

# Video-Based Instruction: Effects on EFL Learners' Spoken Learning

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## Abstract

Video-based model has emerged as a promising approach for teaching spoken English (EFL), offering immersive environments that simulate real-world communication. However, video-based instruction models, especially the roots of the model and specific video-based methods in spoken English classrooms, have not yet received due attention. Given the positive impact of video-based model instruction on students' academic performance, this study first clarifies the characteristics of authentic oral tasks on the basis of the video-based instruction model. Then, the study offers specific video-based methods in spoken English classrooms. The data results showed that the video-based instruction model could engage students in speaking activities and improve learners' speaking ability in English.

## Keywords

Video-Based Instruction Model, EFL Learner, Spoken English Instruction

## 1. Introduction

The issue of second or foreign language learners' weak speaking abilities has long been concern. As far as the language learning process is concerned, oral proficiency can improve the learners' language learning process to a certain extent by providing new learning opportunities for learning the foreign language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and by supporting learners' personalized learning (Yükselir & Kömür, 2017: 255-266). Zhang, Guo et al. (2017: pp. 18-26) found that the existing research showed that the majority of university English learners are affected by the teaching environment, traditional teaching practices, and instructional methods, resulting in poor oral output. Likewise, Wang and Zhou (2004: pp. 7-14) frankly stated that there were still many challenges in China's spoken English instruction, including teaching methods, teaching environments,

and students' pragmatic competence. Dai (2001: pp. 1, 32) also highlighted that the most prominent issues in English teaching in China were "mute English" and the "time-consuming yet inefficient" nature of learning English. To have spent up to six or more years of study to achieve so little in terms of speaking competence indicates that in many countries, something is seriously wrong with English as a foreign language (EFL) education, particularly in oral communication. It's time to create an innovative and interesting method for increasing EFL Learners' speaking skills and motivation.

Video-based instruction has been used in recent years to promote better EFL learning. Jauregi and Bañados (2008: pp. 183-207) pointed out that people could use video conferencing for academic research, and teachers and learners could work together to learn a language while familiarizing themselves with a culturally-specific virtual environment by using video network technology, and learners enjoyed this method of learning because it motivated them to learn a language in an authentic socio-cultural context, to communicate, and to learn about the culture behind the language, and the related pragmatic issues. The essential question in L2 pedagogy is not only why videos should be used in spoken English instructions but how videos can be effectively planned and implemented. Wagener (2006: pp. 279-286) argued that short videos could provide a unique and rich resources for language digital labs.

Although researchers have been concerned with ways in which videos are used in EFL instruction, limited research has invested in the authentic characteristics of video-based EFL instruction and how video-based instruction can be most effectively carried out in oral communication instruction. Wen (1999: pp. 1-4) found that for adults, textual information was generally received better through the visual channel than the sound channel in terms of listening and speaking learning. Adults' ability to remember strongly was not as good as children's, coupled with a higher sensitivity to self-image than children's, which made it more difficult to carry out listening and speaking activities without the aid of textual materials. We have restricted our discussion in this study in spoken English instruction. Thus, the current study aims to add more evidence in this field by using videos to teach spoken English (EFL).

## **2. The Roots of Video-Based Spoken Foreign Language (EFL) Instructing Model**

### **2.1. Authentic Foreign Language Task**

As Ellis and Barjhuizen (2005) pointed out, learning is the process by which learners construct meaning and extend it through participation in situated cooperative activities. Jones & Saville (2019) suggested that students' purposeful application of language to communicate individual meanings could drive learning behaviors. Otherwise, interactive activities designed by the teacher were ineffective without the cognitive involvement of students. Also, Van den Branden (2006) argued that a task was a cognitive and communicative process in which learners applied new

and old knowledge in an authentic context. In a nutshell, the academic community places special emphasis on the role that authentic social contexts and culture play in the development of language proficiency.

In the context of foreign language learning, “authenticity” is divided into two categories: the first is authentic texts, i.e., authentic language teaching materials; the second is authentic activities (Guariento & Morley, 2001: pp. 347-353). Little et al. (1988) explained that authentic text was a text that was created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced. “Authentic activities” were teaching and learning activities that were closely related to people’s needs in the real world and had practical relevance. Fanselow (1982) also studied authentic activities. He gave the example of teaching a Chinese chef how to describe his job in English, which seemed to be an authentic context. But, in the real world, did a chef really need to say, “I’m chopping onions” while he was working? For this chef, it would be better to teach him how to take phone orders and how to check the numbers on an invoice. Ellis and Barjuizen (2005) held the view that a grasp of linguistic knowledge was gained through the completion of meaning-centered linguistic activities under authentic conditions. Bachman et al. (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Yang, 1999: pp. 48-57) pointed out that the design and development of foreign language speaking tests should use authentic environments or contexts, and language testing behaviors should be consistent with the actual use of language.

## 2.2. Emphasis on Video-Based Spoken English Language Instructing Model: Authenticity

The authenticity of short videos is a hot topic in task-based language teaching research (Plonsky & Ziegler, 2016: pp. 17-37). Even if much of the literature review on the subject has been widely shared, the detailed review of the literature showed the common ground while providing the following characteristics of authentic spoken foreign language activities:

Firstly, authentic oral activities need to accomplish communicative goals in real-time. In this regard, the researchers have made the following explanations from two aspects: 1) Willis (1996) pointed out that authentic oral communication had communicative goals. Speakers communicate out of an attempt to convey a message or out of an individual’s intrinsic emotional needs or extrinsic social needs. For example, imagine what occupations might be replaced by AI in twenty years? Authentic activities emphasize meaning and communication and are replicas of real-world communication. Such oral activities motivate students to communicate naturally in real-time, thereby achieving specific communicative goals, improving fluency, and acquiring language naturally (Willis, 1996). In other words, authentic oral activities are those that learners prepare for their future life in the real world. 2) authentic oral communication has a time limit. Long and Crookes (1992: pp. 27-56) argued that authentic communicative interactions took place under time pressure. Foster et al. (2000: pp. 354-375) suggested that the speaker’s response was spontaneous and unplanned in a conversation. The speaker

improvises, thoughts, and outputs language. Ellis (2003) asserted that topic familiarity was related to learners' negotiation of meaning, which in turn had an impact on language comprehension and output. Gu and Jin (2021: pp. 73-81) explained that the temporal limitation of oral text output explained why learners' "oral output elicits significantly higher loads than written output" for unfamiliar topics.

Secondly, Yang Huizhong and Han Baocheng (Yang, 1999: pp. 48-57; Han, 2018) made clear that authentic oral activity was a two-way interactive process in participants co-construct meaning and Yang (1999: p. 49) stated that the essential features of authentic oral communication were summarized as real communication situation, real communication contextualized, and interactivity of language communication. Jones and Saville (2019) asserted that language learning is a product of participants' negotiation with each other. The interaction included activities, goals, scaffolding, feedback, etc. In other words, authentic spoken texts are the products of collaboration between two or more interactants in a shared time and a shared physical environment.

Thirdly, Yang Huizhong (Yang, 1999: pp. 48-57) acknowledged that authentic speaking activities were accomplished through an integrative approach to teaching and learning. Speaking as language output was an integrated language skill. Widdowson (1978) claimed that language teaching should integrate the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order to realize the communicative purpose of language. Oxford (2001: pp. 58-63) regarded "Integrated-Skill Instruction" as a creative approach to teaching.

### **2.3. The Need for Video-Based Spoken English Language Instructing Model**

Language researchers have believed that oral communication skills are one of the important goals of foreign language teaching. Talking about the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a language, Widdowson (2008) held that nothing should be said until it is heard. Nothing should be read before it is spoken. Nothing should be written until it is read. The Guide to Teaching English at University (College Foreign Language Teaching Advisory Committee of Higher Education Institutions of the Ministry of Education, 2020) (hereinafter referred to as the Guide) clearly stated that the requirement of teaching college English was to cultivate students' English application ability. The students' competence to use English was the ability to communicate in English in study, life and future work, which included both written and oral communication skills. As far as the learners' comprehensive language competence is concerned, the ability to express themselves orally was an important indicator of the learners' foreign language competence. It was because, generally speaking, whatever could be expressed would be understood, but what could be understood might not necessarily be expressed (Yang, 1999: p. 48). Accordingly, it was reasonable to emphasize the necessity of teaching spoken college English (Yang, 1999: pp. 48-57; Wen, 1999: pp. 1-4; Zhao, 2000: pp. 59-61). The survey conducted by Zhang et al. (2017: pp. 18-26) found that there was a serious lack of adequate opportunities for students to practice

speaking. Again, both college and high school English learning was not irrelevant to real-world issues, which didn't emphasize authentic speaking practice. Therefore, the aims of learning were not achieved.

The existing research on teaching spoken English (EFL) has indicated that the "time-consuming and laborious" methods of teaching spoken English at university are out-of-date. Teachers might actively explore a new method for teaching spoken English (EFL).

### 3. Specific Video-Based Model in the Classroom

#### 3.1. Implementing Video-Based Spoken English Instructing

The problems of spoken English (EFL) considered above are doubtless great where levels of learning outcomes are low. [Brown and Yule \(1983: p. 9\)](#) asserted that "the problems in the spoken language are going to be much more concerned with production, and with the question of how to find meaningful opportunities for individual students to practice using a rather minimum knowledge of the foreign language in a flexible and inventive manner, then with linguistic complexity." In order to teach spoken English successfully through using video, we should consider the following principles for conducting classroom tasks so as to enable learning to happen. Those are:

- 1) Video-based classroom interaction;
- 2) Video-based real-world authenticity;
- 3) Integration of teaching methods.

To repeat: in teaching spoken English classrooms, interaction (e.g., a student to a teacher) is at the heart of learning. [Ellis and Barkhuizen \(2005\)](#) viewed interaction as being the place where language learning actually occurred. Where the other two principles are successfully implemented, then the classroom becomes an ideal environment. Here, we have developed a series of activities in more detail designed to generate interactions that possibly lead to spoken English learning:

**Stage 1:** task preparation. Before class, the teacher downloads an appropriate short video on a specific topic and prints out other viewers' comments from the video, which will be distributed to students for discussion in the classroom.

[Breen \(1985: pp. 60-70\)](#) held that all daily activities, learning activities, practical needs, and interests offered the potential for authentic communication. Therefore, we have identified the following features when selecting the videos: 1) learners are familiar with the topics of the videos. 2) the topics of the videos are interesting. 3) the topics of the videos serve to advance socially valued outcomes and learners' comprehensive quality. 4) the language of the video is basically consistent with the learners' language level (where the learners are in their English learning).

**Stage 2:** classroom tasks. Firstly, students watch and understand the video together, and then students take turns making a presentation of his or her first impression and opinion of the video to the class. Secondly, students read other viewers'

comments on the video in the comments section, and explore the video by asking questions including: 1) What aspect of the video is mentioned in the comments? For example, content, point of view, images, language, etc. 2) What aspect of the communicative function of speech is mentioned in comments? For example, evaluating, criticizing, giving additional information, and so on. Finally, students draft comments on the video where the teacher should provide guidance on the use of language.

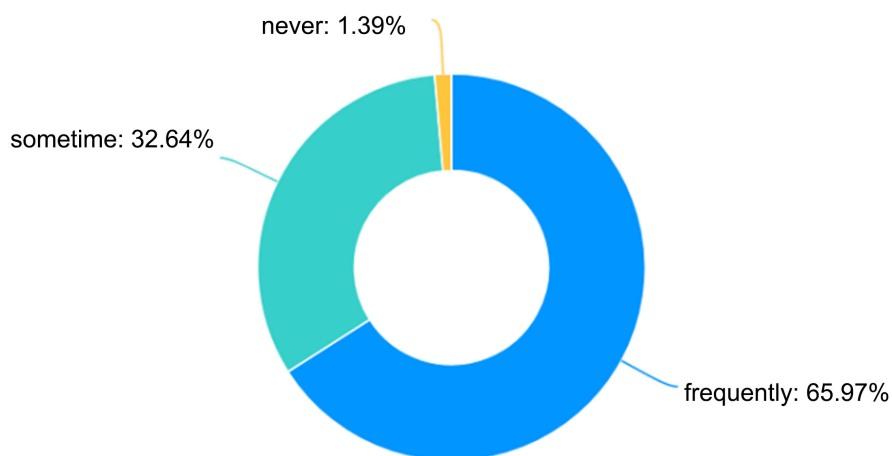
**Stage 3:** extended tasks. After students who hold similar views on the video discuss and improve their comments on the video in small groups, they will post their revised comments on a social medium platform. We can imagine the impact of such a social medium platform, further comments from viewers might bring about very significant gains in language learning and personal development, consisting of attitudes, dispositions, autonomy, confidence, and critical thinking, which prepare students for present and future real-world life. “The world in which learning is rewarded, it provides extrinsic motivation, incentives, needs and opportunities, self-realization, and so on” (Jones & Saville, 2019).

### 3.2. Findings

The video-based teaching spoken English model can provide learners with an excellent model for intensive language learning. In 2020, we conducted questionnaire surveys on 144 undergraduate students from the classes of 2019 who were not majoring in English, and 144 valid responses were received. After we used the video-based model to teach spoken English from September 2020 through September 2021, we found that the students gained a lot in spoken English by using short video clips in the classroom. The students felt they had improved their spoken English proficiency. Our questionnaires found that the students not only had increased their interest in English learning, but also improved their oral communication skills dramatically. Furthermore, the results of the questionnaire surveys showed that all the students gave affirmative responses to the video-based teaching. Among them, 79.86% of the students claimed that the short video teaching method greatly stimulates students' interest in English learning; 94.44% of the students asserted that the short video teaching method could enliven the classroom atmosphere; 94.44% of the students who were concerned with the language knowledge thought the video-based spoken English teaching method could make it easier for them to master the language knowledge. In terms of the students' feedback on the open-ended questions in the questionnaires, we also proved that the use of short videos played a positive role in teaching spoken English. For example, some students replied that the sentences in the books were dead, but they came alive when the learners spoke them out, so the video-based teaching models were very nice. On the other hand, the videos could attract the learners, stimulate their interest, make the classroom environment more interesting, and offer the learners the opportunity to study the British and American cultures and beyond (see the

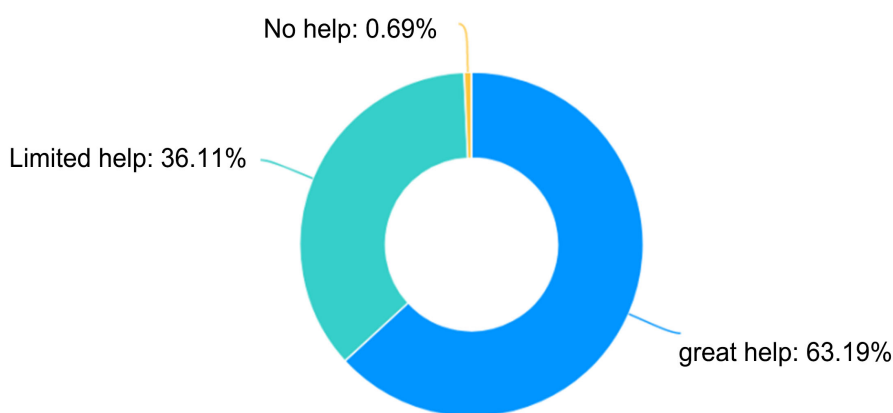
following three figures).

**Figure 1** shows how often the respondents used videos to learn college English. 65.97% of respondents used videos frequently, 32.64% of respondents sometimes used videos, and 1.39% of respondents never used videos.



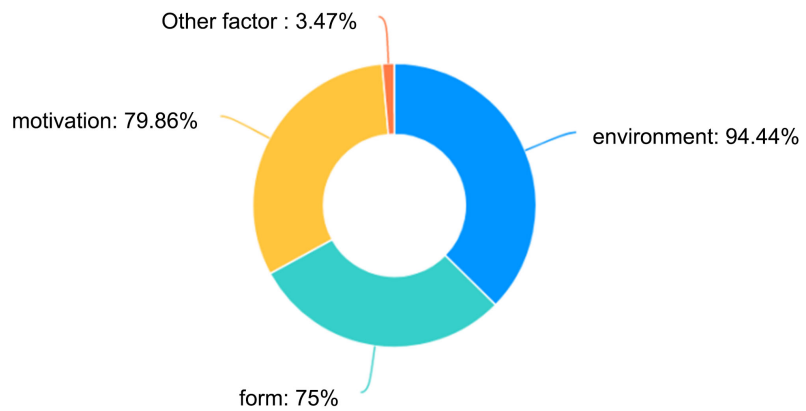
**Figure 1.** Description of how often the learners used videos to learn college English.

**Figure 2** shows how many respondents suggested that using videos to teach spoken English contributes to improving learners' speaking ability. 63.19% of respondents suggested that using videos in spoken English classrooms was a great help, 36.11% of respondents suggested that using videos was helpful in some ways, and 0.69% of respondents suggested that using videos was no help.



**Figure 2.** Description of how the learners evaluated video-based spoken English instructing.

**Figure 3** shows how using videos in the classroom contributes to improving learners' speaking ability. 94.44% of respondents suggested using videos contributed to creating an ideal environment, 75% of respondents suggested that using videos contributed to studying language forms, 79.86% of respondents suggested that using videos contributed to motivation, 3.47% of respondents suggested that using videos contributed to study English in different ways.



**Figure 3.** Description of the way the video-based model contributed to improving learners' spoken ability.

The results of our surveys were in line with Jensen et al.'s (2011: pp. 68-80) view that as a language learning model, video projects offered many opportunities for learners to create a more dynamic and interactive classroom, increase self-confidence, and become personally independent. Over the past years, our video-based model has realized the aim of achieving better speaking learning outcomes.

#### 4. Conclusion

John Dewey's approach to education was rooted in the idea that "The value of any fact or theory as bearing on human activity is, in the long run, determined by practical application—that is, by using it for accomplishing some definite purpose." (Dewey & McLellan, 1980). The video-based model highlights the importance of adapting language learning to real-world contexts. In traditional spoken English classrooms, the activity topics are usually not irrelevant to real-world situations: the teacher asks a question, then the student answers it, etc. The situation is changing as technology is increasingly adopted in teaching spoken English. The video-based model entails more diverse and authentic circumstances for spoken English learning, offering opportunities and reflections to ensure that the impact of video-based activities is a positive one. Video-based teaching model may be a new trend of teaching spoken English in the years to come.

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#### Notes

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### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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