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## USING VIDEO PROJECTS IN PROMOTING STUDENTS' ENGLISH PARTICIPATION IN CONVERSATION CLASS

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### *Abstract*

*Videos are engaging. They teach students to plan, organize, write, communicate, collaborate, and analyze. This paper reports on a case study of the role of video projects in improving students' participation in conversation class. Students' low motivation in conversation class is presumably caused by their less ideas to maximize the technology they had to draw in and connect them in innovative ways. This research is aimed at examining whether video projects can better improve students' participation in English conversation. The result showed the improvements in terms of numbers of exchanges the students could produce in a conversation, students' turn-taking, and students' back-channeling. It indicated that video projects is really a great way to encourage students' participation in conversation. As this media further matures, students may need to be able to express themselves as effectively through moving imagery as with the written word.*

**Keywords:** *video projects, conversation class, turn-taking, back-channeling.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Obviously, one of the problems in learning a foreign language, particularly English as a Foreign Language (EFL), has always been providing quality linguistic input to learners. Amongst the main goals of the English language teaching is enabling EFL learners to communicate in the target language in real-world situation (Oxford, 1990). It can be said that EFL learners are expected to be a proficient language users. Nevertheless, in such contexts, real language learning environment does not always provide EFL learners a natural setting to promote their English language proficiency. There are a number of limitations associated with EFL classroom. Cziko (2005) identifies several problems, they are; limited exposure to the target language, limited opportunities to use the target language, limited exposure to inaccurate forms of expressions produced by both fellow students and the teacher, limited opportunities for authentic communication, and limited language ability and cultural knowledge of EFL teachers. Therefore, to compensate the aforementioned shortcomings, an alternative critically needed to be sought.

As media devices become increasingly portable, this paper argues that integrating video projects into the EFL classroom may help address the above limitations by providing students wide opportunities to be exposed to the target language. As educators, our aim is to get students energized and engaged in the hands-on learning process, and video is clearly the perfect medium for students because it has greater amount of interest and enjoyment than the more traditional printed material. It is also assumed as one new approach to emphasizing professional communications skills by assigning student to make video projects (Genereux: 2014). Without question, today's generation truly is the media generation. Most of them are devoting more than a quarter of each day to media. For instance, In my classroom, video usually equals instant engagement. Students like to record anything around them. Many of them get to use their phones for fun and for school purposes. They like to watch it even more, and if those videos are produced by their peers, their interest skyrockets. Undoubtly, there are ample of strength of video as communication medium in the classroom. Video can present visual information that is difficult to convey in other ways. One of the appeals of video is that it provides a sense of 'being there'. A student who sees and hears the eruption of a volcano will likely be more affected than one who reads simple textual information about it. Moreover, video can be used to model positive behaviour and to motivate students, they are particularly useful for introducing a topic, or reviewing material already studied. With a careful concern about critical analysis of message design, information sources, and the power of video to elicit emotional

responses, video can be effective for examining many different types of issues and promoting conversation class.

Every educator has experienced the frustration of a discussion falling flat in class. Even when they design substantive and open-ended questions, students sometimes choose not to share their ideas or engage in conversation with other students. It is hoped by seeing their own video projects, students can lead to participate actively in conversation and a platform for sharing ideas, even if it is out of the classroom. This statement is in line with Sherman (1990) that stated that watching student-made video also can enhance students' communal viewing and listening experience. It is felt to be awkward if the participants of a conversation cannot take their turns to speak smoothly. Students learn best when they are actively (physically and/or intellectually) engaged in the learning activity. A variety of approaches can be used to promote active learning during a video viewing experience (Plowman, 1988). Viewing a video with carefully stop points can greatly enhance attention and engagement with the topic. On the other hand, affective learning and motivation may be influenced strongly by the choice of media. This in turn, may influence how enthusiastically and successfully students engage in learning activities. Here, before watching the video, students can be separated into small groups. A single question or a set of questions can be distributed around the class. After watching their own video, with a face-to-face conversation, students can create opportunities for more intimate conversation and discussion. They have time to consider the question, articulate the response, reply thoughtfully to their peers, and learn from each other. Valuable discussion on the video concepts and topics can be fostered in these small groups.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

College students are enthusiastic users of mobile and social media technology in their private lives, but are not often invited to make use of these in the classroom. Clark (1983) stated that research on cognitive learning and media technologies has shown that no specific educational media is inherently more effective than another. The video projects described here strive to motivate students into using technology for their own active and participatory learning. Essentially, a video by itself is unlikely to be more effective for teaching information than a book or programmed learning device on topic. Some scholars recognize a video as the 'current vernacular' (Hobbs, 2011; Daley, 2003; Poe, 2012). Moreover, Jarvinen et al. (2012) and Lichter (2012) argue that some scholars describe student video projects as flexible and easily integrated into courses regardless of academic area and even suggest that students can learn material from videos made by other students.

The expectations of students today are for more active and engaging experiences, an experience that utilizes their unique learning skills and styles. Hofer and Swan (2005) state that students of the twenty-first century, are frequently described as multi-taskers, having short attention spans for any one project, comfortable switching from one project to another, and expecting and enjoying constant digital stimulation and gratification. Requiring students to create video projects to explore subject content plays to their expertise, familiarity, and interests. Gehringer and Miller (2009) recognize that the active learning exercises need not be creative solely by the instructor and that students may benefit in multiple ways by giving them an opportunity to construct their own activities to master subject content. They further investigated that the students were able to increase students' engagements and learning activities.

Depending on the complexity of the project, students may work independently or in groups. The video topic can be assigned or students can choose their own relevant topic. Stash (2015) proposes some suggested steps to be considered for ensuring that the students create thoughtful final products that demonstrate their knowledge rather than pieces full of flash but potentially lacking of substance. The steps are:

- (1). *Outline*: students should start by outlining what they have to say, what they intend to show, and their main points
- (2). *Script*: whether the students are going to perform in their video, use a voice-over, or simply write captions, they should know what they are going to say before they begin.
- (3). *Storyboard*: students often have higher expectations that they can actually deliver. Having them present a storyboard before filming, makes them plan each step of the process encourages them to gather resources in advance.

(4). *Filming*: they key to good video project is the actual raw footage. Consider blocking a few times for recording and having an alternate activity available for the rest of the students.

(5) *Editing*: tools such as Microsoft Movie Maker, Apple iMovie, and Pixorial easily allow students to add soundtrack, voice overs, special effects, captions, and titles.

(6). *Publishing*: at the most basic level, a camera can be plugged in to a Tv or projector and shown to the rest of the class. Online video sharing sites (Youtube and Vimeo) and class websites provide students with an even broader audience.

With the availability of video recorders, visual communication using video is becoming more prevalent. Through video, it is hoped that communication strategies can be taught. Grenfeld and Harris (1999) suggested that strategy instruction could give learners more of sense control over their own learning. The strategy training could be beneficial for language learners because it is also teaching learners how to select turn-taking phrases, request for help, clarification and repetition and pause fillers.

The quality of discussion improves when more people participate, and because research has documented what most of us have experienced that only a few students regularly participate in class conversation. Here is a brief summary of what studies suggest to motivate students to talk more in class proposed by Weimer (2015), they are (1) establish the expectation of participation by warming students that will be called. Discuss the importance of participation in class and attach a grade to participation, (2) provide opportunities for reflecting and responding by giving students time to prepare. Use appropriate amounts of wait time. Maybe let students write some ideas and/or share them with another students, (3) skillful facilitate the discussion by setting ground rules. Discuss what makes the good answer. Do not let a few students monopolize the discussion. Let students look at their notes or the text, (4) use questions appropriately by asking open-ended questions. Call on those who might have relevant experience or background knowledge. (5) create a supportive learning environment by letting the classroom be a safe place where honest attempts to answer are supported and encouraged, and (6) respond respectfully to students' contributions by using wrong answers as teaching moments. Get others involved in understanding misconceptions and errors. Communication strategies are employed in order to repair breakdowns in spoken communication and to improve the effectiveness of communication. So it can be said that learning strategies are used in order to promote learning, whereas communication strategies are used to promote communication. And it is reasonable to say that language learning strategies contribute to the development of communicative competence and communication strategies are one type of language learning strategies.

Although communication strategies are not directly related to cognitive learning of language, they provide the learners with the input which is very important for the success of learning. In this case, communication strategies can be employed in conversation in order to allow the learners to maintain in conversation. So, learners get more opportunities to hear as well as to produce the target language. Tarone, Fearch and Kasper in Brett (2001) propose that in order to remain in the conversation learners must: (1) find way to continue producing the target language despite the limitation, (2) recognize when their production has not been properly interpreted, and (3) indicate their reception of the speakers' intentions. Related to this idea, many academics consider class participation evidence of active learning or engagement that benefits learning, critical thinking, writing, appreciation of cultural differences, time management and interpersonal, listening and speaking skills (Petress: 2006).

However, less vocal students may not have an incentive to participate, especially when the teacher's classroom style is autonomous and students set the policies and procedures of the course (Gomberg & Gray: 2000). Unlike some of the other forms of learning that take place in the classroom, participation in the small-group environment is not an individual activity. How and what students learn from listening to a lecture, reading a textbook, doing research, or studying for an exam is quite different from what students can gain when students have immediate access to approximately different, informed points of view on a single issue. Playing an active role in discussions involves volunteering students opinion, asking questions, and listening carefully. The best discussions are the ones that move beyond the simple questions and answers. Students will be rewarded for bringing up more chal-lenging ideas and for trying to deal with them collaboratively with their classmates. To do

this effectively, teachers must have read all of the assigned material carefully. If they haven't, it will become clear quite quickly.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In doing this case study research, the case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame — an object — within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates. According to J. Creswell (2009) One approach sees the case study defined as a research strategy, an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. Case-study research can mean single and multiple case studies, can include quantitative evidence, relies on multiple sources of evidence, and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. As such, case study research should not be confused with qualitative research, as case studies can be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

This research was conducted at STMIK Jayanusa Padang which is located in Jl. Damar No.69E Padang. The research is administered to the second semester students (63 students). Time allocation for English course is 2 x 45 minutes per week.

The data were collected by doing direct observation as the main technique to find out what happen in the classroom during the process of teaching speaking. While observing the teaching learning process, the collaborator put a tick to the sheets of students' activities. After the lesson, the author and collaborator discussed and took some notes into the research field notes because ideally, the notes should be written as soon as possible after the lesson. To support the data collection in observation, the author recorded the students' conversation at the end of every meeting.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### Students' Perception on Video Projects

The video projects discussed in this paper was my first attempt at collecting data about students experiences and perceptions of doing the project. It included to allow different interests and learning styles as the students take active ownership of a portion of their learning. The improvement of students' involvement in learning process was analyzed from the data gained through observation sheets and field-notes. The analysis of observation sheet and field-notes as stated in the finding concluded that students was getting more involved in learning process, and had been able to show their positive attitude toward learning this strategy. Related to this condition, Brown (2001) argues that an analysis which identifies the requirements of the learners involved is a necessary first step in teaching speaking. In this research, students worked in groups of four to five members and presented the video project of english conversation in class on the last day before the mid-term of semester. Students were given two weeks notice and they were not given any instruction on the use of video recording and editing technology. They are only given a topic to be developed become a conversation. After the videos were presented, students were given a survey asking them about their experience with the video assignment. The survey included an open ended question and eleven Likert scaled questions (rating questions 1-7, 1 strongly disagree – 7 strongly agree.) Sixty-three students completed the Likert closed ended questions.

The results of the survey indicated that students enjoyed creating their video projects; they thought the experience was both important and useful and enjoyed the project. These results were not universal; for many of the questions, the responses were bimodal, some students scored the questions very high and some very low, few in the middle. For the following questions, enjoyed the experience, glad they completed the experience, creating videos was interesting and they would recommend the project for future classes, the mode of the answers was a 7, strongly agree.

Table 1: the open-ended question of students' experience in making video project

Survey Questions	Mean of All Responses
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1. Creating videos is an important exercise	7,9
2. Creating videos is an enjoyable experience	7
3. Creating videos is a useful experience	7,3
4. Creating videos enhances learning content	10,1
5. Creating videos will enhance in the future	12,6
6. I am glad I created video	8,5
7. Participating in video project will help my career	6
8. I would recommend this project for future classes	28,5
9. The video project was the most useful project in class	7,1
10. I would rather do a different project than the video project	5

Of the open-ended questions, twenty-two were completely positive, thirty-two were left unanswered and nine were mixed, containing both positive and negative thoughts. The negative responses focused on lack of time and lack of technology skill and inability to coordinate schedules with group members. It should be noted that prior experience with any outside student project, especially at a college that is heavily commuter rather than residential, where 90% of the students are working at least ten hours a week, will typically yield the same comments. A few students also commented on the project not being relevant to their education and fail to see how this project would serve any useful purpose in their future career.

On the positive side, the following comments were provided: These comments were constructed before the students reviewed each other's work.

- *It helped us learn how much actually goes into creating an english conversation*
- *I really enjoyed it, it was fun to do and gave me an opportunity to be creative*
- *It was great. It helped me learn a lot about how to build a real english atmosphere from a storyboard*
- *It was definitely useful to at least see how the process works...*
- *It was a fun way to spend outside the class*
- *It was extremely funny*
- *It was a fun and a good experience*
- *I like the idea but many of us lacked the equipment*
- *I found the project to be enjoyable and educational*
- *The video project was definitely a great learning experience*
- *It allowed us to put what we learned in class on a real project and experience a real project*
- *I really enjoyed the project....it was pretty fun and really shows what goes into making a drama.*
- *I enjoyed creating our project, because it is more than memorizing terms, it's using creativity*
- *I really enjoyed making the video with my group, it was a fun experience. It really gives you an idea*

Although not mentioned directly, all students had an opportunity to develop some level of video technology expertise which is expected to increase in relevance as they go forward in their education and their work experience. The positive comments support the notions that students appreciate: having an opportunity to exercise personal creativity; having educational activities that are: experiential, active, and entertaining; having an opportunity to engage in social learning and having an opportunity to gain familiarity and comfort with classmates.

The following categories emerged from the result of data analysis. Based on the data gathered through three instruments; observation sheets, field-notes, and tape recording, the following categories are the basis to report and understand the picture of the findings.

#### Students' Involvement in Classroom Conversation

The data gathered from observation sheets and the research field-notes were analyzed based on the categories of; students' involvement in classroom conversation and students' participation in pair work. There are three indicators in this category, namely; students' responsiveness to the teacher's questions, students' initiation to speak English, and students' participation in pair work.



From the data collected, it can be identified that students' lack of confidence and inability to employ certain strategies in speaking are the causes of their unresponsiveness to the teacher's questions. They were also not used to initiate speaking by using English. The author supposes that this condition caused by their lack of confidence and being untrained to do so. Dealing with their participation in pair-work, they had begun to show their better involvement the class conversation. They had given their contribution to their pair to play their role. They seemed to be seriously prepared their dialog. And all of the pairs performed their dialog in the meeting.

The improvement on students' participation in conversation in terms of the number of exchanges they could produce in a conversation were showed in the tape-recording data. That is why, before analyzing the conversation, it was important to determine what element of conversation structure to be observed. Here, the author focused on the numbers of exchanges they can produce because 'an exchange is the basic unit of interaction' (Sinclair, 1975). So, the more the exchanges the better the conversation is. This improvement is closely related to the idea of Bachman (1990: 84). He states that students' mental capacity to implement their language competence in contextualized communicative language use is needed to build their strategic competence. In the analysis, the strategy appears as acknowledging move in elicit and Inform exchanges, and as eliciting move in clarify exchange. Most of the students began to be more responsive to the teacher's questions, more had tried to respond the teacher's questions, and their participation in pair work had been good. Their involvement in pair work seemed better than their involvement in classroom activities. They felt free to show their participation through working in pair. These data indicate that the students' involvement in teaching learning process had improved.

#### **Students' Conversation Exchanges in Classroom Conversation**

In last meeting of the mid-term, the author tape recorded the students' conversation to be transcribed and analyzed. The analysis of the students' conversation of the first cycle shows that students had been able to converse with their pair based on the direction in the role-play card distributed. Since one of the indicators of the improvement of students' participation in conversation is the number of exchanges they could produce, the data can be summarized as follows:

No	Numbers of Exchange	Numbers of Pair
1	8	1(07%)
2	9	2 (14%)
3	10	4 (28%)
4	11	3 (21%)
5	12	3 (21%)
6	15	1 (07%)

Table 3.2: The Percentage of Students' Conversation Exchanges

It can be described that they could maintain their conversation more than 10 exchanges in average. This number of had met the target of improvement targeted before. It implied that the author had reinforced the students' concepts they have been exposed in the class conversation.

#### **Students' Turn-Taking in Classroom Conversation**

Based on the analysis of the recorded conversation, most of students had been able to improve their own motivation to speak English as an utterance or marker to share their turns. As an effort to take their turns, students learnt through talk in their video projects. They tried hard to make their own input and demonstrate autonomy. They also utilize the knowledge they already had in breaking their passive viewing habits. The data also showed that students' ability in managing their turns to speak had gained improvement. The flow of their conversation began to be smoother even though some incomplete exchanges still appeared in the transcript. The problems of the students' turn-taking were mostly caused by the current speaker's unawareness to distribute the turn to the next speaker. And no data revealed that the problem caused by competing for the turn.

The improvement of students' turn-taking is also an indication of good participation in conversation. If the participants of a conversation cannot manage their turns to speak, there will be long pause or overlap. Yule (1998) states that long pause and overlap between turns are considered awkward in a conversation. In accordance, Brett (2001) argues that learners' strategic competence can be a problem solving in communication. Moreover, McCarthy (1991) states that conversation

participants should be able to provide responses of not taking turn when one has the opportunity. There are signals to indicate that back-channel responses.

The students also claimed that learning speaking by using video projects motivated them to improve and respond to others' statement or performance. It could be caused by the activities which were conducted in the classroom. The students were not only required to think what to be uttered, but also to understand other's utterances. It means that the students gained the opportunity to initiate oral communication. It is not only conducting a dialog which had been previously prepared, but also practicing the strategy in any possible situation. This statement is in accordance with Brown (2001) who mentions that part of oral communication competence is the ability to initiate conversations, to nominate topics, to ask questions, to control conversation and to change the subject. It means that in communicative activities, it is important to strive for a classroom in which students feel comfortable and confident, feel free to take risks and have sufficient opportunities to speak.

#### Students' Back-channeling in Classroom Conversation

Based on the data from the transcript of recorded conversation, few students had a feed-backs or acknowledgments to their partner. It was also discovered that some students used other devices as back-channels. It is supposed that the signals students make to give feedback to their partner are likely to be unconscious. It can be transferred from students' L1 back-channeling. Based on the data from the recording, some students also used back-channels like; okay, yeah, hmm, oh, I see, no problem, etc. From the data above, it can be inferred that students made video projects can be additional devices for students in back-channeling. The use of the strategy contributed to students' ability in giving back-channels to their partner in conversation.

The students liked if the teacher gave them opportunity to work in pair preparing a dialog to be performed in front of the classroom. In addition, the students also admitted to use casual language based on the situation given. Feedback and assessment from the teacher was also another factor that motivated the students to improve their ability in speaking. It suggests that the teacher was able to give appropriate feedback since in giving feedback, the adequate way and occasion should be taken into consideration, how the teacher was able to correct the students without offending them. Even though, the feedback was not only provided by the teacher, basically it was what the students considered more. It is in relevance with Willing (1988) as cited in Nunan (1991) who states that in the major investigation of the learning preference of learners, error correction by the teacher was one of the most highly valued and desired classroom activities. Therefore, the fact that feedback given by the teacher could motivate the students to speak indicated that the teacher could deliver her feedback with proper ways. The increasing of students' motivation also influenced their involvement in learning. From the observation result, it could be investigated that most of the activities were dominated by the practice of language. It could come from the performance of the students conducting conversation. In addition, the students believed that in the teaching and learning process, the teacher had provided two-way communication which could help the students to be more confident in speaking since this two-way communication could create a relax atmosphere in the classroom.

In the matter of their oral communication skill, the students mentioned in the interview that they experienced the improvement in interacting with others, increasing self-confidence, and showing their cooperation in speaking to others. It was in relevance with Murcia (1991) who states that language students are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in their second or foreign language. Therefore, the strategy provided the students' need to improve their oral communication skill.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Basically, the ability in speaking was not only about the ability in say things a sophisticated manner, but also to show participation, to maintain and develop conversation. The students claimed that they appreciate for the video creation experience. The positive aspects about students created video are; deeper learning; more engaging experience; more active learning; and more personal

involvement -by taking the ownership of their ability to acquire learning. Some of the students stated that it helped them speaking because they did not need to get confused about what to say if they find difficulties in managing conversation, and it could also broaden their knowledge. However, there were still few students who mentioned that it confused them for its various functions. Since this students video projects is not enough just to be known, students' opportunity to practice it is another crucial thing to be considered. Therefore, it was kind of challenge for the teacher to improve their teaching technique in order to avoid students' problems in their learning experience.

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