The Effect of Multimedia on Cultural Learning and Teaching in Taiwan

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The application of technology, including films, radio, television, the Internet, and other forms, is increased in various language classrooms. Interest in using multimedia as tools to improve learning is growing in language learners and teachers (Liu, Moore, Graham, & Lee, 2002). Multimedia instruction environment can promote students' learning motivation and attitude. In addition, culture teaching and learning has been considered as an important interest to language educators and over the past four decades. Thus, the present study is designed to investigate the impact of multimedia on EFL learners' cultural understanding and raise learners' learning motivation via different multimedia. Forty Taiwanese college students with pre-intermediate English proficiency level participated in this project. The instructor used a film, *Night at the Museum III*, to design a series of classroom activities to help learners improve their cultural knowledge. The activities involved film watching, vocabulary learning, artist knowledge searching, on-line resource searching, and feedback. The educator used both qualitative and quantitative methods as the tools. During the classroom activities, the educator provided a learning sheet including new words, phrases, and sentences for students to check. Then, after the film, students searched the scene appearing in the movie, trying to surf on the Internet to search the background of the museum (the British Museum), the famous collections and then share some of their favorite collections to others. Finally, a questionnaire and interview related to learning motivation were used. With multimedia, the writer would like to assist learners to connect cultural awareness and language learning, and improve their motivation in learning English.

Keywords: cultural learning, multimedia, language learning motivation

Instruction

During the last several decades, "technology" is one of the most important changes in education. Nowadays, multimedia is widely used to stimulate interests in various topics, to provide information on cultural or historical background for language learners. In addition, it can be seen as stimuli to help students involve in class activities. Videos would create a role to help students improve the learning motivation and with the visual image; students can connect it to what they see in textbooks and then obtain real knowledge. Finally, videos can facilitate critical thinking and deeper language processing.

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As we know, the 20th century witnessed an increase in the application of technology in ESL/EFL classrooms, including film, radio, television, language lab, and so on (Cunningham, 1998). Also, the use of multimedia is widespread today. Multimedia can provide instructional information for students during the learning process. Technology-enhanced language learning provides positive impact, such as increased motivation and low-anxiety (Blasszar, 2001). Thus, interest in using multimedia as tools to improve learning is growing in language learners and teachers (Liu, Moore, Graham, & Lee, 2002). With the increasing interest in computer technology, how to enhance teaching and learning through technology has become an important issue. As a result, this present study used multimedia as a tool to improve students' motivation, providing different opportunities to help students familiar with cultural knowledge and finally improve their cultural awareness.

Methods

The main video material, *Night at the Museum III*, was used in class. Based on the above discussion of multimedia and language learning, two major research questions were presented as follows:

1. Is students' English learning motivation improved after multimedia integration in teaching?
2. Do students get better cultural understanding through those activities?

Subjects

A total number of 40 sophomore college students with pre-intermediate English proficiency level from a college in New Taipei City participated in this project. All the subjects in this study shared the similar English learning experiences and majored in travel management.

Also, all the subjects have completed the ILTEA English Proficiency Tests (CEF A2). In the test, it contained 32 questions related to reading ability and 25 questions related to listening ability. Students who passed the test have the basic reading and listening ability, such as topics related to daily life conversation, travel events, advertisement, business conversation, etc.

Instruments

The instructor designed pre-watching learning sheet, after watching learning sheet, feedback questions, and interview.

Pre-watching Learning Sheet

It contains the learning of movie scene (the British Museum), such as the location, the features of the museum, basic new words they need to understand. From the activity, students can search on the Internet or discuss with their classmates to get basic understanding about the museum and the city.

Post-watching Sheet

A sheet related to the movie content was used. From the sheet, students need to check some important museum collections' background, the feature, and even the authors. Then they used some simple sentences to give a short feedback about the movie. Finally, students need to find some museums interested them and write down the features. From this activity, students can learn art knowledge and then develop their cultural understanding.

Pre- and Post-questions and Interviews

Ten-question questionnaire for collecting students' multimedia use and motivations with five-point Likert scales was used as pre- and post-tests. The questions involved motivation of cultural learning, English learning motivation, and video learning in class. In addition, for more detailed information, the educator interviewed some students. The questions were presented as follows:

1. What do you think about using video in class?

2. Do you think this kind of learning can improve your English learning motivation?

3. After this activity, do you think you understand more about foreign culture and art knowledge?

Procedures

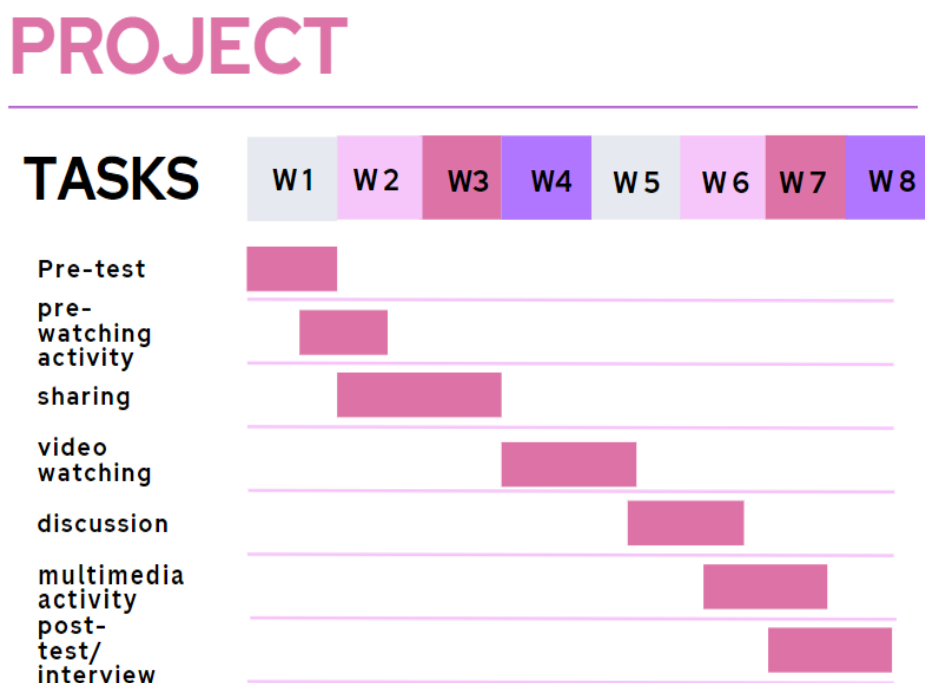It is an eight-week project. The detailed class activities were presented as follows:

Figure 1. Procedures of this project.

Results and Discussion

Collected data were analyzed and discussed based on the two major research questions stated above. First, the educator presented the results of the feedback questionnaires. Then, to get more detailed information, the relationship among multimedia teaching, English learning motivation, and cultural reading were discussed.

At first, the results of the feedback questionnaires indicated that students provided positive reflection about this multimedia learning. Most students believed this kind of learning method can help them improve their learning motivation and thought this is a different way to learn languages. In addition, with the help of Internet and multimedia data, students could get more authentic information related to the topic. Then, students can combine what they found with their travel plan in the future.

Table 1

Pre-test Questions Results (N = 40)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Fair	Agree	Strongly agree
1. This video learning was beneficial to me.	0	12	6	12	10
2. I can know more cultural knowledge.	0	10	10	15	5
3. My English learning motivation is improved.	0	8	3	14	15
4. I want to know more about this museum.	0	0	5	26	9
5. I like this kind of learning.	0	2	2	22	14
6. I will recommend this class to others.	0	0	1	19	20
7. I know many new words related to the film.	0	10	5	15	10
8. Video activity can improve my interest.	0	8	5	17	10
9. With Internet, I know more information.	0	0	1	27	12
10. I know historical background.	0	12	8	10	10

Table 2

Post-test Questions Results (N = 40)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Fair	Agree	Strongly agree
1. This video learning was beneficial to me.	0	2	2	23	13
2. I can know more cultural knowledge.	0	1	3	20	15
3. My English learning motivation is improved.	0	1	5	12	21
4. I want to know more about this museum.	0	0	5	26	9
5. I like this kind of learning.	0	1	4	21	14
6. I will recommend this class to others.	0	2	4	19	15
7. I know many new words related to the film.	0	5	1	13	21
8. Video activity can improve my interest.	0	3	4	21	12
9. With Internet, I know more information.	0	2	1	27	10
10. I know historical background.	0	1	2	19	18

The Relationship Between Multimedia and Learning

Among 40 subjects, before this project started, 12 subjects did not think video learning could benefit their language learning. In addition, eight subjects thought video activity could not improve their learning motivation. However, after this project, most of the subjects believed the positive effect of learning motivation. As Keddie (2014) claimed, video is becoming the primary mode of communication around the world. As a result, with using videos, teachers are more likely to relate to their students' lives and meet their expectations, and this provides positive influence on learning motivation. Videos provided authentic materials to help students approach real languages. It combines visual and audio stimuli, and then it also allows students to see their facial expressions and body language at the same time when they hear the stress, intonation of English (Bello, 1999). From those stimuli, students can connect the video content with their textbook. With different opportunities, students would be more interested in English learning. Here are some students' responses:

"I think this is an interesting movie. After that, I want to know the new words I hear". (Den, March 20, 2017)

"At first, I think English is not useful. But after watching movie, I want to know more sentences to express myself". (Alex, March 20, 2017)

Multimedia Learning and English Learning Motivation

Shelly and Counter (2006) indicated advantages of multimedia include strengthening learning motivation and learners' attention. Also, non-space-time restricted Internet communication provides more opportunities to learn, helping the learners learn at any time and any place. Furthermore, multimedia provides various of information, creates abundant learning scenario, and combines existing technology, making language learning have different kinds of resources (Gilakjani, 2012). In addition, online multimedia could assist language learners to search for related sources and then maintain learners' high motivation. After this project, most subjects showed positive attitude, and then believed their language motivation was increased.

Multimedia Learning and Cultural Understanding

In an English language learning classroom, teachers can make use of the advantages of media technology to increase students' cultural awareness. For English learners, video has the benefit of providing cultural information (Bello, 1999). A number of videos are based on stories, and some particular cultures so that students can learn different cultures and then connect them with what they find in textbooks. In addition, with authentic image, the video provides a realistic view of famous history. From this interesting interpretation in the movie, students are motivated to stretch their comprehension (Stempleski, 1992). Here are students' responses:

"The movie is fun. I learn more histories from it". (Jenny, March 27, 2017)

"I didn't know many museum collection before. After this movie, I know many collections' names". (Lily, March 27, 2017)

"After this movie, I want to travel to England". (Felicia, March 27, 2017)

"At the beginning, I am not interested in this kind of movie. But now, I like this very much. I want to know more about cultures". (Jenny, March 27, 2017)

Conclusion

Based on the findings, multimedia offers positive impact on students' language learning and cultural awareness. Most students thought this is a new way to learn language and learn different cultural knowledge. From visual and audio stimuli and the assistance of Internet, students could get authentic learning context and improve their cultural knowledge. Thus, language teachers should take advantage of using these tools in language-learning classrooms. However, when choosing appropriate video materials, teachers need to meet students' needs and interests so that students' learning motivation could be really improved. When multimedia is effectively integrated in language-learning classrooms, it helps in creating more meaningful teaching and learning experiences and provides various approaches for language learning.

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