

SMARTPHONES, YOUTUBE AND LEARNER-CENTRED TECHNIQUE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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October 2018

for

Centre of Teaching Excellence for Language Learning (CTELL)



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Aims

To illustrate and reflect on the use of smartphone-facilitated learner activity:

1. text-chat rehearsal as preparation for spoken fluency practice.
2. learner-controlled video viewing as preparation for spoken narration.
3. learner controlled audio recording and peer correction

To present student responses to the use of this technology in this lesson

Context

Lesson aims:

1. Develop spoken fluency (opinion and narrative), motivated by response to YouTube videos.
2. Sensitise students to differences between spoken, informal responses and more formal written reports

One-off lesson / 22 volunteer students. Written consent obtained.

14 experienced English language teachers from China

8 younger upper intermediate students from Japan, Saudi Arabia and Italy.

The full video can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6i-rGfOPJjk>



Section One of the Lesson

Section One

Lesson Flow

1. Watch a YouTube video about a simulated child abduction with guiding questions.
2. Text their responses to a partner and also elicit options in text.
3. Have the same conversation but with a different partner in face-to-face oral mode.
4. Plenary discussion.

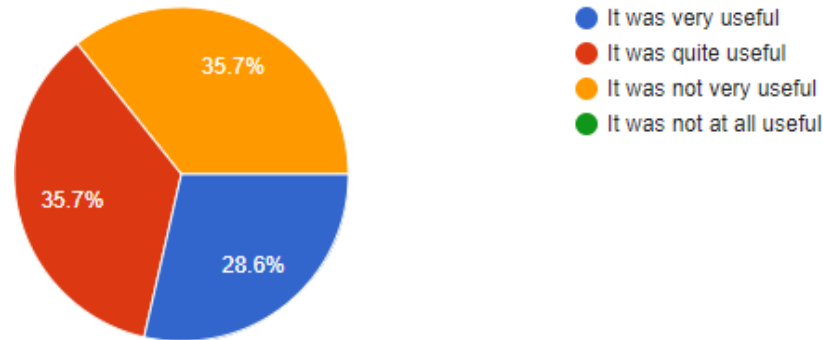
Section One of the Lesson

Rationale

- This activity replicates MALU (Jarvis 2013) as opposed to CALL or MALL (!)
- Texting may provide a pressure-free environment to enable ‘thought gathering’ to enrich spoken fluency.
 - Need for quasi-experimental testing
- Related research
 - Michel 2018 (text chat and acquisition of target structures in German),
 - Satar 2008 (text chat verses voice chat and anxiety levels),
 - Sauro and Smith 2010 (text chat and linguistic and lexical density)
 - I can’t find anything on text chat-fronted fluency practice vs non-text-chat-fronted (normal) fluency practice

Section One of the Lesson

How did you feel about responding to the video in texting mode and then repeating the activity with a different partner in speaking mode?



Negative comments

- I don't like texting because I am slow in typing. I like the speaking activity. It is quick and effective.
- Texting is time consuming, while speaking is more efficient.
- I think it is time-consuming.
- Typing is time consuming
- Too much texting and speaking; not enough new words

Positive comments

- It's like daily conversation with a friend.
- Because it helps to develop the critical thinking.
- Help understand the video; more communicative
- Reduce the affection (!) filter
- Can improve understanding through comparing

Section Two of the Lesson

Section Two

Lesson Flow

1. Learners second-view the video and note down events in the story with full control of playback, rewind, pausing etc.
2. Learners then share notes with a partner to build up a co-produced spoken report

Section Two of the Lesson

Rationale

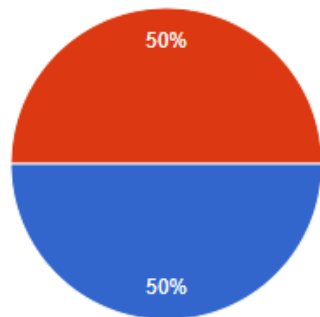
How would YOU rationalise (justify) this activity? (Assuming you think it's 'OK')

- Learners have time to recall necessary language and content, increasing the potential for linguistically richer recounts (research opportunity).
- Pedagogy **OF** autonomy in action (Kuchah and Smith 2010).
 - Learner-controlled viewing makes use of latent autonomy
 - Learners are afforded the status of decision maker and are thus able to construct their own micro-syllabus with the video content according to their own needs and preferences. (cf. Minecraft!)
- '**OF** autonomy' vs. '**FOR** autonomy'
 - OF: classroom activity activates our existing latent autonomy
 - FOR: assumes we don't necessarily have autonomy (i.e. in relation to learning English) and need to be trained in it.

Section Two of the Lesson

How did you feel about watching the video individually on your smartphone with control to stop, start, review and take notes?

- It was very useful
- It was quite useful
- It was not very useful
- It was not at all useful



14 responses to open ended questions were received. All positive. These are typical:

Autonomy and control (x 7)

- This is very good because everyone can watch the video in their own speed.
- It provides learner autonomy to students and students have more control of the materials.

Affect, time, stress (x4)

- We can have enough time to take notes
- It makes me feel relaxed and stay focused.
- It can help to reduce stress and anxiety. Also helpful to understand it better.

Level (x1)

- Students have different language levels

Section Three of the Lesson

Section Three

Lesson Flow

1. Learners record narrations individually into their own smartphones.
2. One learner shares their recording for plenary playback and the teacher gives examples of how to self-correct.
3. Learner then engage in peer-correction of each other's audios.

Section Three of the Lesson

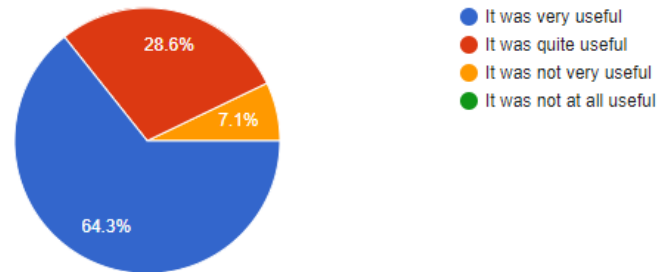
Rationale / issues

- Self recording reduces cognitive load (thinking time) and reduces pressure to immediately 'perform' to an audience
- Assumption (and justification): it harnesses students' intrinsic motivation (if they have it!) for self-improvement
- Any success depends students' existing meta-awareness (why correct, what to correct, how to current,).
- Hence the need for sample plenary correction: implicit learner-training activity: a pedagogy **FOR** autonomy.
- Research
 - Most on peer correction relates to writing and presentations,
 - Most indicates that students have negative perceptions of it (Manglesdorf 1992, Zhang 1999, Nelson and Carson 2006).
 - Most suggests that teacher feedback gets better results.
 - Most research is context specific and generalisations are not made.

Section Three of the Lesson

Student Response

How did you feel about recording your description onto your own smartphone?



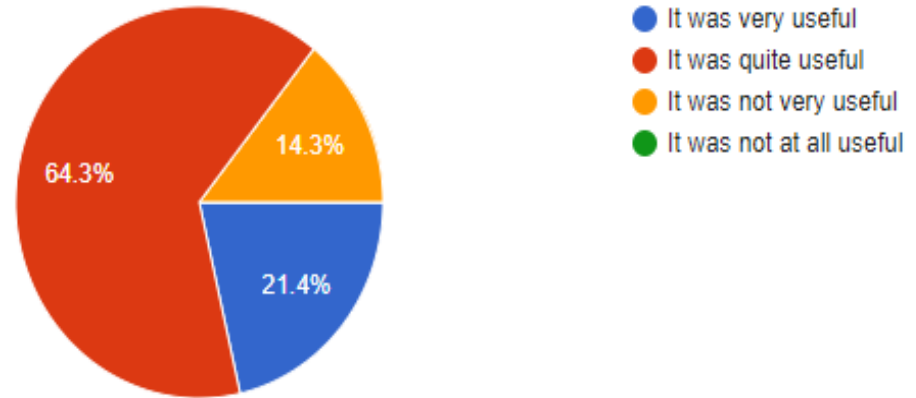
All comments were positive:

- It is like a self-checking activity.
- It is useful and can be recorded from time to time to check your own progress.
- It make me feel comfortable to check my own language errors.
- Because it gives me a chance to reflect on my own speaking.

Section Three of the Lesson

Student Response contd.

How did you feel about being asked to correct your partner's recording?



Positive – co-operative learning

- We can correct others' mistakes and also learn good points from others. X5
- I feel comfortable to correct and be corrected.
- Peer correction facilitates Ss' sensitivity to some shared problems.

Negative – face / confidence

- Sometimes it gives a sense of losing face if you make lots of mistakes x 2
- He or she may be unwilling to let others correct him or her.
- We should give upfront presentations so teacher can give comments
- I do not have knowledge to criticise my own or partner's performance if I listen to myself.

Section Four of the Lesson

What would YOU do next?

Text-based language analysis followed by controlled practice.

Section Four

Questions

- What do we do about those students who:
 - Don't want to self-/peer-correct?
 - Don't know how to self-/peer correct?
 - Believe they don't have the proficiency to self-/peer-correct?

- What do we do about those students who (more generally) don't really understand the reasons why we deploy a particular methodology in a lesson?

Conclusions / implications / questions

1. Include time for learner-led reflection (on the learning and teaching process of a lesson) within a lesson. (A pedagogy **FOR** autonomy).
2. Ensure that ensuing discussion in the reflection is egalitarian (A pedagogy **OF** autonomy)
3. Balance 1 and 2 with the need to respond constructively to learners' traditional concerns.
 - Do not lose sight of the importance of language input – whilst at the same time raising student awareness of the value of skills practice.
4. Deploy a pedagogy **OF** autonomy via stimulating content and learner-led activity (and, where feasible learner-chosen content)
5. Deploy a pedagogy **OF** autonomy whereby 'naturalistic' learner use of tech is part of a teaching programme.
6. Seek opportunities to 'normalise' (Bax 2011) use of tech where appropriate. Don't impose tech use for the sake of it.

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