Using Authentic Video Materials for Teaching Oral English.

The Case Study of Second Year Students at Batna University.

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Abstract

This paper suggests a highly interactive strategy, based on the communicative approach for teaching language as a foreign language.

Moreover, it explains that video technology which is often underused in language classrooms can be equally educational and simulating. In this study, we will try to prove that video materials can be the perfect vehicle for integrating skills practice, authentic communication that is difficult to sustain through other media.

ملخص

يتضمن هدا البحث اقتراح استراتجية فعالة لكيفية تدريس استيعاب اللغة الانجليزية .حيث نقترح ان تكون هده الاستراتجية مبنية على منهج التحاور واستعمال شرائط الفيديو المصورة كوسيلة بيداغوجية لتحفيز الطالب و تنمية قدرات التعبير الشفوي بصفة خاصة لديه.

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Introduction

There has been a prominent shift within the field of language learning and teaching over the last years with greater emphasis on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching.

The rigidity of the teaching-learning materials and techniques has produced ineffective students as far as communication is concerned. This situation encouraged students to learn language for testing not for communication; and at different educational levels, teachers of English were primarily worried by preparing their students for such or such examination, thus, it would not be surprising that they hardly had time to concentrate on the communicative aspect of the language. Even learners themselves complain that they spend so much time in learning grammar and structure, yet when in actual encounters they have hard time in remembering or choosing the proper structures to speak out their minds needless to add that they hardly make any effort to have extra –curricular training in oral skills. Last but not least, at the university, students have listening comprehension and oral expression in one course which is relatively insufficient to lead to the desired communication.

All of what is cited above leads to the need to redirect the focus of our teaching and learning to a more important perspective: communication. Now, it is true to that teachers are so often confused by myriad of approaches and methods leading authorities proposed for the teaching of second or foreign languages; but it seems obvious that searching for the perfect approach to achieve a complete success rate would be a loose of time and energy. Teachers instead are required to look for the appropriate method; "appropriate" in the sense that it reflects the realistic communicative needs of the learners and concurs a balance between the perception and production aspects of the language. So as teachers, we should help our students to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language. This may be done by following a highly interactive strategy, grounded in the communicative approach.

Teachers should provide comprehensible input, challenging tasks and indulge students in an environment in which they can develop a range of functional strategies. To achieve this, information gap or problem solving activities –in which learners work towards a definite solution-were found to be very useful as explained by **Littlewood (1981)[1]**. Also, social interaction activities in which learners must pay more attention to the social context i.e. saying the right thing to the person in the right context are of a great importance for developing the students' English competencies. To fulfil such requirements, we may suggest role- plays simulations as samples of social interaction activities.

In this article, we will try to demonstrate that for fluency and communication in English to develop, the teacher must provide students with structured activities and discussion used in combination with the video- taped material.

I. Teaching oral expression to 2nd year students:

At the University level, the listening and speaking skills become a separate course, namely oral expression. In fact, the second year oral expression curriculum is designed to give students the opportunity to develop their communicating skills. In this course, the teacher should assure that students listen to authentic materials, participate in various communicative activities in which they can express their ideas, feelings and opinions. Moreover; throughout this program, they are expected to be able to understand natives speaking with the supervision of the teacher.

In fact it is up to the teacher of oral expression to organize the content of the courses and to select the appropriate activities according to what he sees as suitable to the learners.

Despite the fact that oral expression teachers have to struggle against the limitted number of language laboratories as well as the lack of materials and the limited time devoted to listening and speaking skills, they have to find out ways for motivating students to participate in the class aiming at achieving a better performance in oral English proficiency.

Because the subject matter of our study is concerned with the teaching of oral expression, in what follows we are going to speak about the listening and speaking skills in more details. Moreover; we will deal with all the problems that our foreign learners encounter in this course.

I.1. The listening skill

Listening is believed to be the first language mode that we acquire. It provides a foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development and it plays a life- long role in the process of learning, and communication essential to productive participation in life.

Listening is usually defined as a receptive skill comprising both a physical process and an interpretive, analytical process **Littlewood (1981)[1]**. It is important to note that despite the growing attention researchers reserved to this skill, a consensus on a definition of listening has not yet been established. Nevertheless, despite the various definitions attributed to this skill, the majority of scholars recognizes and emphasize that any definition of listening comprehension must acknowledge that: listening comprehension is an interactive process and not a passive skill **Anderson and Lynch (1988)[2]**. In fact, most researchers explain that listening effectively involves a multiplicity of skills. They construct a very simple step-by-step picture of the various elements that might be thought to make up the process of listening in face-to-face conversation:

1. " The spoken signals have to be identified from the midst of surrounding sounds.
2. The continuous stream of speech has to be segmented into units, which have to be recognized as known words.
3. The syntax of the utterance has to be grasped and the speakers' intended meaning has to be understood.
4. We also have to apply our linguistic knowledge to formulating a correct and appropriate response to what has

I.2. Learners difficulties in listening comprehension:

Listening is one language skill with which most learners have problems. As far as second or a foreign language is concerned, this skill proves to be more difficult and challenging for learners **Penny Ur (1984)[3]**. We will discuss some learner difficulties in listening and try to make some suggestion as to what the teacher can do to help to solve them. Some of these main problems are summarized bellow:

1. **Trouble with sounds:**

Since most listeners rely mostly on context for comprehension, they are often themselves unaware of inaccurate sound perception.

2. **Have to understand every word:**

This is a very common problem, often unconsciously fostered by teachers and/or listening comprehension materials which encourage the learner to believe that everything that is said bears (equally) important information. The effort to understand everything often results in ineffective comprehension, as well as feelings of fatigue and failure.

We may need to give learners practice in selective ignoring of heard information something they do naturally in their mother tongue. We should explain this point to the learners, and set them occasional tasks that ask them to scan a relatively long text for one or two limited items of information.

3. **Can't understand fast, natural native speech:**

Learners often ask teachers to slow down and speak clearly by which they mean pronounce each word the way it would sound in isolation; and the temptation is to do as they ask but when teachers do this, it will not help them to learn to cope with everyday informal speech. They should be exposed to as much spontaneous informal talk as they can successfully understand as soon as possible; and it is worth taking the time to explain them why. One of the advantages of teacher produced talks is that teachers can provide learners with this sort of discourse at the right level for them, getting faster and more fluent as their listening skills develop.

4. Need to hear things more than once:

Generally there may be very good pedagogical reasons for exposing learners to texts more than once. But the fact remains that in real life they are often going to have to cope with "one-off" listening; and can improve learners' ability to do so. We can for example, try to use texts that include 'redundant' passages and within which essential information is presented more than once and not too intensively; and give learners the opportunity to request clarification or repetition during the listening.

5. Find it difficult to keep-up:

The learner feel overloaded with incoming information. The solution is not to slow down the discourse but rather to encourage them to relax, stop trying to understand everything, learn to pick out what is essential and allow themselves to ignore the rest.

6. Get tired:

This is one reason for not making listening comprehension passages too long overall, and for breaking them up into short "drunks" though pause, listener response or change of speaker.

I.3.The speaking skill

Of all the four skills, speaking is considered to be the most important since people who know a language are referred to as "speakers" of that language and the majority of learners are interested in learning how to speak.

Speaking is an interactive process of contrasting meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information **Brown (1994)[4]**. The form and the meaning of the spoken language are largely dependent on the context, in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their shared knowledge, their physical setting and the purpose of speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. **Hugues(2002)[5],**explains that the obstacles are great with regard to the pronunciation of our tongue .

Research that has been conducted so far notes that in order to become successful speakers, learners not only need to know how to

produce specific points of language such as grammar or vocabulary, what we usually call linguistic competence, but also that they understand when, why and in what ways to produce language. In brief, successful speaking involves "communicative competence» **Hymes (1972)[6]**. This term refers to what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a particular speech community. It involves knowing not only the language code, but also what to say, to whom, and how to say it appropriately in many situations, further, it involves the social and cultural knowledge speakers are presumed to have. It has important implications for the selection and sequencing in language curricula.

According to **Burns and Joyce (1997)[7]**, **Carter (1995)[8]**, speech has its own skills, structures and conventions different from written language. For this reason, speaking is said to be a powerful tool used for personal, academic, professional and social purposes; and to become an effective speaker, students not only need strategies for spoken communication but also to gain confidence through risk taking and practice, need opportunities to express their ideas and opinions in various domains by participating in a variety of experiences through formal and informal oral communication.

I.4. Learner problems in speaking activities:

Inhibition, finding nothing to say, low or uneven participation and mother tongue use are among the most important speaker related features that make the process of speaking in a second or foreign language a complex matter.

1. Inhibition:

Unlike reading, writing and listening activities, speaking requires some degree real-time exposure to the audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: Worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts **Penny Ur (1996)[9]**.

2. Nothing to say:

Even if they are not inhibited, we often hear learners complain that they can't think of anything to say: they have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking.

3. Low or uneven participation:

Only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard; and in large group this means that each one will have only very little talking time.

This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.

4. Mother-tongue use:

When learners in the same class share the same mother-tongue, they may tend to use it: because it is easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language. When we have small group discussion it can be quite difficult to get some classes particularly the less disciplined or motivated ones to keep to the target language.

Moreover; some affective factors may also affect the learners' capacity to talk in the foreign language to a considerable extent. These factors which enter in interpersonal communication are found to be highly relevant to the process of speaking. Some of these are: anxiety and self esteem.

II- **Using authentic video materials for teaching English**

II-1-Video -Tapes

Nowadays, video as a language material is becoming a prominent feature in many foreign language classrooms; it's obvious motivational and entertainment advantages foster a positive attitude to language learning. Moreover; it has become demonstrably clear that their contribution is relevant to all languages, aims and proficiency levels.

-quoted by **Johnson and Morrow (1981)**[11]-argues that:

"Visual materials are useful in developing listening comprehension particularly "directed listening" (where the student

listens for certain information and ignores the rest).They not only help to guide the students' listening. They can provide general background and context, increase motivation and give evidence of understanding for diagnostic assessment".

Many studies that have been carried out in the domain of foreign language teaching demonstrate that without seeing the speaker it is difficult, even for a native speaker it is difficult, even for a native listener, to follow the listening activities. Video taped materials, however, offer to students a better opportunity for comprehension as stated by **Lonergan (1984)[12],** who maintains that video based instruction reduces the difficulty of listening in a foreign language, since:

"At any level of language competence, the learners' potential for comprehension is greatly increased if the virtual information is included in the presentation". In fact, the majority of students today are used to gain knowledge about the surrounding world from television. This is why many teachers exploit such an advantage to use video materials in order to teach English to University students.

The use of videos may be useful in different ways:

-It may stimulate students' discussion after the presentation of the material, and hence increases students' participation which leads them to practice their oral English.
-Videos can be easier to follow than audio-tapes because of the visual and paralinguistic clues that extracts can provide, alongside practice in listening.
-Videos give access to a wide range of accents, cultural insights and idiomatic ways of speaking in various settings both formal and informal.
-using videos for teaching English as a foreign language, encourages learners to use videos at home as a learning tool and not as a mean of relaxation and therefore it increases learners' extracurricular exposure to English.

-Using television and video materials in the class give teachers and students a structure to maximize language learning, so that students do more than just watch.

II-2-Using video materials for communication

To succeed, this technique requires a significant amount of teacher preparation. This latter should give to learners a sequential series of tasks, these may involve:

-Previewing tasks to be completed before watching the video segments.
-While-viewing tasks that need to be completed using information from the video.
-After-viewing tasks that further exploit the language or the information contained in the video.

We advocate using "viewing sheets" consisting of easy multiple-choice questions, which the students answer as they watch the video **Donley (2000)[13]**. Pre-viewing and after-viewing discussions are conducted in conjunction with the viewing sheets. As they listen to the dialogue in the program, answer the questions on the viewing sheets, and discuss the questions and events in the program, students will use three of the major skill areas of language learning.

II-3-Viewing sheets

The viewing sheet is essential in the lesson presentation and greatly enhances students' comprehension of the movie or the program. Viewing sheets should be multiple-choice; with a maximum of three choices. The viewing sheet should contain questions related to the plot, characters or main events of the story of the program or movie selected by the teacher.

-In the previewing step, we can introduce vocabulary and important events of the movie or the program using visual aids, read over the questions, and ask students to predict the answers to the questions. A good previewing discussion will probably interest students in the forthcoming segment.

-During the viewing step, each student should have a copy of the viewing sheet. As the students watch the movie or the program, they answer the questions. Teachers should insist on individual work and minimize interruptions, as talking distracts other students.

-After the section ends, groups can summarize the events that occurred. Next, discuss the answers to the questions to check comprehension,

and solicit students' opinions of developments in the program. We may ask students how many questions they were able to answer correctly.

II-4-Selecting the program

The genre of the movie or the program the teacher chooses is important. Dramas and comedies are too wordy and usually require knowledge of idioms or vocabulary that is beyond foreign language learners. The program selected must be age- appropriate, culturally appropriate and interesting for both boys and girls. Action and adventure movies are an excellent medium for videos for teaching; engaging events occur on screen and difficult dialogue is minimal.

We asked our second year students during the oral expression course about the type of videos they like to watch in the classroom, they have proposed the following:

-Action films as well as films dealing with social issues and historical events.
- News and documentaries dealing with history, literature as well as cultural aspects of life
-Announcements, story telling, TV plays and even cartoons were also cited by learners.

II-5-The Quality of the video

If we accept that authentic video-taped materials are likely to help learners overcome their English learning difficulties, it is important to note that those who addressed the usefulness of these materials in language teaching and learning **Stempleski (2001)[14]; Lonergan (1984)[15]** take pains to point out that selection of the type of videos should be built on well thought criteria, these are summed up in what follows:

-The videotape should be of a good quality without any sound or picture distortion.

-There should be a mismatch between the visual and the audio components of the video since according to **Allan (1985)[16]** the visual information helps to reinforce the audio signals.

-Decision on the subject matter of the video should of course consider its adaptability to the learners' linguistic and conceptual competencies; their needs and interests as well as their sensitivity so as not to offend them.

- The study also highlights the fact that the speed at which English is spoken may present our learners with difficulties in understanding the content of the video. So, suitable videos are those in which the speed of language production is neither too fast to discourage learners nor too slow to decrease their level of interest and motivation. We need to judge the length of the selected clip in the same way too. In general, it is accepted that learners feel comfortable with short video extracts.

II-6-Students' questionnaire

We have suggested the use of a questionnaire in order to investigate; collect data, and check learners' opinions concerning the topic under investigation, and which deals with the use of authentic video materials for teaching English.

Our questionnaire was designed for a sample of forty students selected randomly from all second year of Batna University **(academic year 2010_2011)** to collect necessary data on students' attitudes, preferences and opinions regarding the teaching materials selected during the courses of the oral expression module.

The questionnaire is one of the data collection procedures. It consists of a series of questions and statements to which individuals are asked to respond. This instrument is widely used by researchers for a number of reasons. It can be used when large numbers of respondents must be reached; it requires little time to administer and it permits respondents to remain anonymous when they answer the questions **Turney and Robb (1971)[17].**

We selected two important questions from our questionnaire and which are directly related to the subject discussed in this article. These are:

Question one

-How often do you watch video-tapes in the classroom?

a- Often

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b- Sometimes ☐

c- Rarely ☐

d- Never ☐

By asking such a question to our learners, we wanted to know if our students were used to such an activity during their first year, their answers are shown in the following table:

Answers	N%= participants	Percentage %
Often	00	00 %
Sometimes	03	07.5 %
Rarely	17	42.5 %
Never	20	50 %

Table 01: Frequency of watching videos in the classroom

This table shows that an overwhelming majority of learners (50 %) had never watched a video-tape in their English classroom, (42.5 %) of the participants answered that they had rarely watched films in English courses. Only a very low percentage (07.5 %) argued that they sometimes experience videos.

Question two

Do you think that videos can be a reach recourse to enhance your English capacities?

Yes ☐

No ☐

This question highlighted the importance of videos in the development of learners listening and speaking skills.

Response	Number of participants	Percentage %
Yes	32	80 %
No	08	20 %

Table 02: The importance of videos in the oral skills.

(80 %) of our students had strong beliefs concerning the importance of videos in the teaching process, this augurs well for them since motivation and interest to watch videos contributes successfully to the improvement of learners' listening and speaking skills.(%20) of the students, however, found that videos have no importance in enhancing their aural-oral capacities.

The rate of yes indicates that our students have strong beliefs regarding the importance of videos in the teaching process; this augurs well for them since motivation and interest contributes successfully to the improvement of learners English.

The students who had positive attitudes towards the use of videos in the classroom justified their answer as follows:

-It stimulates our interest and motivation.
-It stimulates discussion and debate in the English classroom
-It familiarizes the student with the different cultural aspects of English speaking countries.

-In videos Language is usually associated with facial expression and gestures which help students to get the meaning of the message easily.

It reduces many psychological problems as shyness and anxiety.

In fact, because of the opportunity in our FL settings to interact with native speakers, the need for exposure to real world situations and scenes becomes important. In addition, since they provide a purpose for he use of language in a specific context other than simply learning language for its' own sake, many activities can be combined with he video materials to practice and lead to creative oral production. Overall,

for more practice tasks appear to start with the previewing discussion, move into focusing on the content of the video during the while viewing stage with learners fill in gaps or finding out some solution to structured problems, and finish with role- plays simulations during the post viewing section. In deed

Authentic videos are a tremendous resource for teachers of foreign languages. These materials are often entertaining and exciting than many other materials but, it is difficult for teachers to effectively utilize this resource. Viewing sheets promote understanding of key events and provide an outline of discussion. If students participate actively during the lesson, they will probably develop critical aspects of fluency. Videos give students a structure to maximize language learning, so that students do more than just watch television.

Conclusion

We can conclude that there is a serious gap in our learners' ability to perceive and produce English to communicate their thoughts effectively, our learners' poor performance in oral- aural English can be attributed to their lack of practice in the classroom. Indeed, students revealed in the questionnaire that they do not participate actively in the classroom activities, because these latter do not feed their interests. They are aware that what they get in the classroom is not enough to equip them with better speaking and listening proficiency.

In fact, Teachers should establish the proper atmosphere where learners can feel relaxed and develop their oral English through communicative activities. Moreover; giving positive feedback may help to encourage and relax shy students to speak more. Activities should capture students' interest and create a real need for communication; the teacher must speak in English as much as possible in the class to encourage students to speak in English in their turn. In all a good social climate and a variety of classroom activities will certainly encourage communication and students will perform better if they feel self-confident, proud, respected and loved.

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