

Utilization of Films In The Foreign Language Classrooms

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Abstract

Throughout the recent decades of foreign language teaching the best new technology has been adapted and has been put in the context of teaching and learning. In particular the use of filmed materials has entered widely the process of foreign language didactics. Many are the reasons why language teachers should use their filmed material. They complement textbooks with authentic paralinguistic as well as extra linguistic cultural material featuring a reality as close to the place of language in the object of study. The utilization of these materials has raised curiosity and motivation in language learning. Even scientific research support this typology of learning. Of course the teacher must be careful in the selection of films which should include some specific criteria. The collection of the teaching materials related to the film selected parts, takes time and special specifications, but it provides in depth acquisition through the active participation of pupils.

Keywords: *foreign language teaching, the FL teaching, film materials, Utilization of film materials in the classroom*

1.Introduction

The use of audiovisual materials in general and in particular the use of films, is already a reality known in the context of foreign language teaching. The assessment of the cultural aspect in language learning has also for a long time now found support to access communication and the use of authentic materials, best represented by audiovisual materials and films. With regards to authentic materials it can be said that, if the intention of learning is that of presenting learning situations rich in content, diverse in themes , but also adhering to the interests and needs of the students, the authentic materials should be built as such for " the mother tongue" and represent the best linguistic, cultural, social, historical reality etc. of the language being studied. Among these materials, to be utilized by the foreign language teachers, in daily didactic process there can be used audiovisual ones and films.

2. Why should film materials be integrated in the FL teaching?

As stated above there are numerous authentic materials that can be used in foreign language classes. Part of them are handouts from books, magazines or various publications on paper. But what would be the difference between them and the textbooks? The latter are already contemporary texts printed in attractive colorful formats for the students. Would it be attractive for the pupils, the replacement of those texts with black and white photocopied materials, although they will have advantageously authentic content?

Therefore we are of the opinion that the use of authentic materials, audiovisual and film ones would be appropriate, especially in circumstances feasible to different school contexts, as they not only have the authenticity but are also presented in a format different from the textbook, enabling thus an interesting and motivating class.

In fact, there are numerous reasons and suggestions that researchers of the field give concerning the use of film footage. To begin with, by using the film, the teacher is at the service of science. Nowadays, the concept of education through various means and materials has changed radically.

This is also noticed in the educational process where the main purpose of the use of audiovisual materials is not merely the manifestation of a certain material, but the importance of creating learning situations where the audiovisual instrument comprises the material to work with as well as the language through which will be processed this material (Rivoltella, 2001, 34-35). Furthermore we will refer to theories related to communication access which mean learning as the fundamental objective of language related communication, audiovisual and film footage, contexts as well as the sounds of different voices complementing the textbook, teachers voice, etc. (Diadori, Micheli, 2010, 194-195). In particular the assistance provided by the visual aspect is presented as a visual dictionary which is meaningful in terms of culture, which varies from school to the dynamics of more informative texts, in which students shift as an active witness. (Altman, 1989, 103), (Spinelli, 2006, 13).

The use of audiovisual means through which materials are passed through, follows the principle of orientation according to which when a language is learned, the mind follows a particular itinerary, tackling initially the general sense and then stopping gradually to analyze the details. In this sense learning through a visual means of this standard means learning through videos will follow the natural journey of of learning. (Danesi, 1988) (Troncarelli, 1994). Apart from this, the visual element comes to the aid of the word, with respect to the environment where the event, but also the characters participate in, providing contextualization and assumption of dialogues. (Torresan 2000, 268). Through footage other elements can be analyzed easily such as extra textual elements as well as gestures, facial expression, claims, the distance between the interlocutors, the social meaning of objects and clothing of the characters, etc. (Diadori 1999,29-39) (Torresan 2000, 269) (Celentin, 2007,32). Many are the neuro-linguistic research works which have highlighted the contribution that we get by memorizing long film materials (Begley, 1994). With the use of a film sequence which coincides with the interests of the students and that can arouse in them visual emotions,

hearing or thematic ones, the memorization mechanism enters the game that underlies language learning (Fabbro, 1996), (Diadori, Micheli, 2010,195). The idea of seeing a part of the film evokes pleasure and curiosity among students by motivating progress (Celentin, 2007, 31).

Given these aspects and underlining the fact that the showing of a material film constitutes one of the motivations to be quoted in different surveys developed about the reasons that lead to the study of language and culture of a foreign language, we are of the opinion that since the film materials which promote a psychological and emotional involvement, it should be considered very important to the didactic process and even in many cases irreplaceable. Many students prefer this form of imagination offered by movie. Visual involvement in films is often regarded as pleasing and less "tedious" than reading a text.

So, in any case, the film is a very good didactic resource that enables students to plunge into an authentic linguistic and cultural universe. The combination of moving images with sound inevitably attracts curiosity and interest from students who dive into a story that not only provides spoken language, but it is also felt in the words, in the images, in the clothes and movements. In addition, it is known that persons interested in learning are mainly drawn by art, cinema and literature; therefore the watching of a film represents a meaningful situation for psychological and emotional involvement in the didactic process.

3.Utilization of film materials in the classroom

As mentioned, the film materials are a very valuable didactic source, which can be used for different purposes. If our objective would be bringing the students to a reality as cinematic as historical and contemporary, we can select a scene or two taken from different movies. If we want that through film materials we enable pupils the learning of foreign languages by teaching objectives set out in the program files, we can then select a material that suits the tastes and interests of students, and arouse pleasure by representing the culture of the language the object of the study. Film parts should be part of films produced exclusively for foreign language audiences in the object of the study, because only in this way they will provide a full panorama of the language, culture, civilization, etc. Regarding these later aspects the teacher must have the ability to select linguistic and cultural models, to apply specific teaching strategies as per the audio-visual materials and films, while adapting them to the different phases as per the didactic units, integrating thus the work around the parts of the film with other teaching methods (Diadori, Micheli, 2010, 231).

For pupils with an intermediate language level standard films are preferred, with average formal registers and with ordinary conversations with a basic vocabulary (Diadori, Micheli, 2010, 232). As for students with advanced –level, other materials can be used with examples of regional variations,

more formal records or more informal conversation language, as well as various aspects of jargon. (Diadori, Micheli, 2010, 232).

Before the planning the film it is necessary to elaborate exercises that lead to the establishment of assumptions and projections about the scenes that will appear, in order to prepare the students about the material and minimize the anxiety that can be created by the expectations of everyone in terms of an audiovisual text in a foreign language. This factor may lead to the lifting of a filter which prevents the proper learning of the linguistic, pragmatic, cultural aspects, communication, , etc. , that are provided by the content material.

Written materials and exercises that will be elaborated by the teacher will be presented in the classroom with applications in didactic activity (Eşi, 2010, 24-34). They should reconsider situations that appear in the film parts. To enable the acquisition of various targets provided by the teacher, didactic units to be used should contain a variety of exercises, exercises with content analysis and processing of data, exercises to predict the wording of individual assessment and knowledge transfer learned in other contexts. Work at home in relation to the culture of the target language can also be completed with studying online and carrying out research tasks. Some of the exercises should also be dedicated to the functional aspect: communicative acts, with implications in intuitive didactics (Eşi, 2014, 87-92), situations and relationships between language and referring film sequences that will appear in the classroom. Other exercises should be linked with lexical phenomena that appear in the text. They can also be treated in the Motivation or the Pre-global part to enable the initial approach to vocabulary elements that will be displayed, but also in the part of the detailed analyses in order to move on with memorizing and learning.

Within the comprehensive global stage in order to realize the understanding of the material, the teacher can build up exercises that can appear in different techniques, as alternatives, open or closed questions, true or false exercises, exercises with rankings and other ones that display the transition from one code to another or transcodification, cloze exercises as well as table of contents of the vocabulary build up. In the mean time the connection of the analysis of the spoken language can be treated in terms of sociolinguistic aspects: possible regional variants, different records, slang etc., para and extra linguistic elements and elements of intonation, rhythm, stress, facial expression, gestures, movements. Various other instruments should be treated as essential elements bearing on the target language and culture of study. The analysis of these aspects can be developed in a direct way, i.e., featuring the images of the film selected with the sound and sequences, or it can be altered by initially listening to the voice of the film in order to develop exercises of speculation and hypothesis showing further images of the part. The hypothesis should be related to the characters speaking, the physical appearance they may have, their costumes or to extra linguistic aspects,

gestures etc. The use of video footage enables situations simulated by students who are invited to read the dialogues imitating characters with the respective extra linguistic aspects. This typology can be developed through exercises showing voiceless characters' images of the film aiming at the long-term acquisition of all the different elements which are part of the teaching objectives.

4. Conclusions

The utilization of films in the foreign language classroom enables the display of different situations in different environments that offer diversified aspects in order to approach the students with various aspects of the subject language as well as cultural and sociolinguistic elements that very often the textbook cannot provide. Furthermore they are authentic materials that enable the teachers to apply linguistic structures alongside the essential cultural ones that improve foreign language acquisition. From the didactic perspective these footage materials lead beyond a simple listening education. The didactic process elaborated as per the film material contains all the writing and speaking skills to acquire the aimed learning. It should not, however, set aside the reading skills. In conclusion, it is more than important as most researchers suggest, that the film materials are used widely in the foreign language class. But of course didactics of the film should be treated as a source of alternatives, with the teacher taking into consideration the targets and complying with the didactic reports and the interest of the students in terms of thematic and technological opportunities offered by the school environment.

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