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## The Role of Video Materials in EFL Classrooms

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### Abstract

The rapid growth of technology has brought many innovations in education and especially in language teaching. In order to offer and create successful classes language teachers, especially English language teachers are using different audio-visual tools to facilitate the teaching process, besides textbooks and other interesting and engaging activities, which ensure student centeredness, autonomy, interaction and connectivity to a certain theme, and videos such as: movies, songs, power point presentations are widely used in EFL classrooms. This paper first attempts to explore the goals of using video material in EFL classrooms and the advantages of using video materials in EFL teaching, on the basis of which proposes a framework of teaching principles, strategies and specific tips which facilitate EFL teaching. Then will bring theories and practice related to the use of audio- visual tools in language learning especially in ESP classes at a university level and the reason why videos can be considered as valuable pedagogical tools, to facilitate the teaching process. The purpose of this study is to investigate the benefits that the language teachers and learners get in using audio-visual aids in teaching and learning the English language, as well as to show that by using the appropriate video material the teachers can improve and ensure student- centeredness, have their students interested and engaged in activities, be more active, motivated and confident in their communicative language competence.

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### 1. Introduction

Video materials nowadays are not only part of everyday life activities, but they are shown as an effective method in teaching English language as a foreign language for all learners both inside and outside classroom. Ever-changing

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technological advancements present new opportunities for instructors to incorporate online materials, videos into traditional classroom situations, allowing both learning and teaching to become more interesting and meaningful.

A great advantage of the video materials is that they provide original and authentic input as they are produced originally for native speakers such as films, different TV programs, songs,. Videos can be used in variety of instructional and teaching settings- in classroom, as a way of presenting content, initiating discussion, for providing illustration for a certain topic and content, self-study and evaluation situations.

When teachers bring video materials into their English classrooms, students can directly acquire a great amount of cultural background information and emotional attitudes about the learning materials. Therefore, they could employ their autonomy in language learning. While viewing the video materials, students can put themselves in the vivid atmosphere created by the video materials and understand the pragmatics of the language used by the characters. Compared with traditional English teaching, such courses truly put into practice the student-centered teaching strategies.

Video materials and films greatly contribute to understanding of another culture and mentality. Video materials show the students how people behave in the culture whose language they are learning by bringing into the classroom various communicative situations. Watching videos in class should not just be a passive activity. The tasks in which the teacher should involve the students should include the four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Li and Hart (1996) advance the Internet, with its multimedia capabilities and interactive functions, as an attractive medium to conduct instruction, while Meloni (1998) cites increased student motivation, authentic language, and global awareness as reasons for its use in language learning.

According to Paulsen (2001), the effective use of online materials may provide positive spin-offs for learners much the same as if they were immersed in the language and culture while studying abroad. Two important reasons cited for such positive performance are authenticity and motivation. She proposes that, "It is no longer a question of whether to take advantage of these electronic technologies in foreign language instruction, but of how to harness them and guide our students in their use (p 10-14)" Chuo and Kung (2002) report positive results using a variety of EFL/ESL websites with supplementary material with college students. Furthermore, Beatty (2003) presents a clear overview of the increasingly important role of computers in language learning and points out how computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is continually evolving with the advent of new technologies. Taking advantage of the latest technologies, Campbell (2004 & 2007) describes how web logs and Flickr (photo sharing) may be used to enhance the learning potential in EFL classrooms.

## 2. Theoretical background

This paper looks at the concepts of authenticity and student motivation and how they may possibly be incorporated and enhanced by using video materials as supplementary material in an EFL classroom.

Sherman (2003) presents a convincing argument for incorporating authentic video material into language classrooms. She provides a variety of practical classroom activities showing how to use video to bring real world language and culture into the classroom in contemporary, engaging and productive ways. There are lot of documentaries, educational films, interviews and sites containing a large body of material created and posted by people all over the world to communicate their ideas and beliefs, and allow for interaction with others through the commenting feature. Thus, YouTube has the potential to connect learners with authentic English input through what is quite possibly already a part of their life experience.

Videos of all kinds, as mentioned, are one readily available source of authentic pop culture material. Encouraging students to interact in an educational capacity with popular culture through English language video clips may act as a motivating factor for students wishing to further develop their language skills as they endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of content they willingly access online. Moreover, it is also available for students to engage in outside of class in some form of student-centered, self-directed learning.

According to W. Rivers, many media and many styles of visual presentation are useful for the language learner. That is to say "all audiovisual materials have positive contributions to language learning as long as they are used at the right time, in the right place. In language learning and teaching process, learners use their eyes as well as their ears; but their eyes are basic in (p.330-340)"

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