Use of Online Videos towards Developing Communicative Competence

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ABSTRACT

While learning the mother tongue, the learners never feel that they are learning a language, but while learning a foreign language they become cautious. When the language learners are asked to speak in English on a given topic/context, they try to speak, but they may not speak well and 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 inadequate language. 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 master communicative competence in English. So, the author feels that 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 present approach is a modernistic approach which provides a platform to teachers to cater for learners to address the needs of present day communicative world through computeracy. The present article focuses on teaching speaking skills through group/team work.

Key words: Speaking skills; communicative competence; online videos; computer literacy.

Introduction

In today's world of Information and Communication Technology, every learner must be tech-savvy and should be ready to open up for computeracy, update and upgrade easily and voluntarily. Therefore, the researcher felt it would be an innovative idea to make the learners acquainted with the English language in an easy and interesting way by using modern technology. When learners are asked to speak on a given topic/context, they may not show interest to speak, but they are attracted towards online videos because of the audio-visual effect and pay greater attention, and learning becomes more enjoyable.

According to Benson (1991: 202), "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." Online videos instill confidence and learners 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 learners to speak, particularly learners of heterogeneous groups,

to enhance their communicative competence. The present paper focuses on teaching speaking skills in English by using online videos from 'YouTube', 'WhatsApp' and different online modes.

Backdrop of the study

In the context of a poor education system, fewer opportunities for language learning are being provided. A language learner has to wait to get a good English teacher in most rural places. Learners of heterogeneous classes come from vernacular backgrounds and have little exposure to the target language, 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). The researcher felt that a better way to motivate the learners to speak in the target language would be to help them generate ideas and persuade them by showing online videos and video clippings. In the world of developing communication technologies there is no scarcity of internet resources. As most of the learners use 'WhatsApp', sharing selected online videos from 'YouTube' on 'WhatsApp' to each group fosters curiosity, and the learners are more likely to be encouraged to speak. Various forwarded online videos in social media are motivational, inspirational, and persuasive. In the classroom, when the teacher screens such online videos she explains and discusses the concepts or ideas, and sets the objectives of the screening. Later, the learners can be asked to watch them and understand them. The advantage is that the learners can watch the same video repeatedly with their peers in groups until the ideas become clear to them.

Objectives of the Study

Videos increase student engagement, which in turn would help to boost student achievement. If the students are interested in the material provided, they will understand and remember it better. Videos offer the flexibility to pause/stop, skip, or replay for having class discussions or reviewing particular sections. According to Wange (2015), there are three goals of teaching English with video materials.

(a) To facilitate the development of EFL learners' language skills. It means that the video can give a lot of information to the learners, get their attention to focus on the material in the video, and improve their language competence.

(b) To cultivate students' competence in intercultural communication. When a video is screened in the classroom, it not only gives information about the language, but the learners can also learn about the culture of the English speakers.

(c) To inculcate aesthetic values in students. In this case, the video screened not only provides information about what the students have watched, but is also expected to enhance their sense of appreciation. It can encourage them to have deep critical thinking and critical review. So, the students can get a lot of benefits from the video.

The objectives of using online videos in the English classroom would be:

a) To instill courage in the learners to speak in the second/target language and to remove the sense of inferiority in terms of language competence;

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

c) To make them competent in English by minimizing the influence of the mother tongue and improving the accuracy of their language use;

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

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

Participants and Duration

A batch of thirty learners with two hours of work in a language lab is sufficient to hone their speaking skills. If we engage more students, it might be difficult to achieve the objectives.

Methodology

Methodology includes the procedure, the material used, and the assessment procedure. With the help of proper tools, the learning objectives would be achieved. The activity was designed to help the learners to improve their fluency by making them involve themselves in the process of learning. During this activity, each group was given a different video clip or online video and the handouts related to the video clipping. The learners watched the video clip or online video, answered the questions and expressed their views in the handouts, interacted with the members of the group, overcame stage fright and spoke. They also developed confidence. In this activity, the classmates needed to support every learner, not allowing demotivating factors play any role.

Procedure

The teacher divided the learners into five groups of six learners each and distributed the handouts to every member of each group. A mobile phone or a tablet with only the video clipping or online video was given to each group. The learners were asked to watch the video and write the answers to the questions given in the handouts. The members of the group discussed, shared their views, and completed the writing task individually. Once the groups were ready, the teacher played each video in the classroom, so that all the learners in the class watched the video. Then, the members of each group came in front of the class to express their ideas related to the video. The teacher appreciated the groups. In the last five or ten minutes, the teacher invited two or three learners to talk about their experience of the group activity and gives suggestions. Finally, the teacher collected feedback from the learners and gave her feedback in detail.

Time management

While conducting such activities time management is important; otherwise, the core focus of the activity will be lost. Grouping the learners, distributing the tablets or mobile phones, and giving out handouts and instructions should all be done within the first ten minutes. Twenty minutes of time should be given to complete the task initially; it may be extended by five or ten minutes to

motivate them to perform better. After playing the video, each group should be given eight to ten minutes of time to speak. One should also keep time for sharing experiences and for feedback.

Material used

Mobile phones and tablets with video clips or online videos; handouts; computer with projector, speakers, and internet connection.

Handouts: The handouts were prepared based on the video clip or online video, which included questions related to that video. The common questions were:

1. What message did you get from the video? What did you learn and what do you want to do?

2. Was the video useful or informative? Did you face any such incident in your life? If you did, can you narrate it?

3. Comment on aspects of the language like style, vocabulary, accent, action, characters, and theme.

4. What was the takeaway from the video? Do you want to share this video with others? If yes, with whom? Why?

Role of the Teacher

To achieve the objectives of the activity the teacher must be a facilitator, mentor, guide, and minute and careful observer. She should give a tablet or a mobile phone with only the video to every group and the corresponding handouts to each member of the group. She should give instructions and assist the learners at various stages. She should monitor the learners and help them to follow the video. She should motivate the learners by giving time limit to complete the task. She should build an atmosphere of healthy competition, which would motivate the learners to learn effectively. While giving feedback, she should be careful not to demotivate the learners. She has to explain to the learners the importance of building their active vocabulary.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of any learning process. Learners are evaluated by listening to their interpretation and critical analysis of the video clips from their speeches and from the answers given in the handouts. Their pronunciation, posture, body language, eye contact, hand movements, audibility, tone, and other aspects of formal presentations must be observed.

Results

a) Each learner spoke on the video in a different style from their perspective.

b) The interaction of the learners with their peers in their group helped them to analyze and understand the video from various perspectives.

c) The video clips generated ideas and various thoughts, and even the learners from vernacular backgrounds could overcome stage fright and spoke confidently.

d) Their logical thinking and analytical skills were also developed.

e) The learners' communicative competence was enhanced gradually.

Recommendations of the Study

The teacher should:

a) select motivational/inspiring/heart-touching/sensible videos with different themes with social implications. Before selecting each video, she must check whether the video would help achieve the objectives.

b) watch the videos well in advance, analyze, and understand them thoroughly and prepare handouts according to them. The questions should cover all the objectives of the activity.

c) also give numbers to the videos and handouts to avoid confusion.

d) ensure that there is only the relevant video in the mobile or tablet to prevent the learners from getting distracted.

e) monitor and guide the learners in analyzing the video and encourage them to complete the task in the given time.

f) correct the learners' errors immediately while speaking, but correct them later with the whole class.

g) select the suitable time slot for the screening.

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