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ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGY: DEPLOYING SHORT FEATURE FILMS TO ENHANCE TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The current study aims at depicting the post method panorama of learning English as a second language through using short feature films for the non native English speakers. Short feature films can be used as a specific language tool considering as refreshing experience for the students as well as the teachers. Within the limits of the curriculum, the development of methodology to deal with feature films prepares the grass roots for similar work with other non-conventional resources. This obviously will increase the choice of strategies for the English as Second Language (ESL) teachers who often find it difficult to generate students' motivation. Films are not an alternative to the text book. Rather they provide a supplement which should help ingestion and make the main course more palatable. On the other hand, students also tend to get something new, interesting and innovative to learn a new language.

Keywords: *Visual sense, motivation, interpretation, competency, pedagogical tool, palatable, context, 'real-life', English as a Second Language (ESL)*

1. Introduction

Teaching is always a challenging task in the ESL classroom, particularly in the traditional approaches and methods. So, the ESL teachers and the learners very often seek out the innovative pedagogies to apply in the classroom to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Use of short feature films as a secondary tool of language instruction can be effective in this regard to remove the intricacies of teaching and enhance the teaching effectiveness during the class. Papadoulou (2018) postulates that short films are often more academic or experimental that can inculcate in the learner the ability to think logically and they also make excellent teaching tools.

Several practitioners have recorded their successful use of films in their blogs and clearly demonstrated that teaching English to non-native speakers through films is actually a viable modus operandi. Jamie Kedie's "lessonstream.org", Raymond Wescheler's "eslnotes.com" and Ian James' "viralelt.wordpress.com" provides the detailed synopsis of popular films with embedded glossaries of vocabulary and expressions and supports the notion that since that among our five senses, the visual sense is the most developed, films can make tangible and deep impressions on the students. The sound-track can provide a listening exercise which is in most cases more 'real' than the stereo-typed audio drills to which students are often exposed. Short feature films can also offer useful writing and composition material in addition to providing a platform for conversation and group discussion. They can enhance motivation in the student as

films are more interesting than the bland curriculum of most language courses. Finally, films can fulfill to an extent the fundamental intellectual objectives of higher education which are memory, translation, interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Thus if this visual medium is integrated into the course content, it can be extremely effective in helping the student attain English proficiency and thus, the prescribed outcomes.

2. Objective

The primary objective of this study is to provide a systematic approach to utilize short feature films to teach English as Second Language (ESL) for the non-native English speakers. The study also aims to facilitate ESL teachers to teach English to the non-native English speakers.

3. Literature Review

Movies are the great resources for enhancing the teaching and learning process though the long three hour movies are not always effective to teach the students a second language. For that reason, the author here intellectually developed a sense to teach ESL to the non native speakers through the use of short feature films which are interesting, comprehendible and full of messages. Moreover, such short films contain extraordinary and sound soothing dialogues that seem to be more effective than that of the time consuming three hour long movies.

The visual things really affect the learners' mind if the content is not boring and dull. While watching the video contents, learners can put themselves in the vivid atmosphere created by the visual materials and can comprehend the pragmatics of the language used by the characters (Bajrami and Ismailia, 2016). According to Adeyanju (1988), also cited in Khan (2017), language classes with visual subsidy are more interactive and interesting to the learners than those without any visual aids. So, it is comprehendible that short feature films can be the good options to facilitate the teaching process of the ESL teachers. Moreover, after watching a short feature film, students may be asked to write a summary of the plot. Animated cartoon movies also contain a number of ornamented vocabularies that are really supportive for the teachers to conduct different types of classroom activities in the language classes.

Begum, Hossain and Rahman (2018) state that the use of drama in teaching can develop the flexibility, cooperation, creativity, sensitivity, originality and communication skills and assist the pupils increase their competency level in the receptive and productive skills. Interestingly, drama helps the learners uphold their perceptions of the verbal/ nonverbal aspects of a second language they are trying to master. Though they might talk about the literary texts only, but if the drama is used as a visual text, then the teaching process will be more lucid and the learning process will be more facilitated. Such teaching tactics are really supportive that go with the ideas of post-method. So, the researcher gets the similar opinion like Khan (2017) that the visual schooling can serve a post-method pedagogical purpose for the learners.

4. Methodology

The paper is an original work which is qualitative and innovative in nature. The researcher analyzed the data after collecting from the reliable secondary sources and incorporated that information with the individual ones and finally provided a set of credible and applicable ideas.

5. Findings and Interpretations

For visual literacy through using short feature films, the teachers must take some steps to attract the students first with the vivid description of the content. In that case, the teachers must be prepared before the class and pre select an effective short film to be used in the classroom.

5.1. Criteria for Selection

The process of selecting the film is an imperative aspect of the whole approach as the effectiveness of the program depends on choosing the right film. The instructor should keep in mind the following considerations while making a decision about any particular film:

5.1.1. The film should be culturally appropriate as giving the student a sense of the culture of the native speakers of the language is important. However, it should

not offend the students' sense of appropriateness in any way. Adaptation of short stories or even some television programs can be quite suitable in some cases.

5.1.2. The film should be short (not more than 45 minutes or better limited to 20 minutes) to ensure that enough time is left for profitable discussion.

5.1.3. The plot line of the film should be easy to follow. Features with ambiguous plots and metaphysical themes should be avoided or their discussion should be limited to the simplest level of meaning only.

5.1.4. The language of the film should be as close to Standard English as possible to protect students from picking up slang and absorbing them into their vocabulary. Any unconventional phrase or word should be properly explained by the instructor as to its usage and meaning.

5.1.5. The instructor should preview the film to check the quality print and audio quality. A bad print can mar the purpose of the entire approach.

5.2. Application of the Film to a Classroom Format

A properly chosen film can be very useful to the student in reinforcing his language skills. By exposing the student to dialogue in a 'live' situation between native speakers, he also becomes aware of cultural context of the situation. This is obviously important for the development of his competency in the language. Furthermore, the student is also subjected to the challenge of following the plot which is an exercise in both visual and oral comprehension.

The right feature will always provide adequate material for testing. A well planned worksheet can incorporate material for all skill areas. Initially, the student should be instructed to take notes as he views the film. Each screening should be followed by a discussion on the relevant aspects of the film. The discussion should be controlled by the instructor. He acts as the moderator and initiates discussion by asking questions based on topics listed in the worksheet. The discussion can be punctuated by remarks from the instructor but in no case should be dominated by him. He should encourage the students to express themselves by asking direct questions. The parley should be followed by vocabulary initiation and whenever needed, the teacher should improvise pronunciation drills. The cardinal aspect of this initial exercise is not only self expression but verbal communication as well. The class should be made to realize this.

After the period of controlled discussion, a time slot should be allocated for student questions on any aspect related to the film. The teacher can also use stop-action procedure to clarify ambiguous detail. A second screening always helps.

The next part of the worksheet should include a set of listening comprehension questions. To begin with, the questions should be simple but as the student progresses the questions should reflect his ability to infer and draw conclusions. It should be noted here that the fact that the speech pattern and dialectical inflections of the various characters in the film differ, is an added advantage because the situation approximates real life.

A short feature film is usually a good means to teach the students the basic rudiments of composition and note-taking. The student should be taught to recognize the correlation between the main idea and a thesis statement. He should also learn to link the exposition with the introduction and the denouement with the conclusion. Similarly the relation between sequential development of plot and paragraph development should be pointed out to him. These facts should be elaborated in detail, before the student is asked to write his first composition.

Another type of writing assignment which is extremely useful involves the organization of the most important concepts in the form of lecture notes. This skill is very useful to the student as he moves on to his major field of study.

5.3. Fulfillment of the Objectives of Education

On examination of Sanders' categories of 'Knowledge', it becomes evident that the proper use of films can reinforce and help in implementing the specified objectives. It must be stated here that all categories are sequential and cumulative. When a student is asked to answer an inference question after a screening, he has to utilize his memory and also draw on his ability to

translate, interpret, identify issues, analyze, synthesize and evaluate the issue. Thus, when a film is used as a pedagogical tool in an ESL class, it also helps to sustain and aid the very purpose of education.

6. Conclusion

Short feature films, used as specific language-teaching tool, can be very effective for both the learners and teachers because of their ability to facilitate the'visualization' of spoken language and present the use of language in a real-world context. Obviously, all language skills are strengthened during and after a documentary or short film viewing session, particularly interactive language- the language of 'actual' conversations. Overall, a positive learning environment in the short feature film-based ESL classroom can be assured by choosing films with care, creating stimulating lessons, and providing a forum where students are encouraged to share and record their ideas. This, in the long run, promotes learning which the nucleus of higher education is.

A Sample Worksheet *(Use of Short Feature Films in ESL Teaching)*	
Title of the Film	The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
Duration	45 minutes (Approximately)
Author of Original Story	Washington Irving (1753-1859)
Discussion Topics	
Plot	What do you think actually happens to Ichabod Crane?
Themes	Superstition, Ichabod's quest as parody
Characters & Characterization	Ichabod Crane, Brom Bones, Katrina
Open Topics	The story as fairy tale, The courtship of Katrina
Vocabulary and Pronunciation	
Keywords	Mysterious, speculation, church, abode, nature, weather cock, legend, rustic, brook, witch, topsy-turvy, omen, blooming, geese, rival, feud, gallant, symptom etc.
Listening and Visual Comprehension	
Questions	What are the names of the three major characters in the film?
	What do "old country wives" say happened to Ichabod?
	Who invited Ichabod to Van Tassel's party?
	What did Brom Bones say when he heard about the story of the headless horseman after the party?
	Narrate the story of DoffueMartling.
	What do you think actually happened to Ichabod?
Writing Assignment	
	Take notes on the theme, the plot, Katrina, Ichabod's characters etc.
Topics	Write a composition of 200 words on one of the following: Brom bones and his role in the story. Ichabod Crane and his role in the story. Katrina and her role in the story.
Role of Teacher	
Responsibilities	The teacher must ensure that the classroom activities have two key formats: Main idea + Subject segments. The theme should have an introduction where the teachers first introduce the main ideas and a conclusion where they summarize with a just argument. This worksheet is only a sample and should be treated as such. The teacher is free to make his own variations within the broad-spectrum framework. The sample vocabulary has been gleaned from the text and as such the word list may vary for different film versions.

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