УДК 372.881.111.1

THE USE OF FILMS AS A WAY TO IMPROVE LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Mikhelson S.V.
Krasnoyarsk state agrarian university, Krasnoyarsk, Russia

This article analyzes the effects of using film in the English classroom. It reveals its effects on developing students' comprehension skills in English. Film is widely used as a teaching material in foreign language classes as one of the most important ways of multimodality in terms of supplying both social and semiotic features of a target language thanks to its qualities.

Key words: films, English, language, teaching, communication, authentic materials.

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ФИЛЬМОВ КАК СПОСОБ УЛУЧШИТЬ НАВЫКИ ПОНИМАНИЯ У ОБУЧАЮЩИХСЯ

Михельсон С.В.
Красноярский государственный аграрный университет, Красноярск, Россия

В статье анализируются результаты использования фильмов на занятиях по иностранному языку, а также раскрывается влияние на навыки понимания студентами английского языка. Фильмы широко используются в качестве учебного материала на занятиях по иностранному языку как один из важнейших способов комплексного предоставления как о социальных, так и о семиотических особенностях языка.

Ключевые слова: фильмы, английский язык, обучение, общение, аутентичные материалы.

The world and the type of communication relied upon most within multimodality has shifted away from language based communication to more visual-based communication, but many language courses ignore or downplay the visual and continue to give the language-based texts primacy. It makes sense that there would be resistance to decreasing focus on the word in favor of the visual when it seems that keeping most or all of the focus upon word-based texts is still not producing skilled learners. We definitely cannot afford to stop teaching word-based literacy but need to include within our instruction at least some attention to visual communication to broaden student literacy.

Using the film medium in language instruction, specifically narrative film is a viable way of increasing our students' multimodal literacy without detracting from their instruction in word-based literacy. Although visual communication and persuasion have been utilized throughout history in different ways, current

technology has allowed the visual to become the prominent means of communication to which we are exposed.

As Hill also describes, because of this shift to visual communication, "many students arrive at the university with apparently little experience with the written word" [2]. As Hill continues, "A major goal of the educational system is to help students develop the abilities necessary to comprehend, interpret, and critically respond to the textual forms that they will encounter as members of the culture... Our educational institutions should be spending at least as much time and energy on developing students' visual literacies as these institutions spend ondeveloping students' textual literacy" [2]. What is needed is a way to increase both types of literacy at the same time, and even better, through an approach that utilizes students' increased experience in visual communication to help them better understand the language-based communication with which they are less familiar. In essence, what is needed is to broaden existing analytical frameworks that are taught to language learners so that they represent the full spectrum of modes of communication. From this perspective, using films and other multimedia instruments are essential and efficient ways to fulfil the needs of learners in terms of creating competent learners in communication.

The use of authentic materials in teaching English as a second or foreign language has long been the focus of many studies. Akdemir, Barın and Demiröz state that "in order to overcome the difficulties of teaching English in a country where it is not the primary language for communication, the best and the easiest way is to enhance teaching with authentic and original materials" [1].

Classroom exercises and methods connected with utilizing films as a teaching instrument let learners go beyond what they can experience in a class with traditional techniques. As far as language learning and teaching, films are fluctuated and adaptable tools since they give learners an assortment of language and cultural experiences. In addition, in a confined classroom environment, learners do not have the opportunity of exposing to authentic target language and speech forms.

Film-related activities motivate learners to participate learning process actively because of real-life language usage. To some degree, films give learners legitimate target language that they cannot experience outside the classroom and films incorporate a few components that a course book cannot teach. Learners have the opportunity to investigate the issues of appropriateness and pragmatics while watching likewise phonetic, paralinguistic and nonverbal conduct. At the point when these characteristics of films are contemplated, films might be thought as a superior language teaching aid than a course-book only teaching environment for both instructors and learners.

Films may be used in the foreign language education in two ways: first, films can serve as a model of language use, in particular as a vehicle to improve listening comprehension, enrich vocabulary, and develop translingual competence; second, as a model and reflection of the target cultural artifacts, values, and behaviours, and therefore a vehicle to develop students' transcultural competence.

The use of film in the classroom or as an outside school activity can uphold the motivation of the learners, because of its playful component. Using films through

specific task activities provides an ideal vehicle for active learning, as well as encouraging interaction and participation. The communicative potential of its use has been commended; it:

    –   facilitates comprehension activities that are perceived as 'real';

    –   creates a curiosity gap that facilitates the exchange of opinions and ideas about the film;

    –   helps to explore non-verbal elements;

    –   improves oral and aural skills;

    –   provides meaningful contexts and vocabulary, exposing viewers to natural expressions and natural flow of speech.

In short, films make meaning through a powerful combination of different modes of communication such as written text on the screen, spoken language, moving images, music and sound effects. When these features of the film are taken into consideration, films are excellent examples of multimodal texts.

Teaching in a foreign language can be challenging in terms of planning. A foreign language teaching environment ought to be flexible, changing and propelling. Learners may have diverse proficiency levels so it might be hard to arrange a lesson as indicated by these distinctive proficiency levels. Right now, utilizing films as a part of language can be considered as an amusing and attractive vehicle. Learners in a non-English speaking environment may profit by utilizing films as a teaching instrument on account of authenticity and real-life language.

Films have been effectively connected to numerous courses in order to offer a wide assortment of learning styles or modalities. Learning styles are characterized as cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviours that serve as moderately stable pointers of how learners perceive, cooperate with, and react to the learning environment. Learners feel more relaxed in an environment that mirrors their predominant learning style.

In spite of the fact that film is a valuable instrument to motivate learners and make the lesson enthralling, a few elements ought to be kept in mind when utilizing films as a part of a foreign language learning and teaching process. These components are deciding on the suitable film, classroom exercises and making full utilization of the film. While selecting the suitable film, the proficiency level of the learners and the intelligibility of the film are essential.

The film ought not to be beyond the current level of learners and ought to be adequately comprehensible. Depending on student proficiency levels, instructional and curricular goals and an assortment of various classroom exercises ought to be arranged and sorted out. By doing this, film is helpful for the course or class and it can dispose of the situation, where the film is thought pretty much as a time-filling component with no specific pedagogical goals.

References

1.   Akdemir, A. S., Barın, M., Demiröz, H. Broadsheet English: Teaching speaking through newspaper articles. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences. – 2012. – pp. 3967 – 3971.

2.   Hill, C. A. Reading the visual in college writing classes. Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World. Ed. Carolyn Handa. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's., 2004. – pp. 107- 130.