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Use of Student-Produced Videos to Develop Oral Skills in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

This paper discusses the use of student-produced videos to improve speaking skills in EFL classrooms, with emphasis on their use in preparatory classes at Kocaeli University, School of Foreign languages. The use of student-produced videos as a learning and teaching tool may greatly enhance the quality of students' oral skills in many ways. They have the chance of reviewing their own performances, evaluating their speaking skills and becoming more self-critical of their abilities. The perspectives of using the student-created videos for the development of oral skills in language classrooms are presented.

1 Introduction

For foreign language learners, the mastery of speaking English is essential nowadays. Consequently, speaking ability is regarded as the measure of knowing a language for many learners and they also define speaking ability as the most important skill in a language. When compared to other skills, speaking can be said to be the most difficult skill to teach and also to evaluate and assess. To overcome those difficulties, teachers need to come up with novel methods to develop learners' speaking abilities.

Using video recordings of students might offer numerous opportunities for the development of learners' speaking skills. There have also been some studies about the effectiveness of using videos as a facilitator in the classroom (Glenn, 1996; Foreman, 1999; Katchen, 1991; Lynch & Maclean, 2003). This study focuses on the perception of the learners about the use of student-produced videos for the development of their

oral skills. The main aim is to better understand why student-produced videos might be used in the classroom to facilitate their oral performance from the eyes of the learners.

2 Literature Review

Nowadays, language teachers use video materials in a variety of ways to address the learning needs of their students. They may easily create their own videos thanks to the technology. Video cameras have also become smaller and lighter. Not only teachers but also students own the most recent cell phones enabling them to record with ease. Why don't language teachers make use of this technological development in their classrooms?

Some researchers have conducted their studies on utilizing video cameras as a teaching tool (Foreman, 1999; Katchen, 1991; Lynch & Maclean, 2003; Murphy & Woo, 1998) and a feedback tool (Glenn, 1996; Tuğa, 2013). These studies mainly revolved around the use of video cameras for the purpose of revealing the efficacy of them on learners' oral abilities. For example, Katchen (1991) proposed the use of video cameras as a teaching tool in language classroom so that learners may have the chance of comparing their last performance with the previous ones so that they may learn to criticize their own product. Katchen (1991, p.4) particularly emphasized the use of videos as "teaching tools". Not only learners but also the prospective teachers make use of the recordings. Among the teacher trainees, recording sessions are commonly used in terms of evaluating their performance (Tuğa, 2013). Some students also liked performing for themselves and it enhanced the enthusiasm towards the language. Through the use of student-produced videos as a third eye in the EFL classroom, fostering oral skills may become easier. Pertaining to this topic, Glenn (1996, p.3) conducted a research revealing the fact that there are many advantages of using student-produced videos such as "practicing feedback, analyzing-structural content issue, and improving speaking style". It was concluded that use of videotaping greatly enhanced the quality of student presentations in researcher's classes, improved the classroom atmosphere and helped produce positive educational outcomes.

Additionally, there are many other studies indicating the benefits of using student-produced videos. It was suggested that having students produce their own video materials promoted active learning (Schults, et al, 2013). Schults et al, (2013, p. 4) also claimed that Jonassen's research revealed that asking students to create their own videos facilitated the authenticity. Video-production projects created "authentic experiences" (Schults, et al, 2013).

The authenticity of the materials has been always the main debate among the language teachers. Lide and Lide (1986) proposed a theoretical model in which learners played an active role in public places in the target language for creating "authentic camera-produced materials". It was strongly underlined the need of authenticity of video materials in language classroom. A video recording project at Martin Luther King, Jr. High School was applied by Berney & Schlau (1989). This project was designed to

use student-produced videotape recordings to help students to learn to speak, read and write English. The findings of the study showed that the project facilitated language learning stimulating student creativity, confidence and motivation. Moreover, Garza (1996, p.18) claimed that the instructors should produce their own video materials in second language instruction. In his study, video material was seen as "a facilitator of communicative performance in a foreign language".

Among these positive studies, there are as well some studies revealing the fact that some certain negative effects of video-recording might occur in language classrooms (Biegel, 1998; Kinzer, 1985). It is argued that there may be some drawbacks of recording students. Some students do not prefer to be the focus of attention and reject the project while extrovert ones happily involve the activity or task due to the fact that they would enjoy the hands-on tasks or projects.

Kinzer (1985, p.13) included the findings of some researches showing the negative effects of video playback in his study. He mentioned, "Being the focus of attention of both the camera and the class during the performance and the focus of evaluative attention during playback probably increases a feeling of conspicuousness." In addition, the level of stress may increase towards video playback. On the other hand, Biegel (1998) suggested some ways to overcome those negative sides of video productions such as using cameras more often in the classroom settings and using mostly role-play activities to lessen the fear of being the center of attention. The most effective suggestion was giving the role of director or cinematographer to the extremely shy students who are strongly opposed to the idea of being recorded.

However, most studies explored the benefits of using student-produced videos to enhance speaking skills (Garza, 1996; Glenn, 1996; Katchen, 1991; Schultz et. al, 2013). Although there have been many positive ideas on video-recording projects, we must not neglect the fact that there are some drawbacks in language classrooms. It seems like we are experiencing the glory of the 21st century with the practical uses of smart phones in our pockets on a daily basis. Today language learners are already being accustomed to the smart boards in their classes and virtual lessons are becoming part of their regular education. As language teachers, it is inevitable that any chance to implement technology in the classroom will be used. It can be estimated that the value of student-produced video projects as a teaching and learning tool will rise in the future.

3 Research Questions

Five research questions guided the conduct of the study:

1. What are the attitudes of students about recording videos for their project assignments?
2. What are the possible benefits of using student-generated video recordings in the language classroom?
3. What are the possible limitations of using student-produced video recordings?

4. What are the differences between using traditional and recording projects in terms of students' perspectives?
5. Do the video-recording activities help learners improve their communication skills?

4 Methodology
A Subject

The participants were 20 Turkish-speaking students at Kocaeli University, Turkey, in 2014, undertaking preparatory class courses. They were from different departments (e.g. Electronics and Communication, Politics and Science, Chemistry Engineering, etc.) and they had been learning English in classroom contexts for nine years. Of these students there were 12 females and 8 males with an age range from 18 to 23. All the students took part in the study were volunteer that their identity would be revealed. The research session took place during hours of regular instruction.

B Instruments

This study was conducted by using the original questionnaire that was designed by Yoko Hırata (2009). Hırata (2009) focused on the students' reaction to the projects related to the use of video recording with the help of nine questions (Appendix 1). He developed and used just one questionnaire depending on his studies to get a much better understanding of the use of video recording in the classroom. In this study, learners' perceptions on both traditional and video-based projects were evaluated through administering the questionnaire after implementing each project work.

C Procedure

Students (N=20) were divided into two groups, Group 1 (n=10), Group 2 (n=10). Each group was asked to complete project work as a group. The tasks used in this study were taken from the students' textbook, New Total English Elementary by Fiona Gallagher (2011). The experiment consisted of two phases for each group. The first project assignment was "making an interview with a foreign student at their own university about their daily routine" while second assignment was "giving a recipe". Group 1 completed the project traditionally; in this case written work was accepted while second group was expected to record their work as a video. The due date was decided together. They were responsible for their own production process. After all student projects, both written and recorded versions had been completed, the products of the groups were presented in front of the class. Written projects were shared and video recordings were viewed by participating student, and finally feedback was returned to the students. After presenting their works, the questionnaires were administered to both groups. The data obtained from the study were carefully evaluated.

For the second part, the procedure was the same. The only difference was that the group which was treated in a standard way was supposed to complete their work by

recording a video. This time, the written form of the task was expected from the other group. After completing their projects, the related questionnaires were again administered. The data obtained from the study was analyzed.

The in-depth analysis of the data obtained from both procedures was studied in detail. The data was believed to be more profound in that two different groups were exposed to two different treatments and questionnaires were administered. The study was conducted to make a clear distinction between the perception of the learners on the effect of standard and video-recording projects on their oral development. The detailed visual scheme of research design is presented in Table I.

TABLE I
RESEARCH DESIGN

	Time 1	Focus	Time 2	Focus
Group 1	Traditional	Interview	Video	Recipe
Group 2	Video	Interview	Traditional	Recipe

Table 1 Research design

D Analysis

Both post procedure experiences were obtained with the help of questionnaires and descriptive statistics (means) of students' post-project survey scores were computed. The analysis of comparison was performed on the means of each item in the questionnaire to have a clearer understanding of the perception of learners on video-recording in language classrooms.

Total number of participants is 20. Before treatment, participants were divided into two groups; Group 1 (n=10), Group 2 (n=10). After each treatment time, the questionnaire which mainly surveyed the participants' attitudes towards the learning process on the treatment that they received was distributed (Appendix 1). The perceptions of both groups were taken into consideration. One of the most crucial consequent of this study is that there may be a significant improvement occurring due to the treatment and another point is that groups that recorded their own videos believed that they had made a superior gain. The perception of each group on recording videos was examined in detail in the next section of this paper.

E Results and Findings

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of using student-produced videos through the perspectives of 20 students in a preparatory class at Kocaeli

University. The questionnaire results were displayed in terms of means in Table II and Table III which show that the groups that received the treatment have much higher means compared to that of the other groups that did not record their works. This indicates that the students are in favor of recording their own videos in language classroom. The results of the questionnaire revealed the fact that learners are most likely to agree on the strength of the video recording when compared to traditional way of instruction. However, the means were slightly different between two groups. The results, however, have limited value due to the small sample size (20 students).

The majority of the participants agreed that the use of video recording is beneficial in terms of improving their communication skills (both Focus 1-Item 1 and Focus 2-Item 1 means = 4.4), understanding how words and expressions behave in different ways for different situations (both Focus 1-Item 2 and Focus 2-Item 2 means= 4.1), using the target language in a similar international situation in the future (Focus 1-Item 3 mean= 4 and Focus 2-Item 3 mean= 4.2) and understanding different kinds of expressions and words (Focus 1-Item 4 mean= 4.1, Focus 2-Item 4 mean= 4.6).

However, a slight decrease in the means can be seen when asked the learners whether they are confident about communicating in the target language or not (Focus 1-Item 5 mean= 3.9, Focus 2-Item 5 mean= 4.2).

Further, they agreed that they became more aware of logical flow of conversations (Focus 1-Item 6, mean= 4.2, Focus 2-Item 6, mean= 4.5). Most of the learners believe that they benefited from working as a group (Focus 1-Item 7, mean= 4.2, Focus 2-Item 7, mean= 4.7) and comparing their works with the others (both Focus 1-Item 8 and Focus 2-Item 8, mean= 4.7). Last item revealed the fact that the learners believe that the projects requiring learners recording their works were effective in simulating a real conversation in the real world (Focus 1-Item 9, mean= 4.4, Focus 2-Item 9, mean= 4.7).

While, both groups significantly agree on the positive effects of the video recording on their language learning process, groups that are treated in terms of video-recording tasks have a much higher mean compared to that of the groups that are expected to follow traditional ways. This indicates that most of the learners are aware of the value of using their own video recording projects in their learning. It might be suggested that video recording helps learners understand the target language, feel confident in speaking and foster a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

Interestingly, these numeric data offered some glimpses into how these participants perceived the use of video recording in the language classrooms. The analysis of the data revealed the fact that participants believe that using student-produced videos are more useful than the ones who use traditional written forms of the tasks. Thus, one can conclude that video recording has a facilitative effect for L2 language learners.

The aim of the first statement (The projects helped me improve my communication skills) was to figure out whether the projects helped the students improve their communication skills or not. As it is seen on Table II (Item1) and Table III (Item1), the comparison of the answers in terms of video-recorded projects and traditional way

shows the fact that learners believe the video-based projects helped them improve their communication skills.

Second statement (The projects helped me understand how words and expressions behave in different ways for different situations) aimed to investigate the efficiency of the projects in terms of understanding the different uses of words and expressions in different situations. In other words, it was intended to explore which of the tasks would be more effective in understanding the usage of expressions and words. For so doing, two groups were compared in terms of traditional way and video-recording way. The analysis for both groups is presented in Table II (Item 2: 4,3-4,1) and Table III (Item 2: 3,7-4,1). It is clear that the mean score for the video-recording group is higher than the mean score for the traditional group.

Third one (The projects will be useful when I use the target language in a similar situation) centered on the effect of the video-recording projects when students use the target language in a similar international situation in the future. According to the results, Table II and Table III, students believe that video recording will be more useful than classical writing task.

When asked the participants to state whether the projects assisted them in understanding the type of expressions and words in different circumstances as the item 4 requires (The projects assisted me in understanding what kinds of expressions and words are usually used by particular people in different situations), the results showed that learners who actively participate in video recording projects are more likely to get a better understanding of the expressions and words used by particular people.

When the means of fifth statement compared (Table II-Table III), it is seen that learners feel much more confident. In Table II, the means of item 5 is 3,7 for traditional way, and 3,9 for video-recording. The same movement is seen in Table III; the means of item 5 is 3, 6 for traditional way, and 4, 2 for video-recording classes. As indicated, learners who are involved in traditional writing task feel more confident about communicating in the target language in that they do not have to speak. Indeed, not surprisingly, they think that video-recording process is somehow challenging.

The other statement (Item 6: I became more aware of logical flow of conversations) revealed the fact that video-recording helps learners become much more aware of the logical flow of the conversations.

Yet, as the results indicated, the means of the item 7 (I benefited from accomplishing my work as a team and collaborating our feelings and ideas) proved that group work and collaboration among the students are extremely important for the participated students.

In terms of evaluation of their work at the end of the activities, both groups agreed that comparing their works are much better way (Item 8: Comparing our works/videos with the others made us evaluate objectively what we accomplish).

TABLE II

FOCUS 1- TRADITIONAL WAY AND VIDEO-RECORDING

	Traditional Way	Video Recording
Item 1	4,3	4,4
Item 2	4,3	4,1
Item 3	3,6	4
Item 4	4	4,1
Item 5	3,7	3,9
Item 6	4,1	4,2
Item 7	4,6	4,2
Item 8	4,3	4,7
Item 9	4,2	4,4

Comparison of means of scores

Table 2 Focus 1 – Traditional Way and Video-recording

TABLE III

FOCUS 2- TRADITIONAL WAY AND VIDEO-RECORDING

	Traditional Way	Video Recording
Item 1	3,9	4,4
Item 2	3,7	4,1
Item 3	3,3	4,2
Item 4	4	4,6
Item 5	3,6	4,2
Item 6	3,7	4,5
Item 7	4,3	4,7
Item 8	4,2	4,7
Item 9	3,8	4,7

Comparison of means of scores

Table 3 Focus 2 – Traditional Way and Video-recording

The last item (Item 9: The projects were effective in simulating a real conversation in the real world) revealed the fact that both groups who had treatment agree on the role of videos in simulating real-world conversations.

5 Discussion

There have been many studies on the use of videos in the classroom so far. They all conclude that using videos are much useful in terms of increasing the awareness of the learners towards the real use of the target language. This study shows that the groups who record their own works believe that using student-produced videos in the language classroom is more beneficial than using traditional way of completing a task or a project.

Learners are also believed to evaluate their own performances through videos (Katchen,1991) and Item 9 in Table II and Table III proves Johanna Katchen's idea in that all learners highly agree that they may evaluate themselves objectively through videos rather than classical writing out tasks. Glenn (1996) claims that videos help improve language learners' speaking style. The means of Item 4 and item 6 clearly show that learners believe that video-recordings are beneficial in terms of their speaking abilities (Table II and Table III).

Video projects facilitate language learning and learners become active participants in EFL classrooms (Schultz, et al, 2013), Table II and Table III indicate that the participants who recorded their works strongly agree that they are more capable of speaking in the target language than the participants who write their work out.

Learners think that video-recording enables them to communicate easily in a similar situation in the future. There are also some researches indicating the videos are "authentic experiences (Jonassen et al.,2003, cited in Schults, et al., 2013).

When compared to other studies, this study might be a good proof of using student-generated videos enhances language learners' oral skills, knowledge on language, and evaluation chances from the eyes of the learners. On the other hand, due to the limitation of this study, further research with extended samples would be helpful in deciding the efficacy of student-produced videos in language classrooms.

Conclusion

The main aim of this exploratory study was to examine how students assessed the efficiency of using student-produced video projects on the development of their oral skills. Focus was on learners' attitudes during and after the procedure on whether video-recording would help learners in foreign language learning process. Furthermore, the study compared the traditional way and recording-video sessions. Therefore, Hırata's (2009) questionnaire was administered to the students to better understand the difference between the effectiveness of traditional way and recording videos.

From the scope of the study, it can be stated that teachers should make use of video recordings as much as possible. According to the survey findings, higher means of some items indicate that learners are mostly aware of the value of using videos as a learning

tool to develop their communicative needs. Using student-produced videos appeared to be more effective than traditional way.

Besides, learners' attention should be increased towards some areas. For instance, results indicated that they don't believe that using videos is effective in helping them acquire related vocabulary. Because they are not fully aware of the impact of videos in their learning process in English, they may underestimate the value of recording videos.

As can be seen from Table II, participants think that traditional way of studying a dialogue is nearly as effective as video recording in improving learners' knowledge on words, communication skills and simulating a conversation in the real world (Table II; Item 1-Item 2-Item 9). However, recording dialogues is believed to be more effective than traditionally writing out the task in that it improves learners' in-depth knowledge on language such as being aware of logical flow of conversations and simulating a real conversation (Table III; Item 6 and Item 9). Video recording seems to be better in changing learners' attitudes towards their ability to speak in a foreign language (Table III; Item 1 and Item 5). These results suggest that the participants who received the treatment were strongly agreed that they are more capable of speaking in the target language than the participants who did not receive the treatment (Table II and Table III, Item 3 and Item 5).

Under the light of these findings, it might be inferred that using videos for the development of oral skills is believed to be much more effective in comparison to the traditional writing tasks due to the communicative, authentic, purposeful and meaningful elements of the task. Besides, this study may shed light on the efficiency of using student-produced videos in language classrooms to increase their awareness towards real language use. Yet, there is still a demand to conduct a study with a larger sample to gain a better understanding on this issue.

Acknowledgment

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