

Use of Online Videos to Improve Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

While learning the mother tongue, people never feel that they are learning a language, but while learning a foreign language they become cautious. When language learners are asked to speak in English on a given topic, they try to speak, but they may not speak well or fluently due to lack of ideas, information, exposure, and confidence. Even to write a piece of composition they need to get ideas. So, they escape, avoid or postpone due to scarcity of ideas. Owing to this, they lose confidence; they hesitate to speak and show reluctance to write. It becomes inevitable to the learners of vernacular background to acquire communicative competence in English. Using online videos would be a better idea to motivate the learners of heterogeneous groups to enhance their communicative skills. The core of the approach is: 'the more they see, the more they learn'. The approach presented and discussed here will provide a platform to cater for learners to meet the needs of the present-day world through "computeracy". The present article focuses on teaching speaking skills through group/team work.

Keywords: Teaching speaking skills; online videos in ELT.

Introduction

In today's world of Information and Communication Technology, every learner must be tech-savvy and should be ready to have their "computeracy" updated and upgraded easily and voluntarily. So, the researcher felt it would be an innovative idea to make the learners get acquainted with the English language in an easy and interesting way by using technology. When learners are asked to speak on a given topic, they may not show interest to speak, but they are attracted towards online videos because of the audio-visual effect and begin to concentrate more and learning becomes more pleasurable.

As Benson (1991) says, "Learners' interest, aptitude and motivation for learning English

and the chances of success in foreign language [...] depend to a large extent on the favourable attitude towards English language" (p. 202). Online videos provide ideas to speak on. They infuse confidence in learners who will be easily persuaded to speak. "Motivation [...] plays an effective role in academic achievements among students in general and English in particular" (Abdelrahim, 2012). So, the researcher felt that online videos from YouTube will be better to motivate the learners to speak, particularly the learners of heterogeneous groups, to enhance their oral competence. The present paper focuses on teaching speaking skills in English by using online videos from YouTube and WhatsApp and different online modes.

Context of the study

In the context of a poor education system, very few opportunities are being provided for language learning. Earlier, a language learner had to suffer a lot to get a good English teacher in most of the rural places. When the learners of heterogeneous levels come from vernacular backgrounds, they have less exposure to the target language, which is English. They are expected to speak or write on a given topic or context without being given proper training. The learners hesitate to do it because of fear, lack of ideas, and lack of confidence, and are unable to do it. "Ignorance coupled with fear and inhibition obstruct the students' thinking capacity" (Lowrencia, 2011). Hence they fail to acquire proficiency in the target language. So, the researcher felt that a better way to motivate the learners to speak in the target language would be to generate ideas and persuade them by showing online videos and video clippings. In the world of communication, there is no scarcity of internet resources. As most of the learners use WhatsApp, sharing selected online videos from YouTube through WhatsApp to each group inculcates curiosity and they are encouraged to learn and will be persuaded to speak. Various forwarded online videos in social media are motivational, inspirational, and persuasive. In the classroom, when the teacher screens such online videos, he/she explains and discusses the concepts or ideas and sets the objectives of viewing them. Later, the learners can be asked to watch them and understand them. The benefit is that the learners can watch them repeatedly with their peer group.

Objectives of the Study

Video increase student engagement, which in turn helps to boost achievement. If students are interested in the material provided, they will understand the process better and remember it. The videos offer the flexibility to pause/stop, skip or replay throughout the video to have class discussions or review of particular areas.

According to Wang (2015), there are three goals of teaching English with video materials. The first is to facilitate the development of EFL learners' language skill. It means that the video can give a lot of information for the learners, get their attention to focus on the material in the video and improve their comprehensive linguistic competence. The second is to cultivate the student's competence in intercultural communication. When the video is screened in the classroom, it does not only give information about the language, but the learners can also learn about the culture of the native speakers of English. Then, it can support the learners' communicative competence in English. The third goal is to inculcate in students aesthetic values and the ability to appreciate videos of artistic value. In this case, the video screened does not only provide information about what the students have watched, but it is expected to make the students have aesthetic impressions of the video in their mind. It can encourage them to have deep critical thinking and critical review. So, the students can get a lot of benefits from the videos they watch.

The objectives of this approach are:

a) to instill courage in the learners to speak

in the second/target language and to remove the sense or feeling of inferiority in terms of language use;

b) to boost their confidence level, make them fluent in the second/target language, and to develop in them a flair for the language;

c) to make them competent by minimizing the influence of the mother tongue and improving their accuracy;

d) to strengthen the active vocabulary of the learners in the second/target language; and

e) to prepare them for making formal presentations and public speeches in the second/target language.

Participants and Duration

A batch of thirty learners and a two-hour Lab session are enough to hone their speaking skills. If we have more students, it will not be suitable for the language activity.

Methodology

Methodology includes the design, procedure, materials, and the assessment procedure.

Research Design

The present activity has been designed to help the learners to improve their fluency by making them involve themselves completely in the process of learning. During this activity, each group gets a different and unique video clipping or online video, and the respective handouts related to the video clipping. The learners watch the video clippings or online video, answer the questions, and express their views in the handouts, interact with the members of the group, overcome stage fright

and speak. They also build up their creativity and improve their confidence level. In this activity, the classmates or friends need to support the learner. The teacher should know how to prevent demotivating factors from affecting the students' learning.

Procedure

The teacher divides the learners into five groups of six learners each and distributes the relevant handouts to each member of the group. The mobile/tab with only the video clipping or online video should be given to each group. Learners are asked to watch the video and write the answers to the questions given in the handouts. The members of the group discuss, share their views, and complete their writing individually. Once the groups are ready, the teacher plays each video in the classroom, so that all the learners in the class watch the video clipping or the online video and then the learners from the group come onto the stage to express their ideas related to the video. The teacher plays the next video after appreciating the group with positive remarks and the procedure continues until the completion of all the groups. In the last five or ten minutes, the teacher invites two or three learners to come forward and describe their experience of the group activity and the teacher ends the class with suggestions. Finally, the teacher takes feedback from the learners and gives his feedback in detail.

Time Management

While conducting such activities, time management is very important; otherwise, the core focus of the activity will be lost. Division of learners into groups, distribution of tab/

mobile and handouts, and giving instructions should be done within the first ten minutes. Twenty minutes of time should be given to complete the task initially and time may be extended by five or ten minutes to motivate them to perform better. After playing a video, each group should be given eight to ten minutes of time to speak. Later, one should keep some time for sharing of experiences and for giving feedback.

Materials Used

Mobiles/tabs with video clippings or online videos, handouts, computer with projector, speakers and internet connection.

Handouts

The handouts are to be prepared based on the video clippings or online videos including questions related to that video clipping or online video. The common questions are: What message did you get from the video? What did you learn and what do you want to do? Is the video useful or informative? Did you face any such incident in your life? If you did, do narrate it. Comment on aspects like style, the language, vocabulary and accent, action, characters, theme, suggestions, etc. What is the takeaway from the video clipping or online video? Do you want to share this video clipping or online video with others? If yes, with whom? And why?

Role of the Teacher

To achieve the objectives of the activity, the teacher must be a facilitator, mentor, guide, and a minute and careful observer. The teacher should give a tab or a mobile with only the video clipping to each group and the

corresponding handouts to each member of the group. The teacher should give instructions and facilitate the learners at various stages. S/he should monitor the learners and help them to comprehend the video. The teacher should motivate the learners by giving a time limit to complete the task. The teacher should build an atmosphere of healthy competition so that it can motivate learners to learn thoroughly. While giving feedback, the teacher must be careful not to demotivate the learners. The teacher has to explain to the students the importance of active vocabulary.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of any learning process, as it opens new channels of learning for the students. Learners are evaluated by listening to their interpretation and critical analysis of the video clippings from their speech and from the answers written in their handouts. Even their pronunciation can be analyzed. Posture, body language, eye contact, hand movements, audibility, tone and other aspects of formal presentations must be observed.

Results

- a) Each learner has spoken on the video clipping or online video in their own language and from their perspective.
- b) The interaction of the each learner with their peers in their team has helped them to analyze and understand the video clipping or online video from various perspectives.
- c) The video clippings have generated ideas and thoughts and even the learners from vernacular backgrounds have overcome stage fright and have spoken confidently.

d) Their logical thinking and analytical skills are developed.

e) Learners' communicative competence is enhanced gradually.

Recommendations of the Study

a. The teacher should select motivational/inspiring/heart-touching/sensible videos with different themes with social implications. Before selecting each video, he/she must check whether the video fulfils the objectives.

b. The teacher should watch the videos well in advance, analyze, understand thoroughly and prepare handouts accordingly. The questions should cover all the objectives of the activity.

c. The teacher should also give numbers to the videos and handouts to avoid confusion

d. The teacher should see that there should be only the video clipping in the mobile or tab to avoid distraction.

e. The teacher should monitor and guide the students in analyzing the video and encourage them in completing the task in the given time.

f. If the learners make mistakes/mispronounce the words while speaking, they should not be corrected then, but later; corrections should be made in general.

g. The teacher should select the suitable time slot for screening the videos.

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