

AUDIO VISUAL MATERIAL INTEGRATION IN ESP TEACHING.

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Introduction

The common belief among English language teachers is that Audio material proved its efficacy only in teaching languages particularly for L2 learners because it is the only way to bring the natural language of native speakers into the classroom to be used for different purposes and by different people. Audio and visuals aids, are very useful resources available for language teachers not only to facilitate learning but also to make the course interesting and motivating.

This belief has been now debated, and more arguments are made to support the idea that teaching English for specific purposes also can be conducted now using sophisticated language laboratories similar to those used for teaching EFL students .The first thing coming into someone's mind, when talking about audio aids, is the audio cassette and the tape recorder. The use of audio tapes is essential in ESP. classes since they help students to improve their receptive skills particularly listening and enhance their abilities in oral productions. Chan (2004) who believes that the use of audiotape is essential in the oral skills classes ,says that for receptive skills development, the tape player is the easiest way for students to listen to a variety of speakers on a variety of topics in a variety of genres – dialogues, interviews, lectures, stories, songs and poems .Also,for productive skills, the audiotape recorder is currently the most accessible piece of voice recording equipment

The problem statement

Understanding native speakers' language is level of the communicative skills set as the primary aim of learners of E.S.P. It becomes an urgent necessity now for language teachers to exert themselves to the utmost of their power to benefit fully from the works of language researchers. In the context of ESP, the necessity became really a priority, simply because learners' need to communicate using the target language is their ultimate objective, especially now that English is becoming the world's first language in diverse fields. In fact, almost all language instructional approaches promote the integration of the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) in ways that reflect natural language communication,¹

outside and inside the classroom. Therefore, integrating audiovisual materials sounds not only beneficial to these learners but also a necessity if the aim is to develop proficiency in the aforementioned skills.

Objectives

Investigating the issue of Audio Visual material Integration in ESP teaching stems from the fact that with the new trend in foreign language teaching, much focus is put on teaching English as a subject matter and little is said on teaching it for specific purposes. We would like also to reach, among other points, a number of objectives to show that:

- exposing learners to the language in a language laboratory is an active action helps them to learn the foreign language easier and faster than the traditional classes; and
- that audio visual material used in the language laboratory is one of the most convenient means of bettering students assimilation of that kind of English.

¹ Chan, M.2004. Technology and the teaching of oral skills.

Methodology

The present work investigates the effectiveness of integrating audiovisual material and laboratory teaching to develop understanding and assimilation of native English by E.S.P.students at Batna University. The investigation follows a descriptive way of the current situation based on an analysis of a sample of theoretical concepts suggested by researchers in this field. It is not our intention to establish a cause/effect relationship. A questionnaire that we have administered to a number of teachers of English in the sample departments of computing, law, architecture and sports aims at gathering these teachers opinions and attitudes and their evaluations of the actual situation of teaching English. Added to that, our own comments and analysis of what the theory suggests will certainly add important dimensions to better the actual teaching operation.

-Audio tapes.

The purpose of ESP teachers to use taped material, as one of the most useful teaching aids in language classrooms is to allow their students to practice and develop their listening skills because audiotapes offer students the opportunity to hear different voices of native speakers in a variety of situations and places.

In addition to that, taped material can be effectively used to bring sound effects into the classroom to be used as cues for drills and sound stories (Hubbard 1991)¹

Teachers can exploit sound stories to develop students' vocabulary and their writing ability through different activities and tasks such as: writing a composition, based on sound effects, guessing what is happening and where the sounds take place. They can include a dialogue between two or three people talking about something in the place where the sounds are.

¹- Hubbard,P. and others.1991. The language laboratory and modern language teaching.London.Oxford university Press

For listening, the teacher needs more than one tape recorder (usually three), then he divides the class into three groups and each group listens to their special tape. Finally, students exchange the information they have found out. The groups can be given different parts of a story or problem to solve so they exchange the information until they discover the whole story or find a solution to the given problem.

Listening is really an excellent and enjoyable task to integrate the four skills (listening to the tape, writing down the grasped information, reading the other group's part and writing it down and speaking to each other and to other groups using L2).

Tape recorder is used not only to play back previously recorded material but also to make recordings in the classroom particularly of the students themselves. The teacher can record them during a discussion, dialogue, storytelling, etc to evaluate their speaking skill and provide further remedial work and needed feedback.

Like other teaching aids, taped material chosen for use in class should be interesting, motivating and natural as much as possible (it should include redundancies, imperfect speech of real life, hesitation, connected speech, etc). In this sense, Underwood (1991) states that:

"Most teachers are not able to choose what material to use. But if you are in a position to make that choice, be sure to listen to as large a part of any recording as you can before making up your mind" (P. 84)

She advises language teachers to be sure that:

- The recording is really clear, not just for one person to listen but for use in large classroom.
- It fits the right level of the students.

- It is easy to use (there is a clear division between exercises and sections).
- It should provide a good language work.
- It should contain a suitable content for students.
- It is interesting and motivating.

Before playing the recording, the teacher should determine precisely the purpose, the instructions and activities of the listening task.

What should be finally mentioned is that audiotapes improve not only students' listening ability and skill but also their reading ability; the teacher can allow them to read the related printed material while listening to the recording. They can also do pronunciation work by imitating the model. Generally speaking, taped material is really an available teaching tool for language teachers to provide their students with a significant source of authentic material.

Videotapes .

They can be considered as the integration of audio and visual aids. They basically bring the potentiality of sound and image into the language classroom so that they offer extra dimensions to language teaching and learning.

Video is really potential, powerful and useful educational equipment, for it brings the outside world into the classroom and exploits both audio and visual aids at the same time. Language teachers can benefit from the fact that all students are accustomed to gain knowledge about the world from TV. They can use videotapes as a versatile teaching aid. In this sense, Chan (2004) argues that:¹

*"Videotape is a step up from audiotape.
First of all, playing recorded tapes
provides the audiovisual information that
helps students observe, understand and*

¹- Chan, M.2004. *Technology and the teaching of oral skills*

imitate oral communication, from language expressions and sentence structure to lip shape, facial expressions, gestures and distance between speakers, not to mention other cultural, behavioral and sociological aspects of language."
(p.124)

The use of videotape in foreign language classrooms has become a common feature in recent years . Most teachers believe that it adds an extra substance to the teaching –learning experience. In addition to all advantages of audiotapes, video has more. It allows students not only to hear language but to see it through speakers' gestures and facial expressions. All these visual clues- or 'paralinguistic features'- help students in comprehension and seeing beyond what they are listening to, and thus interpret the text more deeply .

Besides seeing language in use, video material conveys native speakers' cultural identities through their way of life, habits and attitudes. Students can discover, for example, typical British body language when doing or saying something, or the American way of speaking to particular people. It is really a vehicle to transmit other countries' culture and bring it actually into the classroom. Teachers can ask their students to make their own videos using their personal video camera. This actually allows them to create something memorable and enjoyable where he can communicatively use the language.

For the above reasons and others, students show a high level of interest when using the video in the classroom. It basically creates motivation and makes the course more interesting and attractive. Like audio material, the choice of video material should be matched to the students' level, needs and purpose.

In spite of these advantages, video material have considerable drawbacks such as poor quality tapes and disks, bad viewing conditions, boring stop and start process, the length of extracts and the

lack of control and the risk of making students passive viewers.(Harmer 2001)¹.

It is necessary to mention that teachers can use video for a variety of tasks and activities using a wide range of teaching techniques (viewed techniques and listening techniques). So, they are invited to exploit all its advantages to improve students' performances in different language skills.

The language laboratory

Other educational equipment that is available for the promotion of receptive and productive and mainly pronunciation skills is the language laboratory. The modern language lab has from ten to twenty

booths, each equipped with a tape deck, headphones, microphones and now computers. It is built in such a way to allow students to work on their own, they can be paired, grouped with other students, interact with each other through their headphones and microphones.

The most significant advantage of language lab is the opportunity for students to be independent and work alone on their own. Underwood (1991)¹ declares that:

"If your class is working in a language laboratory, most students will be able to concentrate for a little longer. This is partly because they are, as it were, 'alone', and partly because they feel less threatened when they are able to control their own machines and go back if they miss something". (P.85)

¹- Harmer,J. 2001. *The practice of English Lanague Teaching*. London. Longman

Language lab is really seen as an opportunity for students to work on their own pace and in their own way. Teachers thus should not keep on interrupting them and intervening unnecessarily while they are working but to guide them and facilitate their learning.

Since privacy is one of the most significant advantages of language lab, students can talk to each other through their microphones, record onto the tape, wind and rewind tapes without disturbing each other. The teacher can also talk to individual students in the lab from the consol and hold a private conversation. Another function of the language lab is the noticeable help to train students. They can listen to what they say and how they say it. They can correct and improve their pronunciation by comparing it with the correct original version on the tape so that they can discover the differences and be aware of them. After a period of training, they will certainly improve their listening skill and their pronunciation.

language lab undoubtedly brings a significant innovation to the teaching-learning environment. It is available to teach the four skills if the teacher is able to use it effectively and appropriately. Language laboratory is able to act as a strong motivator for students as well as a powerful aid for teachers.

Work Practice

Language laboratory has come to be an invaluable teaching aid to the language learner and teacher as well. It represents the single largest investment of audio resource in education. In spite of all the critical¹.

judgments on its effectiveness, it has never been an issue whether to use it or not but it has been a question of how. Teachers' mastery and control over language laboratory's functions and procedures determine its instructional validity, and their lack of mastery should not be an excuse for them to under-use it.

¹ - Underwood, M. 1991. The effective class management. New York

Research studies on language laboratory's history have been conducted to prove its effectiveness as an educational technology in the language classroom, regardless of the questions they are intended to answer. However, the effectiveness of laboratory work still requires experimental investigation (Dakin.1973)¹. A Systematic and beneficial use of the laboratory , according to this same author, goes through four main stages which he describes in the following points:

Preparation

Teacher's good preparation is the key to laboratory work' success. It demands an insightful vision to every step of the laboratory practice process. Each step should be previously planned, studied and clearly determined in terms of aims, purposes and procedures.

In fact, good preparation prevents the teacher from getting into such an instructional problem. It guarantees a smooth learning process where no gaps or accumulation are allowed. Language laboratory preparation starts from the teacher's awareness of the instructional tool's value he is exploiting. Moreover, he can take into consideration the following points.

- Before carrying out any task with students, the teacher must experience it himself first to find out if it really works as it is intended to. This step allows him to establish what is suitable and appropriate for students and improve his way of teaching as well. In this sense Dakin (1973), declares that: "our success in teaching is dependent on our understanding of learning".(P.02)¹.

In fact, a clear determination of the course aims put the teacher in a good position to achieve his target in terms of the linguistic input and output he wishes to submit to his students.

- teach and improve aural-oral skills rather than to test them.
- Having the 'right' or 'wrong' choice of teaching material depends on the teacher's insightful vision and his well thought decision.

¹ - Dakin,J.1973. The Language Laboratory and Language learning. London .Longman

He gets the right choice if he selects what fits his students' needs, interest and level, and of course vice-versa

- Finally, try to use the course planning sheets as much as possible to be a guidance of your work. You can write down the course title, allotted time, the reference (the book and its cassette)...etc.

Pre-lesson Step

This step is very important in spite of its short duration. It provides students self-confidence and comfort. It may take up to 5-10 minutes; yet it determines the success of the whole time work. Pre- lab practice step is intended to:

- Make students fully aware of the current task (what to learn, how to accomplish it and what should be focused on).
- Create motivation, interest and feeling of security, so that the student feels engaged and then can perform appropriately the task.
- Make students fully aware that the listening task is closely associated with the speaking task so that they will make efforts to well exploit the listening text.

In-Lesson Step

When the lab user has already set all things and is ready to begin the task in the language laboratory, these instructions are thought to help him and guide work.

- Lab practice should cover the two components of communication (listening and speaking) and they should be interdependent.
- The listening task should contain the three main stages: pre, while and post-listening in order to make the most of the listening extract.
- Make clear, precise and well-formed instructions to avoid any sort of misunderstanding. All your students are supposed to accomplish appropriately the task. Your help, guidance and

monitoring are also necessary from time to time to deal with students' serious difficulties. The appropriate use of the console switches will certainly guarantee the success of your monitoring and supervision.

- Remind your students that looking at the script (if it is available) while listening to the passage changes the purpose of the task from listening to reading.
- Listening carefully to the recording is the key basis to the success of the task achievement.
- In the case of speaking practice, inform your students that they are equipped with a tape-recorder in which they can listen to a pre-recorded lesson and record their own voice at the same time. Hence, any student should be made aware that to speak up in a clear, strong voice when doing "imitation of a model" or recording his own performance version. "The front and the sides of the booth have been constructed of sound-absorbing materials so nobody else will hear your voice" (Stack: 1971.270)¹.
- Remark that "Audio-Active-Compare" lab procedure is the students' space for speaking practice, therefore, you must frequently control and check the lab equipment for their suitability and well-functioning.

Post-Lesson Step

This step is said to be the checkpoint of your students' degree of understanding. After finishing the task (listening or speaking), ask your students about their reaction, impression and general comments of the material being presented in terms of difficulty, interest and motivation. You can hold a small debate at the end of the lab-practice to submit further advice and feedback concerning the task being performed. In this step, you can seize the opportunity to give the headlines of the coming course to prepare them in advance.

¹- Stack,M.E. 1971. The Language Laboratory and Modern language Teaching. Oxford University Press.

Post-lab practice fosters the intercommunication between the teacher and his students i.e. they can share and discuss ideas, suggest their own tasks and give critical judgments concerning the current task and the method of work in general.

Material Selection

The present study tries to find out the appropriate way of exploiting laboratory material in order to develop and improve first year students' aural-oral skills. The selection of lab material should be built on well-thought criteria; many points can be taken into account.

- The quality of the recording should be good, clear and free of hiss, background noise, sudden changes in volume and other distractions.
- The speakers should have pleasant and well-modulated voices; they also have to sound enthusiastic and interesting.
- Careful attention should be given to the speed of speech delivery (not too fast and not too slow).
- The content of the tape (dialogues, drills, interviews, stories) must be properly constructed in terms of learners' conceptual and linguistic competence.
- The duration of extracts are supposed to be short in order not to feel bored and uncomfortable. Short extracts create motivation and interest in learners more than the long ones. If the listening extracts are long, the teacher, then, can divide it into sections and allow students to remove their headsets to rest their ears.
- Variety of laboratory material should be also stressed on. The teacher must frequently vary the type of recording to bring different speakers, accents and topics. Variety can range from simple pattern drill to dialogues, narration to pronunciation practice.

Integration of Audio-Visual Aids

The conventional language laboratories allow only the use of audio-taped materials. Although they offer certain facilities that can not

be found in a typical classroom, many language teachers saw that its failure to achieve 'perfect' effectiveness in teaching and learning for ESP Students is due to the absence of the 'visual potentiality'. The latter can be defined in terms of video materials and computer programs.

In fact, modern language laboratories are equipped with "Dial-access Video". Agin,Stack (1971)¹ claimed that:

"Dial switching may also be used in conjunction with video tape players located in the source room. This will permit a student to receive programs consisting of video taped visual material plus sound on the TV receiver located in his booth"(P.15)

This clearly shows the possibility of video integration in the language laboratory in order to add another vital dimension of language learning process (audio-visual aids). The use of video in Language classrooms, as Harmer (2001. 282)² declares, is "just listening with pictures".

Thus, if the conventional Language laboratory is equipped with "Dial-access Video", it will certainly offer extra advantages and facilities for both teacher and students especially those of

paralinguistic features and visual clues (gestures and facial expressions...). Moreover, it demonstrates

native speakers' cultural and social aspects of life both in audio and video forms. Providing language laboratory with video will certainly increase the level of motivation and interest in students since they have a chance to see language in use as well as hear it.

¹ - Stack,M.E. 1971. The Language Laboratory and Modern language Teaching. Oxford University Press

² - Harmer,J. 2001. The practice of English Lanague Teaching.London. Longman

Field work Results

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire revealed that teachers of English in the sample departments at the University of Batna possess different educational backgrounds, teaching experiences and instructional careers. These diversities resulted in different teaching perceptions in terms of attitudes, viewpoints and evaluations of ESP teaching .

- All of the teachers claimed that teaching English and its basic speaking and listening elements in the language laboratory and using different audiovisuals becomes an urgent priority to achieve real language proficiency. Yet, we felt through their responses that this target can not be achieved now, unless serious decisions are taken to follow an effective strategy to introduce audiovisual aids in those departments, which seems not at hand now. Certainly, this leaves their students still encountering serious difficulties in learning language skills.
- Although the teachers have realized how important, necessary and helpful

audiovisuals are in teaching / learning language skills, they reported that they never

used them. Audiovisuals and Language laboratory are claimed to be the most used

teaching aids, yet the lack of these tools now hinders teachers from better exploiting

their capacities to make students feel the difference.

The questionnaire also showed that the major problems associated with crowded groups, insufficient time, the absence of an effective teaching technique for aural-oral skills create an obstacle for teachers to improve and develop their students' average ability in listening and speaking. Teachers' efforts to help their students overcome their learning difficulties by designing well-suited activities and variety of tasks are still required to be doubled.

- Students' aural-oral difficulties can not be effectively simplified unless our phonetics teachers try to get the utmost benefits of the language laboratory which has been argued to be a suitable medium of instruction.
- Therefore, as a research requirement, we suggest the introduction of audiovisuals through the language laboratory as one of the best teaching techniques and an important instructional material to develop the aural / oral aspects of the language. What should be mentioned is the importance of listening-speaking interdependence in designing any laboratory task. The integration of audio-visual potentialities of video and computers with the language laboratory can make a suitable teaching aid in the language classroom to effectively improve students language skills.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we tried to examine some pedagogical implications which we think may contribute in helping English for Specific Purposes teachers to visualize the language laboratory as an educational aid in developing students' listening and speaking skills. What is commonly said here is that it is the job of the teacher to exploit the provided teaching equipments and instructional tools to the full, in order to hopefully achieve his teaching goal. In fact, the lack of material added to the status of English in these departments could never be an excuse to waste such a unique and invaluable teaching aid like language laboratory especially when it is equipped with video and computers. The teacher's motivation and willingness to better things are not enough. A modern lab. equipped with computers is another possibility to add for students of English in departments other than language ones. Of course, this will offer students the chance to study vocabulary, pronunciation, listening to texts, practicing speaking via recording system device and even practice writing with "word processor". So, integrating language laboratory with video and computers in ESP classes will make it really a suitable teaching aid that can help students to improve their language skills especially aural-oral ones.

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