
THE USE OF VIDEO SEQUENCES AND INTERACTIVE VIDEO IN THE SELF- ACCESS LEARNING CENTER

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Abstract

This paper discusses the advantages of using videos in language teaching and learning. Suggestions are also made for the increase of practising productive skills in learning language by the self-access method outside the classroom.

Video is an attractive and compelling medium that has great potential for motivating learners. No teacher alone can provide the variety of situations, of voices, of accents, of themes, of presentation techniques that are already available in video. Increasingly, we are wanting to base our teaching on emplers of real situations. Video can come close to capturing the flavour of reality in the situations, giving learners, albeit vicariously, the feeling of participating in, or at least observing, what is actually happening (Hill, 1992).

Having begun operation in 1990, the Chulalongkorn University Language Institute's Self-Access Learning Center (or Resource Center) has been a place equipped with a lot of learning materials. The objective of this center is to enable students to learn English independently outside the classroom at their own pace and according to their own level of ability. A lot of video sequences are also available in the center. A video sequence is a selected part of movies, dramas, documentary or news which can be used as a medium in language teaching. In the Self-Access Learning Center, activities

such as comprehension questions, true-false, gap-filling exercises, dialogue completion, etc. are provided with the video sequences. The video sequences to be used in the Self-Access Learning Center should be sectioned as follows :-

STEP 1 : The sequence is viewed from the beginning through to the end without pause. This enables viewers to have a general idea about the sequence.

STEP 2 : The sequence is stopped at selected points : Each pause should be timed adequately. In this step, the practice takes place.

STEP 3 : This step is the reinforcement of the previous step. Again, the sequence is viewed without pause.

When producing the video sequences, these three steps should be recorded continuously onto the video cassette so students don't have trouble in turning the video on and off. The topic of the video sequences should be varied to serve the needs of students from every branch of study. It is preferable that the sequences selected are authentic (from films, documentaries, news, etc.) so students will have

a chance to view the culture and the way of living of the native speakers, including the normal speed of speaking. The length of the whole sequence should not be longer than twenty minutes or else the script will be very long. In addition, it may bore the viewers. The video sequences should be graded according to the difficulty of the language and activities so the viewers will be able to choose the one which is appropriate to themselves.

At present, students have little opportunity to practise productive skills, writing and speaking, in the Self-Access Learning Center. Mostly, they practise receptive skills, reading and listening. This is so because we would like the students to study and check the answer key by themselves. Writing and speaking skills are rather subjective and the answer key for these

two skills are not easy to provide. However, by using video, students have more chance to practise productive skills. They can risk writing the video script if the selected video is viewed without sound at first. After viewing one section, there is a pause. Students can spend this period doing the task by using facial expressions, actions and the setting they have seen on the screen as cues. In this way, students can use their imagination to write and the suggested answer key will be provided later. For lower-intermediate level, the script writing may be controlled in some way to enable the students to do the task after viewing the sequence without sound. For example, some clauses may be left out in the answer sheet. The students may use the context together with the pictures on the screen as cues to fill in the blanks.

Frank walks through the main entrance of an office and goes to the receptionist.	
RECEPTIONIST	: Good afternoon.
FRANK	: _____
RECEPTIONIST	: Can I help you?
FRANK	: Yes, _____ Robert Turner's office _____ ?
RECEPTIONIST	: Yes. Um.... You take the lift to the sixth floor. When you come out of the lift you turn left. Go down the corridor and his office is the second on the left.
FRANK	: _____

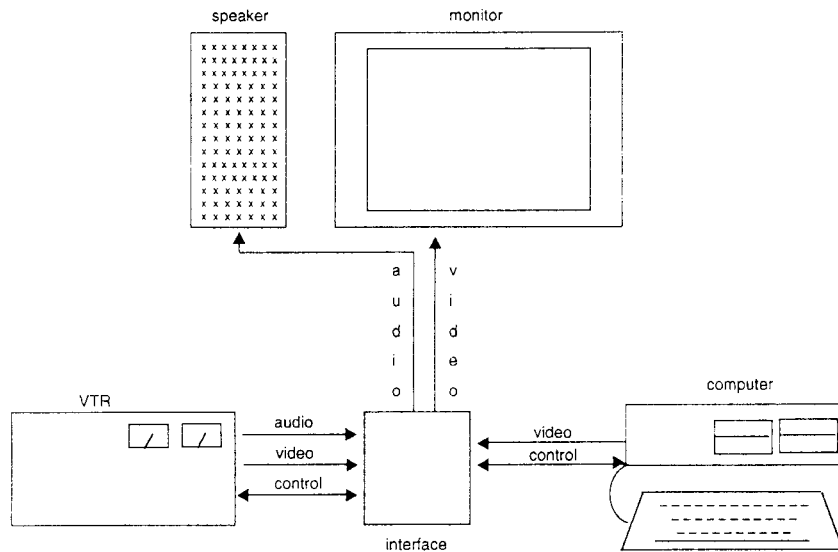
(Video English)

Furthermore, students can practise writing the outlines and summaries from the video sequences they have viewed. These two activities are important for their further study. These activities can be controlled for lower-intermediate students. That is, some major points may be given so the students will have a general idea about the sequences.

Apart from writing, students can practise speaking, another productive skill, in the Self-Access Learning Center. This can be done by using interactive video. The interactive video consists of a video-tape recorder controlled by a personal computer via a hardware interface. Technically, it is very simple to modify an existing personal computer system to be able to

handle interactive video: all one needs to do is find a video-tape recorder and an interface card

compatible with the computer and plug everything together.



Components of an Interactive Video System.

Through interactive video, conversation can take place. The computer can complement the conversation by presenting explanations of the vocabulary, grammar and cultural elements. In addition, the computer can pose questions about the lesson content as well as give exercises and tests. This type of presentation is flexible because the text and questions can be modified so the same piece of videotape can be used with students of different levels (Chung, 1985). However, the Self-Access Learning Center has to provide a closed room where each student will get a headset linked with the interactive video. This room has to be separate from other sections of the Self-Access Learning Center so students can practise speaking without

disturbing others. Lower-intermediate students can begin to practise this skill through drilling or repetition. Repetition is the best starting point for oral work. It allows learners to perform in a non-threatening environment and gives them an opportunity to begin getting their tongues around some of the strange sounds and rhythms of the new language (Hill, 1992).

Video sequences and interactive video can make language learning more enjoyable. They bring authentic language into the English class. They are suitable for every language class which takes place in countries where English is not the native language.

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