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## THE USE OF VIDEO MATERIALS IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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*The article discusses the viability of using the video materials in the process of teaching foreign languages in both schools and higher education establishments. The article also breaks down the essential stages of working with video materials over the course of reading and listening comprehension lessons. Some example exercises are also presented.*

**Key words:** video materials, information and communication technology, speech practice, listening comprehension.

The term “video materials” describes various technical means of teaching that provide the function of transmitting information, as well as receiving feedback in the process of its perception and assimilation, all the while being aimed at further development of certain skills in students during foreign language lessons.

These days increasingly more attention is being paid to the students’ motivation, as well as to the use of information and communication technologies, and various similar multimedia teaching aids. The learning process itself and the approach to it are objectively changing, and so do the goals and tasks of the modern education. There’s a tendency of shifting emphasis from “the mastery of knowledge” to the formation of “competence” of students. The main characteristics of the use of information and communication technologies are the ability to differentiate and individualize the process of education, as well as the ability to stimulate the development of cognitive and creative activity of students.

Some of the main aspects of linguistic competence are related to the mastery of reading and listening comprehension. For the purposes of developing such competencies students can be presented with authentic materials and visual teaching aids such as videos, songs, pictures, tables, diagrams and presentations.

Video materials in particular have been proven to be an effective tool for both native speakers and foreign language students. Video materials can be used in a variety of instructional settings – in classrooms, as a means of distance learning, as well as in self-study situations. Educators using such methods should take appropriate steps to ensure they choose the best ways of implementing video lessons.

For example, TV shows and commercials are suitable for the purposes of providing students with an authentic language experience. While paying minimal attention, students can substantially improve their vocabulary using such accessible means. Afterwards the students can practice their speech skills by identifying terms and words used in the videos and repeating them to practice their pronunciation and intonation.

With reading and listening experiences being fundamentally intertwined, students will also end up improving their listening skills. Such improvements can be monitored by first creating questionnaires based on the video in question, and then having students trying to answer those questions as they're watching the video.

Authentic video materials such as movies, music videos and documentaries are in many ways optimal for facilitating information in an interesting way, introducing extensive capabilities of making lessons less formal and more engaging.

There are several educational goals that can be achieved via the use of such authentic video materials. Among them, cross-cultural awareness and the visibility of the speaker can be considered the most important ones.

Obviously, it would be ideal for every school or a university to have a direct access to native speakers who could've explained the customs and the peculiarities of their home country to the students. However, such an outcome can hardly be called realistic, but also rather unnecessary, because such questions could be easily answered via the medium of video.

While listening comprehension lessons are usually based on listening to an audio recording, most real-life listening situations involve observing the participants of the conversation. Obviously, such important perceptive component is lost through listening. Through the process of observation one can rely on various paralinguistic cues such as facial expressions, gestures and body language in general, environmental cues (where the speaker is located, what is happening around them), etc., making the whole process of understanding the speaker more realistic, and thus more reliable.

Going deeper into the technical aspects of using the video materials, it must be noted that the demonstration of any video material includes three main stages:

1. Introductory stage;
2. The demonstration;
3. After-viewing comprehension check.

Let's take a closer look at each of the stages.

The introductory stage usually includes the following activities:

- preliminary discussion focused on the repetition of the vocabulary. The topic of this introductory discussion is closely linked with the subject of the video, and its goal is to stimulate students' interest in the topic;
- various creative activities. For example, students can be given the opportunity to propose the most suitable title for the video themselves. This also opens opportunities to introduce various problem situations related to the topic under discussion;
- work with new vocabulary, removal of linguistic difficulties, as well as the preliminary analysis of authentic conversational formulas that will be encountered in the video in question.

This preliminary stage includes various tasks aimed at predicting the contents of the video based on a generalization of previously acquired knowledge on the topic, which stimulates critical thinking. Other activities at this stage include tasks such as discussion of the title, a cursory view of a part of the film with the sound muted, various "true/false" tasks.

The demonstration stage can potentially include following tasks:

Prediction

The video is played with sound and video, but from time to time the playback is stopped by the teacher. During this pause the students try to predict what the characters will say or do in the next frame.

Jigsaw listening/viewing

The class is divided into two groups. One group leaves the classroom while the second watches the video with the sound muted. Then groups switch places. For the second group the video is played again, but this time with sound. The groups then come together and discuss what happened in the video and see how close the first group can get.

What are they thinking?

The video is paused at certain key moments. The students are tasked with guessing what the characters' current thoughts could be.

Character role-play

Each student is given a character to study. While watching, they closely observe their characters. The teacher then invites the students to play their designated roles from memory. It's not necessary for the students to reproduce the lines verbatim, they only need to roleplay according to their character's personality. If the selected segment is very short, then the student is required to learn their parts by heart.

Character study

Working in groups, the students are to write down some words associated with each of the characters of the video. Afterwards they're asked to explain why they think these words are appropriate for the character.

Video translation

For this task, you will need a feature film with subtitles in Russian, from which the teacher chooses a short segment (around two minutes). It's preferable for this segment to contain some lines of dialogue without any complex vocabulary. The students are tasked with translating the subtitles into English to the best of their abilities. The beginning of the chosen segment is shown without sound. When the first line of subtitles appears, the video is paused, and students present their translation using natural equivalents appropriate to their level of knowledge. After completing the activity, the students compare their translations in groups, and finally provide the final version.

The after-viewing comprehension check involves the tasks aimed at utilizing the new material as a basis for developing productive speech and writing skills, as well as facilitating the development of socio-cultural traits. These tasks should be aimed at comparing different cultural aspects, at identifying culturally specific features and identifying general cultural patterns. Over the course of the final discussion of the video, the teacher is encouraged to implement various role-playing activities, studies of the characters' personalities, discussions of the possible alternative developments, etc. It's important to draw the students' attention to the acting and other artistic features of the film.

The after-viewing stage usually involves the following practical activities:

- repetition and processing of speech patterns obtained over the course of the viewing;
- consolidation of communicative techniques seen in the film;
- discussion and correlation of what was seen with real situations in real life, analysis of similarities and differences in cultures;
- various role-playing activities;
- texts on the topic of the video for reading and subsequent discussion; various creative activities: a short retelling or reflection on the subject of the viewed video, a dialogue or a scene, etc.

In conclusion, it's worth noting that the use of authentic video materials has several objective benefits:

- first of all, authentic videos – be it a scene from a blockbuster movie or a popular music video - directly affect the students' emotions, which in turn creates a predisposition for effective learning;
- if the video is somewhat relevant to the students, their participation is further enhanced by its direct relation to the students' interests;
- using authentic video materials from the native media and entertainment sources allows for excellent language context as it introduces students to the cultural and social norms of the foreign language-speaking countries - both general (commonly used cultural references and language expressions) and specific (e.g., regional accents, specific idioms and colloquial speech).

Precisely because entertainment video producers strive to faithfully reproduce how native speakers actually interact in real life, authentic video materials are ideal for acclimating students to the types of foreign speech, various peculiarities of informal speech the students are bound to come across in the process of visiting other countries and interacting with the native speakers. Provided the exercises based around the use of authentic video materials are structured correctly, this vast range of potential benefits will help students with the essential understanding of the fact that it's not necessary to understand every single word in a conversation to be a productive participant of communicative exchange.

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