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## Integrating Video in English Language Teaching

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### The Purpose of This Article

The famous saying one picture is worth one thousand words highlights the importance of audio video materials. Particularly, the use of video as an audio-visual material in foreign language classroom enables the teachers to effectively supplement what their textbooks and their teaching practices offer to their students. At the same time, students are also exposed to modern technology and thus are greatly motivated in learning the language. While traditional classroom setting will continue, audio and video materials change the dynamics of teaching and learning. It is obvious that the introduction of video classes would be a great help for foreign language learners to stimulate their communicative talents.

### Importance of Videos

Video has been proved an effective tool in language learning in recent years for both young and adult learners. Video-audio materials may include documented films, T.V programs, movies, series of episodes and other materials that combine motion picture with sounds. Nowadays videos, films and TV are not only part of our daily activities, but they also have become an integral part in our education both inside and outside the classroom. Educators and teachers of ELT also recognize the value of using TV and videos in ELT classes.

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Visual media effectively motivate language learners in the language learning process to practice listening. The media also stimulate speaking and writing, when properly designed and presented.

Videos can be used in a variety of instructional settings in classrooms. DVDs play selected and directly relevant discs in the classroom. There are also telecast lessons and online studies through websites, where information is telecast from a central point to learners in the classroom. These telecasts are also receivable from home as well. Students can interact with the facilitator via computer. These varieties of instructional settings help the teachers in their professional development even as these help improve teaching and learning situations and achievements.

In this article, we attempt to discuss the utilitarian and worthwhile practices of integrating video-audio materials in teaching and learning English.

The primary advantage in the use of video is described in this manner by Bedjou 28: "In EFL setting, where authentic materials are scarce and students are rarely exposed to the natural pace of native speakers of the target language, the video can be valuable source of input and highly relevant to language acquisition."

### **Videos as Authentic Language Input and Its Implications**

A great advantage of video is that it provides authentic language input. Morrow defines the term authentic as "a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer, for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort"(13). Movies and T.V. programmes are usually made for native speakers; so, in that sense, video provides authentic language.

Students in the Middle East have traditionally been taught the grammar rules and vocabulary through classroom exercises or classroom activities. They hardly have or make use of any chance for using spoken language in the classroom which help the learners to follow the real language and acquire fluency. Thus the use of videos gives room for the students to access authentic language.

### **Help with the Development of Speaking and Listening Skills**

One of the major drawbacks is that the real spoken language is not found in typical teaching materials or even in the oral models provided by the teachers in the classroom. For example, as an extreme case, real people when they talk mumble and talk for so many reasons. Some people speak slang forms and talk incomplete sentences using all sorts of short forms, etc.

Accent and mode of delivery are usually quite different from those adopted and produced by the foreign language learners. Differences in speech also may be found because native speakers of English may come from different regions, groups, social classes, ages, apart from gender distinction.

Most of these features may be recorded in the written material used for reading, but these differences are well beyond the reach of the teachers who teach English in most schools in India and similar countries. Video lessons however expose our students to these contexts by giving exposure to learn language through recorded videos like movies and TV shows.

### **No Need to Develop Perfect Accent or Pronunciation, But Comprehensibility is Important**

Perfect accent or perfect delivery of speech requires concentrated effort. However, such concentrated effort exerted exclusively on some or the other aspects of language performance may result in uneven skill development in other aspects of language performance. Our goal in learning and mastering English in countries like India may not include imitating wholly the native-like performance, but to achieve a level of pronunciation to enable their listeners (both regional, national and international, not merely native speakers of English) to comprehend the utterances the learners use.

As Thirumalai points out (<http://www.languageinindia.com/april2002/tesolbook.html#chapter6>),

Most TESOL teachers do not aim at imparting “perfect” pronunciation. Even native-like pronunciation is not insisted upon in all contexts. Teachers have recognized that it takes a lot of time to master “perfect” pronunciation and that the results are not often worth the time and effort.

When mature students try seriously to imitate a foreign pronunciation model, and when the expertise is available to offer technical assistance, they will demonstrate the physical capacity for a quite satisfactory production. But the minute the students’ attention is diverted to the content of the message, the pronunciation control loosens, and native language influence reappears to produce a heavy speech accent . . . For most adult students a reasonable goal is the ability to communicate orally with ease and efficiency, but without expecting to achieve a competence in pronunciation that would enable them to conceal their own different language background. At the same time it should be possible to achieve a consistent production of the basic contrasts of the sound system, to speak fluently and understandably in a form that requires minimum adjustment on the part of one’s listeners. And of course students must be capable of understanding native pronunciation under normal circumstances of production, and not require of their interlocutors a special style (Bowen, p.102, in Celce-Murcia, et al. 1979).

### **Techniques**

The video courses specifically written for ELT are usually accompanied by fairly detailed teacher guidelines. These guidelines can be applied to specifically written or authentic video

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material. In general, however, silent viewing, prediction and role playing are three major techniques (Lonergan, 1984: p 30-40) that may be adopted to teach video lessons in order to develop various language skills.

### **Silent Viewing**

Students view a sequence such as booking a hotel reservation in a leading hotel in a big city, talking to a sales person in a departmental store in a metropolitan city, or even to a high ranking government or bank official eliciting information about borrowing money from a financial institution approved by the government for his or her studies abroad, etc. Based on this viewing of such episodes, they attempt to generate appropriate dialogues for similar situations. The actual dialogues can then be used as a model and the students can adapt some of the techniques and styles which have been displayed in the actual dialogue in the video they viewed. Alternatively, if the students have already heard the dialogue, they can use the silent re-viewing to reproduce the conversation.

### **Prediction**

Another activity often used with videos is prediction. The teacher plays part of a video, stop it at a specific point, and then ask the students to speculate and discuss what they think will happen next. In our everyday lives, we probably do not actively predict and discuss what will happen next, yet prediction is an authentic activity. We may observe the activities in the movie and predict the activities that can take place next. "Using the visual cues on the screen, and parts of the spoken dialogue, learners can predict what is going to happen or spoken next and discuss hypothetical happening to give explanations and reasons for things".(Lonergan p 36)

### **Role play**

Incorporating role-play into the video lesson adds variety, a change of pace and opportunities for a lot of language production and also a lot of fun! It can be an integral part of the video class and not a 'one-off' event'. Role-plays are interesting, memorable and engaging, and students retain the material they have learned. In their assumed role, students drop their shyness, other personality and cultural inhibitions and it is said to be the best tool available for teaching a second language. If the teacher believes that the activity will work and the necessary support is provided, it can be very successful. However, if the teacher is not convinced about the validity of using role-play the activity "will fall flat on its face just as you expected it to" (Porter 54).

### **Setting the Atmosphere**

Kritzer wrote that "Education is a truly cybernetic system in which three complex agents ... are coupled, namely the student, the teacher and the environment" (1976. P 4). In order to get maximum results from the video-audio material, the material has to meet the expectations of the first two agents and has to be suitable for the third agent. This means that a teacher who wishes

to use videos has to convince him/herself of the usefulness of the video-audio materials used in the class. And it is used to play a role in the learning process and not just to fill free class time. Also learners have to understand what they will be seeing and what they need to do afterward. The teacher's enthusiasm and learners' readiness are not quite enough. The environment in which the task will take place has to be set.

### **Procedure in a Video Lesson - Pre-viewing, Viewing and Post-viewing**

Milli Fanzly of Kentucky Educational Television (KET, 1999) suggests that teachers think of using as a three-part lesson, including pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities.

1. The pre-viewing activity included general discussion with the students to check their knowledge on the topic going to be presented. Before presenting the video, the teacher must engage the learners' to generate interest in what they will be doing and prepare them to do it successfully.
2. The 'viewing activity' involved answering multiple choice questions like filling in the blanks, drawing inferences, and listening for the gist. While learners view the video, the teacher should remain in the classroom with the learners to observe their reactions and see what they do not understand, what they are intrigued by, and what bothers them.
3. The last stage is the 'post-viewing' where students were given the chance to comment on the show and to express their enjoyments or objections. The teacher should also take time to review and clarify complex points, encourage discussion, explain, and assign follow-up activities.

It is also important to ensure the suitability, length, clarity, and completeness of the videotaped material. Tomalin believes that "the ideal video clip... tells a complete story or section of a story" (50).

The first author of this article has prepared a sample fifty-minute video lesson for Elementary or Intermediate level. The following are suggested activities that can be covered in fifty-minute duration.

## Applying for a course

Listen to the video



K: Hello, it's Mikhail, isn't it?  
M: That's right.  
K: Well, we've got your application form ... thanks for that ... so you want to do a course with us?  
M: Yes, that's right .  
K: So, when would you like to start?  
M: As soon as possible.  
K: Well, our next course starts on ... April 3rd and finishes on 29th June. Is that okay for you?  
M: Yes ... that's good for me.  
K: Good. So why do you want to study English here?  
M: Well, I'd like to study Medicine in Manchester next year, and I need to take an English exam ...  
K: Right ... English for Medicine, right. How did you hear about us, by the way?  
M: I have a friend who studied here and he said this was a good school.  
K: Oh good. So you'd like to study an Advanced course, is that right?  
M: Yes.  
K: Right. Well, we'll need to give you a test. Could you do that next Monday?  
M: Yes, sure. Is it a writing test?  
K: Writing and speaking.  
M: Okay. No problem. What time should I come in?  
K: Could you be here at 10 o'clock?  
M: Yes, of course.  
K: Fine. Is there anything you want to ask me?  
M: Yes, about accommodation, is it possible...

### Previewing Activity

A previewing activity is meant to familiarize the students with the material that they are going to view and it includes general discussion with the students to check their knowledge of the topic that is going to be presented. The teacher can use the video material he or she has prepared for the suitable level of the students. It is highly required that the teacher and the students work cooperatively, deliberately and simultaneously with the intension to develop the four fold skills.

### Procedure

#### 1. Use the following sample questions and hints about what students expect to view:

**Teacher:** What are we going to do now? (Fixing video equipment)

**Student 1:** I think we are going to watch some interesting video program.

**Teacher:** Good, you are correct. What do you do if you want to study English in a Language centre?

**Student 2:** Um! I think I will go there to enquire about the English classes in the centre

**Teacher:** Excellent, What do you ask when you meet the receptionist of the centre?

**Student 3:** I will ask about the details of the course etc.

**Teacher:** Very good. Now we're going to watch a student enquiring about the course in an English centre. Please, watch and listen carefully so that we'll discuss the next activity, which is going to be based on the videotaped material.

(The teacher half-darkens the classroom, turns on the TV and video equipment, plays the first segment while everybody watches and listens carefully).

#### 2. While-viewing Sample Activity:

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(Sound Pause) Teacher asks question.  
What is the name of the boy?  
Where does this conversation take place?  
Who do you think this woman in the centre is?  
When does the next English course start?  
Why does the boy want to study English?

**3. Post-viewing Sample Activity:**  
(Sound and Picture)

**Circle the correct number in the following. Your answers should be based on the viewing and listening:**

- a) The woman in the centre is .....  
1. angry 2. pleasing 3. cooperative 4. in a hurry
- b) She looked.....  
1. old 2. young 3. middle-aged 4. sick
- c) The starting date of the course is on.....  
1. 29<sup>th</sup> June 2. 3<sup>rd</sup> April 3. 1<sup>st</sup> November 4. 29<sup>th</sup> July
- d) The boy wants to study ..... course  
1. Elementary 2. Pre-Elementary 3. Advanced 4. Intermediate

**4. While-viewing Activity**

The teacher plays the video again and asks the students to note down the questions asked and the style of answering these questions.

**Post-viewing Discussion group activity:**

After the students have already viewed and listened to the segment, the teacher asks them to sit in groups of 4 or 5 and discuss their reaction to the student and receptionist interaction. For example, they can discuss the receptionist's behavior. Manner of asking questions, how did the student enquire the details of the course? Was the receptionist helpful? Etc.

**Post-viewing Activity: Writing Task Combined with Role-Playing**

The teacher can ask two students to role-play similar situations to the ones they have just viewed and simultaneously the rest of the class to write down an outline of the interaction, presented in the video segment.



## To conclude

Finally, we conclude that the video in class rooms is proved to be an effective teaching aid in English language class rooms and it is a great help for the foreign language teachers in stimulating and facilitating the target language. It promotes critical thinking and reflection and thereby enhances learning development. It actually enhances learners' motivation and interest in course material.

We would like to recommend that the use of video equipments and materials in a non-ELT environment enables students to practice what they have learned through various techniques. At the same time showing videos in the classroom also allows the instructors to expose language learners to authentic cultural information. Thus fluency in the target that matches various needs of communication in the target language can be easily acquired by the language learners.

So, we highly commend that language teachers, especially teachers of English as a second or foreign language, make use of video materials because these combine both fun and pedagogic instructions in authentic materials that reflect real interaction.

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