



An investigation into the use of videos in English learning at Thainguyen University of technology

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Abstract

This paper presents a study on investigating the use of videos in English learning at Thai Nguyen University of Technology (TNUT). It is aimed at finding out students' attitude about using videos in English lessons and the benefits they have gained through the lessons integrated with videos. 90 students from K58 participated in the survey questionnaire. The findings reveal that students really like English lessons with videos. They do not feel bored in these lessons. Moreover, they can improve their vocabulary, speaking skills and better understand English-speaking cultures. It is advisable for the teachers to choose suitable videos with interesting contents and suitable to their preferences.

Keywords: Videos, benefits, English learning, oral language skills

Introduction

As we all know, English has already become an international language for many decades. The ways we teach and learn English have changed according to the flow of time. Previously, the main method of teaching foreign languages was the grammar-translation method. This method involved learning vocabulary lists and grammar rules by heart, doing grammar exercises, and reading and translating texts to and from the foreign language being taught (Drew and Sørheim 2009:23) [2]. However, in the digital age, where information is available and communications take place without any bounds, the methods of learning and teaching English have undergone a significant transformation. One of these transformations is the communicative approach. Along with its increasing popularity, videos started to be used in teaching more often than previously. In fact, the arrival of videos for educational purposes at the beginning of the 1980s caused the video-cassette revolution in language teaching (Howatt 2004:319) [3].

The utilization of videos can aid in creating authentic language learning scenarios mirroring real-world communication. In formal language learning environments, communication often revolves around predefined topics. Conversely, real-life conversations involve unpredictable subject matters. Videos serve to stimulate such unforeseen topics, allowing students to engage with various issues raised within the video, fostering discussions, and facilitating genuine learning experiences. Through video-enhanced communication, language usage becomes more spontaneous and authentic, with the focus shifting towards conveying meaning rather than adhering strictly to grammatical form. This immersion in natural language contexts facilitates language acquisition, moving beyond rote learning approaches.

Being aware of the benefits of using videos in language teaching and learning, we have chosen "Life" by John Hughes as the textbook. At the end of each unit, a video is included and presents the topic of the unit to help students recycle the things they have learnt through the unit. So far there has been no official study into the effectiveness of

videos used in English lessons at TNUT. Therefore, in this paper, I would like to find out the benefits of videos to find the answers to the following question:

- What is the students' attitude towards English lessons integrated with videos?
- What are the benefits of using videos in English learning as perceived by students?

The study

The subjects

The participants in the study were 90 second-year students. They have learnt English at school for seven years and then at university for two years.

The instruments

The main data collection instrument for the study was a questionnaire survey.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was partly adapted from Dina's study. It consisted of thirteen questions, all of which were closed-ended based on five-point Likert scale.

Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was administered with all the 90 students and it was returned within one day. The data was analyzed through the descriptive statistical percentage.

Results

The findings collected from the questionnaire are presented and discussed in five categories: students' attitude towards English videos, educational benefits of watching videos, effects of watching videos on oral language skills and students' attitude to subtitles in videos.

1. Students' attitude towards English videos

The results in table 1 revealed that the majority of the students like learning English with videos because they are fun and entertaining 82.3 % and help them to be interested in the lesson 80.2%.

Table 1: Students’ attitude towards English videos

	Videos are fun and entertaining.	Visual cues help me to maintain my interest and concentration while listening.
Strongly agree	55.6 %	26.7 %
Agree	26.7 %	53.3 %
Neutral	17.8 %	17.8 %
Disagree		2.2 %
Strongly disagree		

2. Educational benefits of watching videos

As we can see from table 2 that 80% of students can learn more English and 75.5% can learn more about English-speaking cultures. The percentage of students who learn more effectively is less than the other two 66.7%.

Table 2: Educational benefits of watching videos

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I learn more English	37.8%	42.2%	20%		
I learn more efficiently	31.1%	35.6%	33.3%		
Real life contexts help me to learn about English-speaking cultures.	24.4%	51.1%	22.2%	2.2%	
Videos help me to understand the use of certain words and expressions in real life.	28.9%	44.4%	24.4%	2.2%	

3. Effects of watching videos on oral language skills

According to table 3, more than half of students strongly agreed and agreed that videos in English lessons help them to improve their pronunciation and intonation, understand oral English and get used to different ways of pronunciation and intonation, respectively 73.4, 75.5, 75.6%.

Table 3: Effects of watching videos on oral language skills

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Videos help me to improve my pronunciation and intonation.	26.7%	46.7%	26.7%		
Videos help me to understand oral English better.	31.1%	44.4%	24.4%		
Videos are a good source to make me familiar with and used to different ways of pronunciation and intonation.	26.7%	48.9%	24.4%		

4. Students’ attitudes to subtitles in videos

As can be seen from table 5, the majority of students 75.5% liked videos with subtitles because subtitles helped them in following what is happening 80%, learn vocabulary and idioms 68.9% and reading 75.5%.

Table 4: Students’ attitudes to subtitles in videos

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I prefer subtitled videos to non-subtitled videos.	42.2%	33.3%	22.2%	2.2%	
Subtitles help me to follow what is happening.	31.1%	48.9%	20%		
Subtitled videos help me to learn new vocabulary and idioms more quickly.	28.9%	40%	31.1%		
English subtitles used in videos help me to develop my English reading skills.	31.1%	44.4%	24.4%		

Discussion

Students’ attitude towards English videos

The findings showed that all of the students taking part in the study like watching videos in English lessons. Contrast to reading boring texts, watching videos is fun and entertaining. Then they pay more attention to what is happening in the videos. Moreover, the videos demonstrated authentic situations, so students will have more motivation because authentic materials tend to increase their concentration and involvement in the learning activities more effectively than artificial materials (Peacock 1997 [7]; McNulty and Lazarevic 2012) [6].

Educational benefits of watching videos

More than half of the students reported that their English skills improved through the use of videos, indicating that incorporating videos into lessons enhanced the learning process. This supports the idea that videos offer a relaxed learning atmosphere, which is crucial for effective second language acquisition, as proposed by Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1982:31) [4]. According to Leaver's classification (1998) [5], watching videos and listening to dialogue may have benefitted auditory students, while classroom discussions could have aided those who learn through verbal communication. Through the authentic videos, students have a better understanding of the cultures in different countries.

Effects of watching videos on oral language skills

More than 70% of students said that videos help them to improve their oral English, especially pronunciation and intonation. They can get used to different styles of pronunciation and intonation. This is consistent with Postovsky's (1981:175) 8th experience that mere exposure of students to the sounds of the target language is not enough. That is because the people in the videos are those who come from different areas in the world, so they have a variety of accents.

Students' attitudes to subtitles in videos

Most of students prefer watching videos with subtitles because it helps them to understand what is happening and this is also a good chance for them to learn vocabulary and improve reading skills. This is easy to understand. The English level of students are not high, so they cannot catch many words in the recording, which hinders their understanding.

Conclusion

In the paper, a number of benefits related to using videos in English lessons have been explored. The results show that most students like learning English with videos because of many benefits in educational aspects and oral skills they have gained. Teaching with videos is suitable for the communication approach in English language teaching. In order to improve the quality of videos, teachers should consider the types of videos which are appropriate to students' needs and preferences when choosing videos.

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