

THE ROLE OF VIDEO AS AN AV AID INCORPORATED THROUGH WEB-BASED TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

In this modern era, when methods of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are changing rapidly; English language teachers are in a dire need of advanced tools in the class rooms which can support their teaching methodologies accordingly. Students learning English as a Foreign or second language need a lot of support to acquire it. Teachers who are already in the profession of language teaching are very well aware that students need to experience the language practically in order to acquire it successfully. In that case it is important to use technological tools for the successful progression of language lessons. This paper specifically discusses the usage and role of videos or visual clips, benefits and techniques of incorporating videos through web-based technology in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: *Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Videos, Web Based Technology*

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INTRODUCTION

English Language has become almost the most important language of communication in the entire world. It has now come to be regarded as a global communication medium. In many countries of the world, for those who want to excel in their desiring careers, English language is a mandatory prerequisite. In Pakistan and a lot of other countries, English as a foreign language learning is given a very important place and it is deemed to play an integral role in people's career growth. Therefore it's important for EFL teachers to follow all modern methodologies along with modern techniques and materials which would help them achieve their target in a more efficient manner. Gone are the days when teachers would go in the language learning class and deliver lectures, write on the board, give examples, writing exercise, presentations, etc. and come back. Language learning is an active and practical process unlike other theoretical subjects. However teachers are not supposed to give long lectures but they need to focus on practical usage of modern language. This is perhaps because the paradigm of their teaching role is now shifting from a predominantly teacher-centered instructor to more of a student-oriented facilitator. In such case an integral support comes from technology in language teaching and through the help of it students are able to get real life examples while sitting in a non native learning environment that helps them understand the language in a better perspective. They can hear the sounds in native tone, their pronunciation, fluency and vocabulary can be enhanced, they learn English language in those contexts which are not available in their native countries. Therefore introducing some technological tools or AV aids like video clips, movies, visual presentations that cover both audio and video aspects and are designed by the native English speakers in the class room would give a new perspective to the students. It can improve the learning ability of the students and make language learning a smooth process for many of them. For such activities web based technology plays a very important role.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of videos/visual clips in language teaching classes is quite essential for the teachers and learners both as the learners feel motivated and encouraged by the visuals. Video sessions combine both audio and visual aspects, which make students more attentive towards the lesson. Many videos are based on stories that are enjoyed by almost everyone and particularly favored in some cultures (Johnston, 1999). From videos, a student is able to get direct input of the native

language. TV shows are made exclusively for native speakers, so in that sense visual clips give authentic language input (Katchen, 2002).

Videos are usually shown on Television screens, projectors or computers in the class rooms. Video can be used in a variety of instructional settings--in classrooms, in distance-learning sites where information is broadcast from a central point to learners who interact with a teacher through video or computer, and in self-study situations (Burt, 1991).

Video Sessions for Various Types of learners

There can be various types of videos which might help and benefit language learners. The teachers can use motivational speeches/extracts from films to boost the confidence level of the students. They can play various plays or films for interpretation and discussion. For beginners short movie clips with subtitles for reading comprehension can be used. Some scenes can be shown for role play exercises. Videos can also be set in the form of instructional clips, where the facilitator has recorded his/her conversations/ lectures /presentation for the students in order to minimize talk time and maximize the assessment. Teachers or students can create their own videotapes as content for the class or as a means to assess learner performance (Taggart, 1996). During a video session in the class, the teacher has a major role to play in the successful execution of video lessons. The teacher should keep certain things in mind; the learners can be given different tasks by the teacher such as guessing the gestures with or without audio support depending on the level of language learners. A questions answers session might take place after the video, where the teacher can ask questions related to vocabulary or interpretation of the scenes. Interviews of English speaking figures can be displayed for the questions and answers practice.

For slow learners videos can be of an immense help, as such learners usually have problems with comprehension, and video sessions can improve the comprehension to quite some extent. The teacher has the control so he/ she has the option to rewind, stop, put the video on slow motion or mute as per the students' convenience or according to the demand of the planned activity.

For advanced learners the teacher has the option to show a movie in the class and ask for interpretation or discussion at the end. A role play activity can also be done with intermediate or advanced learners. They can be asked to act out the scenes they have been assigned by the teacher, and the teacher should encourage them to use as much of the vocabulary and sentences of the video as possible. The students can also come up with some improvisation in this case; with the added advantage of creative enrichment while also showing the level of understanding to the teacher, as it is believed that videos can give students realistic models to imitate for role-play; can increase awareness of other cultures by teaching appropriateness and suitability (Arthur, 1999).

New language acquisition demands thinking, connecting and learning; and through videos it gets easier for the facilitator to talk less and focus more on the students involvement in the given task. It's highly important for EFL teachers to research well before executing any activity in class and go according to the plan.

Another important role of video clips in the class is that visual clips give the students practice in concluding attitudes. The gestures like hand and arm movements, nods, and other actions are related to the structure of the message. Moreover, the students build an opinion about the environment where target language is spoken as a native language (Çakir, 2006).

Students always enjoy colors, sounds, music etc. These video sessions can be a big inspiration for students to come to the class. Beginners, intermediate and advanced learners enjoy such an atmosphere in the class. It keeps the environment of the class active and alive.

These sessions include learning with entertainment which the students definitely would not want to miss.

Learning Appropriate Gestures through Video Sessions

Videos work really well in enhancing and improving the fluency and pronunciation of the learners. They allow learners to see facial expressions and body language at the same time as they hear the stress, intonation, and rhythm of the language (Bello, 1999). Through such sessions

a learner can observe different gestures and expressions supported by language which improves his vocabulary, sentences structure, pronunciation, etc., and in future he can relate to the video while using a similar term and through continuous repetition, the contextualized language becomes a part of the learner's speech. Video sessions provide an opportunity to students to learn not only the language but a different culture, body language that compliment utterances they make in their conversations.

Techniques of Incorporating Video Sessions through Web Based Technology

This is an era of web-based technology people use social media as the platform for social interaction and communication, they use search engines like Google and Yahoo more than going to libraries and looking for books they need.

The computer is seen in the literature as a cognitive tool that has great potential to support a constructivist form of teaching and learning (Mueller, 2008). Everything is rapidly changing and so are the demands of all the academic disciplines. English as a foreign language like all other academic subject has started adapting to the changing needs and that has brought a positive result forward.

“We should acknowledge the fundamental changes that IT is bringing to our societies and seek ways to use its power for transformative purposes” (Cummins, 2000). Internet based learning engage the students and it doesn't let the process remain passive. There are numerous free learning websites available on internet that have interactive language related videos, language games and quizzes, the teacher can always guide the students to go on such website to enhance their language abilities while listening to the native English speakers or playing the games designed by them. Through the multimedia feature of the internet the language teacher can present, texts, images, variety of video clips and other materials suitable to the topic being taught in the class.

As this article discusses video sessions in EFL classrooms, computers and internet play a vital role in successful execution of video sessions. Presently, the importance of World Wide Web cannot be denied in the field of education, and methods of imparting education now rely on

internet technology to quite some extent. Therefore the effective use of this technology is mandatory in EFL class for the successful progression of this field. It can be a great academic instrument, as it fulfills the requirement of the modern learner, it gives a free access to the user to learn with the help of audio, videos, comics, flashcards, worksheets, online exercises, dictionaries, etc., and it makes the entire process of language learning dynamic.

Some important websites for downloading authentic and updated ELT audios, videos and worksheets are:

- www.engvid.com
- www.bbclearningenglish.co
- www.britishcouncil.org/kids.htm
- www.britishcouncil.org/central.htm
- <http://www.englishmedialab.com/>
- www.bestofgooglevideos.com
- <http://www.openculture.com/freelanguagelessons>
- <http://teachertube.com>
- <http://www.power-english.net/free-downloa>
- www.free-english-study.com (ESL lessons and practice)
- http://www.letstalkpodcast.com/spoken_english_videos.html
- www.esgold.com
- www.englishmedialab.com
- www.freeenglishnow.com
- www.englishfreeware.com (Self-Study)
- www.vaonews.com/specialenglish
- www.onestopenglish.com

Audio and video files can be easily downloaded through real player, VSO downloader, FLV video downloader, wavepad, 123 Video Downloader. Various types of video files such as 3GP, ASF, AVI, FLV, GIF, MOV, MP4, and MPEG can be converted into WMV format because of its compatibility with multimedia tool.

CONCLUSION

Learning English as a foreign language is demanding and challenging, hence usage of visual clip and other interactive web based activities will not only make the process easier but also encourage the students to come to the language classes on regular basis due to the active nature of the EFL sessions which tend to get boring if the teacher only follows conventional methods of teaching. Learners these days have a natural bonding with the technology, and technology can play a very vital role in making the language sessions as interactive and updated as possible. Video sessions also stimulate the creative side of the language learners and bring them closer to the target language environment while being in a non native atmosphere. Thus keeping the role of video sessions in view, EFL classes throughout the world are incorporating such sessions that help language learners learn English in more interactive and useful manner.

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