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Using popular movies in teaching oral skill

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Abstract

This study investigated whether there is a difference between test and control group in terms of their oral production based on multimedia learning theory. The test group was supported through video input, whereas the control group was provided only with the textual and auditory counterpart of the same video. The data were collected in the form of oral skill performance from 10 participants, five of whom were in the test group and the other five in control group. The data were assessed in three aspects: length of utterance, lexical development, and mean length of utterance.

Keywords: CALL; Language education; video-based language education; multimedia learning theory.

1. Introduction

This study is based on the Multimedia Learning Theory by Mayer (2001), which claims that, if how human mind operates is considered in designing multimedia learning environments, it is likely that the learning will become more meaningful. The theory also assumes that while processing information, human resorts to dual channels for visual/pictorial/textual/auditory and auditory/textual processing and that each channel alone has limited capacity for processing. Hence, active learning would require a collaboration of these channels. This study aims to reveal whether language learners will produce more utterances when supported with visual/pictorial/textual language materials in comparison to those who are provided only with auditory/textual language materials to test whether this possibly meaningful learning will be contributive to the oral performance of the subjects.

1.1. Three assumptions of a cognitive theory of multimedia learning

A Cognitive Theory of how human mind processes information reveals three assumptions: dual channels, limited capacity and active processing. Among them dual channel assumption leads to a division of sensory and working memory. There are two channels through which information enters the mind. One is the auditory/verbal channel.

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The other is visual/pictorial channel. This difference forms the ground for our study. In dual-channel, assumption humans have separate processing channels for visually represented material and auditory represent material (Mayer, 2001 p: 46). In this frame, when a language learning material such as illustrations, animation, video, or screen text is so designed to address the eyes, visual channels process the information. On the other hand, language-learning materials such as narration addresses the ear, and auditory channels process the information provided.

1.2. Language learning with multimedia

In education, investigators always seek ways to facilitate learning for the students and recently they have tended to resort to the multimedia materials as a source of activating the oral skill that may not be active in the mind because of the insufficient information to talk about. Video technology, in this sense, assists students in acquiring language skills by acting as a major motivator and stimuli for language development. The other two major benefits of technology especially for the second language learners are the exposure to a large amount of comprehensible speech and access to friendly learning environment (Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg, 2003 p.84). To integrate computers into education allows instructors to add multisensory elements, such as text, sound, picture, video and animation.

Picture or video is described as the three dimensional text (Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg, 2003). This means that such a multidimensional text will bring together many different perceptions for the students, which will probably facilitate the understanding of the linguistic context and cultural elements pertaining to the target community, which in turn, consolidate the learning process.

Video has long been employed as a tool by which authentic listening input can be provided and as a motivational factor for speaking and writing activities in the area of language learning and teaching. However, there has been little research on teaching language with video or without video. To our knowledge, Lin (2002) investigated how video use would affect students' motivation, listening performance, oral performance, and sense of autonomy and found significant differences between the groups in oral performance and motivation. Chiang (1996) studied whether video use in teaching English colloquialism comprehension and found that he learners' satisfaction is all positive

2. Methodology

2.1. Instrument

The learners were given the protocols about how the learning environment is like and about what they would face during the session. Then, both control and test group were introduce to take the two-minute long excerpt from a popular movie which was on the form of video scene and as a script with only audio scene. The test group was instructed to watch the video scene and then asked to talk about what they had just watched in the movie. On the other hand, the control group was asked to read the text and listen to the dialogues in the same excerpt. The performance of the learners was recorded and these monologues were transcribed to be able to assess their performance.

2.2. Participants

The study was carried out with ten students chosen randomly from among the junior class at Department of English Language and Literature, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University. Five of them were in the control group and the other five in test group. The participants are proficient language users and they receive English medium education.

2.3. Data collection

There are two groups of participants in this study, each consisting of five students. One group called test group were exposed to using visual/pictorial/textual/auditory language materials. This group was asked to watch a two-minute video excerpt and then they were expected to talk individually about what they have watched.

The control group were exposed only to using auditory/textual materials and expected to talk about what they have heard and read from a two-minute written excerpt. The participants were not subject to time limit. They were allowed to talk as long as they could. The activity each participant carried out was recorded and then transcribed.

2.4. Data analysis

The recorded data transcribed was used to measure the performance regarding oral skill development. The data collected were evaluated on three criteria in order to reveal whether visual/pictorial/auditory/textual language materials contribute to oral production skill more than auditory/textual language materials do: (1) the length of the speech, (2) mean length of utterance (MLU), (3) lexical proficiency. The length of the speech was measured through the recording time. Mean length of utterance was calculated through the length of each utterance they produced. The number of the words per sentence revealed the length of the sentence. This was carried out through word processing settings. Lexical proficiency was assessed through *Flesch Reading* Ease. This was tested through using word processor.

2.5. Assumption

The aim of this study was to demonstrate that the test group who watched video excerpt and then talked about it were expected to speak longer; demonstrate increased and varied lexical proficiency; and produce longer utterances in comparison to the control group who talked about the same context in the movie with the aid of only auditory/textual materials.

3. Findings and Results

The findings are based on the performance of 10 participants and the linguistic features of their oral production. The result of the participants performance are as shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Both groups performances were compared in terms of their qualitative and quantitative context. The first finding is that auditory\verbal group (M 111,6 sec.) spoke longer than the visual\pictorial group (M 77,2 sec.) in terms of time. In addition, the mean length of utterance in control group and test group was 13 and 11,8 respectively. It was also found that the lexical proficiency of the control group and test group was 76,4 and 87,06 in terms of *Flesch Reading Ease*, respectively, but in terms of Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, the findings of the control group and test group were 5,34 and 3,56 respectively.

Table 1. The results of the control group on MLU, Duration and Flesch Reading Ease

Participant Control Group	Word count	Sentences	Words per sentence	Flesch Reading Ease	Duration (sec)
1	193	17	11,3	73,6	125
2	93	8	11,6	76,7	126
3	115	10	11	69,5	69
4	185	16	11,5	73,9	140
5	159	14	11,3	88,3	98
Mean	149	13	11,34	76,4	111,6

Table 2. The results of the test group on MLU, Duration and Flesch Reading Ease

Participant Test Group	Word count	Sentences	Words per sentence	Flesch Reading Ease	Duration (sec)
1	134	10	13,4	80,8	93
2	61	8	7,6	95	55
3	162	19	8,5	91,1	93
4	109	12	9	82,7	65
5	117	10	11,7	85,7	80
Mean	116,6	11,8	10,04	87,06	77,2

The data turned out to contradict the assumption that visual materials will contribute to the oral performance of the learners more than auditory/textual materials will. This is justified by the findings that the test group produced fewer words per second (0,66) than the control group did (0,74). One reason for this result is that the control group used textual and auditory materials and constructed the necessary mental pictures themselves out of the text and voice and stored them in short term memory, whereas the test group exposed to visual and pictorial/auditory/textual material did not need to visualize the content, which may lead us to think that this will lessen the burden on the memory. However, this is not the case in our study. Another reason for this contradiction is that when receptive channels are overloaded with information sent to the ears and eyes at the same time, this may result in a failure to understand the message.

Similarly, the test group carried out their oral performance in shorter time than the control group: 77,2 and 111,6 respectively. In addition, the words the test group produced per second was also lower than the control group. This may be because the control group performed their speech slowly or hesitatingly unlike the test group who spoke so fast. That the test group spoke fast and shorter in time could be a result of the effect of the pictures and animation that send more data to the mind for processing, which influence the oral language production. Another reason for the fluent speech of the test group is that their schema was activated through the animation to which they are exposed and they could remember the actions and talk about it at ease. In the video there was a scene in a restaurant in which two people were having something to eat and drink. This schema helped them to remember what is going on.

Another result was about the readability of the text produced by two groups. The scores obtained through the Flesch Reading Ease test show that the test group produced a text easier to read unlike the control group who performed a text relatively harder to understand.

4. Suggestions

Teachers of English can prepare such materials in order to improve the oral skills of the learners in class. In this way they can incorporate the technological aids into their teaching experience. However, they should be able to adjust the materials so carefully that they should not overload the students' mind with both of the channels. They should use materials that send information only to one channel at one time. For example, visual/pictorial or auditory/verbal channel turns out to be more productive when they are appropriately designed.

As the visual materials bring with them a large amount of events and actions that can be vocalized through language, the students can be so stimulated to tell about what is happening in a part of the video. Such exercises can be seen a training ground for speaking activity. The mental pictures formed after reading a text, or listening to a text or watching some video can readily be vocalized by the students. Popular movies in speaking exercises should be selected sophistically that would be appropriate for a lesson long session with something to talk about during the exercise. This will let the language learner talk and so the course will effective for both teachers and learners. The use of video for this purpose will enhance the motivation of the students in class and encourage them to narrate something that happens in real life, on which most of our communication depends.

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