pupils' vocabulary.

Roell (2010:2) believes that films are a great medium to be used to facilitate intercultural learning. By using the term 'culture', Roell (2010:2) means the values, traditions, customs, art, and institutions shared by a group of people who are unified by nationality, ethnicity, religion, or language. Since culture considerably impacts communication, it is helpful for teachers to introduce lessons and activities that reveal how different dialects, forms of address, customs, taboos, and other cultural elements influence interaction among different groups. Numerous films contain excellent examples of intercultural communication and are hence highly useful resources for teachers. According to Roell (2010:10), among such films suitable for intercultural training can be 'A Love Divided' (1999), describing a true story of a Catholic man and his Protestant wife whose mixed marriage causes hostility and conflict in the small Irish village where they live and hence describing Ireland in the 1950s with its religious conflicts and prejudices; 'American History X' (1998), representing a stark drama about a neo-Nazi skinhead and his family and touching upon racism issues; 'Bread and Roses' (2001), about a young Mexican immigrant who enters the United States illegally in search of a better life and becomes involved in a labour strike by revealing the issues of immigration, discrimination, exploitation and human rights; and 'Dangerous Minds' (1995), depicting a white teacher who struggles to be accepted by African American inner-city students and representing the race relations in the United States and the problems of inner-city 'kids'.

Harrison (2009:92) insists that in a curriculum that envisions a shift toward cultural studies, the use of a feature film in the classroom can foster cultural competence, since a feature film places language in context, gives students an in-depth understanding of a country's culture and history, and eventually becomes the gateway to language and culture. Indeed, videos are saturated with cultural information and touch upon different cultural themes, such as national diversity, national identity, national character, people's values and lifestyle.

According to Kramsch (1995), cited in Roell (2010:3), in the future the language teacher will be defined 'not only as the impresario of a certain linguistic performance, but as the catalyst for an ever-widening critical cultural competence.' Intercultural topics that show how people from different backgrounds communicate and interact are becoming more prominent in language teaching. Teachers can benefit from the films that deal with such subjects as immigration, xenophobia, adjusting to a new culture, or the dilemmas faced when one belongs to two cultures. Although films cannot substitute for actual interaction with members of other cultures, they can provide useful preparation for those encounters by fostering understanding and developing sensitivity. Films are also important for teaching the target cultures because they can represent intercultural misunderstandings and the roots of racism, foster empathy with foreigners, illustrate intercultural conflicts, contain stereotypes, show cultural traditions and intergenerational conflicts, and deal with different patterns of behaviour (Roell 2010). In addition, films can open doors to various disciplines, such as cultural studies, media studies, and film studies, which can bring diversity into language classrooms (Eken 2003:58).

Videos can also be used for many other purposes. For example, video materials can be useful for promoting communication in the classroom. Lonergan (1984:4) states that: 'The outstanding feature of video films is their ability to present complete communicative situations.' Indeed, video-based assignments can extend beyond passive video watching by requiring pupils to interact and respond to the video content. For instance, after watching the video pupils can be asked to answer questions.

Videos can also be an important tool for learning new words. Gee and Hayes (2011:116) claim that: 'When a person has images, actions, goals, and dialogue to attach to words, they have an embodied understanding of those words.' Consequently, videos help learners to see language 'embodied' by providing them with, first and foremost, images, as well as the other features named by Gee and Hayes. Besides, Köksal (2004:63) sees as one of the advantages of videos the fact that they can be adapted for use with both large and small classes. Indeed, it may be easier to prepare activities for video-viewing classrooms than for other types of lessons by creating, for example, more oral tasks for small groups of pupils and more written tasks for larger ones. Furthermore, Köksal (2004:64) points out that videos can be an endless source of grammatical structures and words as well as a discussion starter. Consequently, teachers can benefit from videos if they exploit those opportunities that videos provide them with.

Mills (2011:32) draws attention to the fact that, in the current abundance of media, print and online sources, and the need for critical literacy skills greatly arises. She insists that children entertained by videos and television programmes need the conceptual tools to understand, select, challenge and evaluate the messages of texts. Teaching with videos can become a good start for developing pupils' critical literacy skills by making them analyse, evaluate and challenge the texts that they have been exposed to.

Even though one may find drawbacks in teaching with video as well, they are likely to be outweighed by the benefits. However, the main drawback in teaching with video that should be noted is that such teaching is time-consuming. First, it takes time for the teacher to preview and select authentic videos suitable for classroom use regarding their language use and context. Teachers then need to spend some more time on preparing activities for pupils. Secondly, videos take much class time, especially if they are full-length feature films.

Another disadvantage can be the risk of making lessons entertaining rather than educating, which may lead to meaningless viewing without any purpose and hence without any educational outcome. Vetrie (2004:40) states:

Teachers sometimes use the film as a relief or a nonteaching break. The worst application of all is to use a feature film as an entertaining reward between the conclusion of a teaching unit and a holiday, a practice that is unethical as well as illegal.

To sum up, technology is an essential part of the educational world and, if used properly, can effectively promote successful language acquisition. It is important for every language teacher to be able to integrate video technology in the classroom routine and language learning activities. The instructional value of video should by no means be underestimated. On the other hand, it is also crucial to be cautious about overusing or misusing videos in class.

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