

# Exploring student attitudes toward video-based lessons

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本論文は、英語を外国語として学ぶ（EFL）会話クラスにおいて、ビデオ教材を使った際の大学生の反応に関する研究である。日本の三つのキャンパスで行った調査をまとめ（被験者は合計88名）、さらに学生の反応度を測るため、SPSSソフトウェアを用いた因子分析を行った。その結果、ビデオ教材を用いた会話クラスでの大学生の反応について、六つの因子が明らかになった。本論文では、そのそれぞれにつき、考察を行う。

## 1. Context and research question

The research in this paper investigates views of EFL learners on the relationship of video-based lessons to the skill of speaking. During one 15-week semester, post-secondary learners in classrooms of three teachers at separate universities in Japan received instruction containing the same video-based materials. The objective of these courses was to enable students to develop their speaking skills through a focus on fluency. Primary data for the present study consist of responses to a questionnaire administered to the students at the end of the semester ( $n = 88$ ), with secondary data consisting of field notes from classroom observations. These data were analyzed to learn about student attitudes on the potential relationships between the video content and speaking skills. This present study was part of a larger project that aimed to explore the effects of video-based lessons on EFL speaking through a combination of classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student beliefs. The following question drove the quantitative study:

What are the students' views of how video-based materials contribute to the development of their speaking skills?

## 2. Classroom video

Videos in the classroom fall under a broad heading of technology for language instruction (Levy, 2012). Maley (Word Powered, 2011) suggests that using technology in the classroom is a challenge for language teachers that has not been investigated enough yet or 'integrated in a meaningful way', indicating that questions remain about the effectiveness of the current use of such tools.

In practice, video has a history in the language classroom. An abundance of writing was produced in the 1980s on video for language instruction (e.g., McGovern, 1983; Lonergan, 1984). Stempleski and Tomalin (2001) provide numerous suggestions on how teachers can design lessons incorporating video into language lessons such as comparing movie trailers, analyzing and discussing commercials, and creating short videos. Coursebooks recently released such as *World Link*, *Pathways*, and *World in Focus* all contain video as focal points. Textbooks based on television news from large broadcasting networks like *ABC World News 14* have

been in print for more than two decades (Kathleen Yamane, personal communication, March, 2013). As the Internet becomes more readily available in language classrooms, teachers are turning to online videos for lesson material. One choice to find such material is YouTube™ where currently 100 hours of video are uploaded every minute (YouTube, 2013).

With the wealth of video material available to teachers today, what kind of research has been conducted on classroom video? Although a number of studies based on classroom videos exist in the area of *computer assisted language learning* (CALL) by and large the focus of this research falls on listening (e.g., Cross, 2009; Gruba, 2006). Despite the recent proliferation of multi-media and video-based materials being adopted by language teachers (Vanderplank, 2010), it appears there is a lack of current research into video use for the teaching of speaking. The present study aims to open an inquiry into video usage for language instruction with a particular focus on the teaching of speaking in EFL classrooms.

### 3. Project overview

The administrations from all three universities involved in the study granted consent for the research. Three instructors volunteered to teach video-based lessons in their required speaking classes for university freshmen and sophomores at universities located in the Kanto and Tokai regions of Japan. One teacher used the material with two classes, so learners from a total of four classrooms participated in the study.

Teachers delivered a total of ten lessons with an activity containing a video component as a part of a unit. One unit was taught in each lesson, and consisted of three segments:

1. Dialogue reading.
2. Brainstorming on provided topics prior to a peer-to-peer speaking activity.
3. Writing notes about the video while it played as preparation to a teacher-fronted speaking activity.

The videos depicted imagery of cities and sites from around the world in a montage format that resembled Hollywood movie trailers. Because the videos were originally created for broadcast on cable television in the United States, and not for teaching *per se* the imagery can be classified as authentic material (Gilmore, 2007). What makes the videos unique for language teaching is that the montages were set to instrumental music and contained no dialogue. In this type of instructional approach, value falls on students' ability to interpret the media (Warschauer, 2007). These *wordless videos* (WV) averaged approximately 5 minutes in duration. Teachers in two of the classes played the videos once per lesson and the third teacher played them twice in each lesson. This type of lesson could also be termed a *wordless video lesson* (WVL).

For the activity containing the video, teachers asked students to write notes in English related to or inspired by what they saw in the video during playback. Learners wrote the notes while the video played. Following video playback, instructors elicited responses from students about the contents of their notes. These responses triggered further teacher-fronted discussion with the entire class thus creating a dialogue with the whole group participating. This research project sought to better understand students' views about the speaking activities in the lessons.

## 4. Methods

A questionnaire containing 23 Likert-item statements was prepared in English and translated into Japanese adhering to design concepts from multimodality (Grandon, 2013). The questionnaire was pilot tested with an independent group of learners who were also using the same wordless video material in a speaking class. The pilot revealed several issues that were repaired before the final version was sent to the teacher participants. The three teachers administered, collected, and returned the questionnaires completed by the learners at the end of the course.

## 5. Results

A total of 88 questionnaires were collected from the four groups. Data from the Likert-item responses were then analyzed in *SPSS* (ver. 19.0.0). First, a table of descriptive statistics was created for each of the 23 Likert-item statements (Appendix A). Then, inferential statistics were generated through exploratory factor analysis. A reliability scale was calculated for all 23 of the Likert-item statements yielding a Cronbach Alpha of ( $\alpha = .779$ ) indicating the instrument was reliable as a whole (Field, 2009). In addition, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test to measure sample adequacy returned a value of .724, which exceeds the required minimum of .5 (Field, 2009). All of the variables were then run through a factor analysis using maximum likelihood and rotated with the oblique method (Dörnyei, 2007). For structural validation of the factors, an additional factor analysis was calculated utilizing the alternate procedure of principle component with varimax rotation, and these numbers resembled those found in original maximum-likelihood analysis, indicating validity (Dörnyei, 2007).

For final analysis, maximum-likelihood factor analysis yielded six factors or categories comprised of 66.9% of the total variance. A Scree Plot was generated to get a visual breakdown of the data and justified retaining the six factors (Field, 2009; Kootstra, 2004). Next, specific variables comprising each factor were studied and each factor given a name corresponding to its unique characteristics. Finally, reliability analyses and correlations were run on each factor. Based on the data analysis, factors were identified as shown in Table 1, and appear according to percentage of variance.

**Table 1** *Factors Identified Using Maximum Likelihood With Oblique Rotation*

No.	Factor Name	% of Var.
1	Speaking Proficiency	27.7
2	Language-less Videos	11.0
3	Talkies	9.0
4	Stress	8.1
5	List Generation	6.4
6	Offshore	4.7

*Note:* Var. = variance.

These six factors represent areas where the data clustered together in a statistically significant way. The next section presents the details of each factor.

## 6. Analysis and discussion

Each factor was examined to flesh out the discussion and construct findings in a process where analysis overlaps with discussion backed by evidence. This process is a strategy used more often in qualitative studies (Duff, 2008; Dörnyei, 2007), and adopted here to discuss each of the six factors.

### 6.1. Speaking Proficiency factor

Factor analysis indicated that a reported improvement in speaking ability was by far the single most major component of the learner responses. Accounting for the Speaking Proficiency factor establishes significant links between a perceived increase in speaking ability, the development of the skill of organizing associated words into groups, and the amount of time that learners spoke in class. The individual components of the factor are summarized in Table 2 of this sub-section. Learners seemed to realize that when they used English they were being understood, yet they maintained a belief that English is *not easy* to use. Most learners did not recognize a change in their pronunciation even after all the practice of making themselves understood in class. This lack of recognition may be due to the fact that learners were not given explicit pronunciation activities or perhaps there was no real change in their pronunciation. Also, cultural elements may have some effect here where the learners may be too shy to admit to being good at English (Harumi, 2011). Thus, learners believe their overall speaking proficiency improved, but do not feel speaking is an easy task.

**Table 2** *Items that Comprise the Speaking Proficiency Factor*

Items
Improved explaining themselves in English
Had ample class time to work on speaking
Learned the skill to organize groups of associated words
Speaking still not easy to do
Little perceived change in pronunciation

### 6.2. Language-less Video factor

The Language-less Video factor emerged as the second-largest factor in the study. The main part of this factor details how much students liked using videos in general and the wordless videos in particular for studying language. Students recognized the multimodal aspect of the video and felt the instrumental background music aided to make the experience more engaging. Not only did learners like the videos, but also reported the WVLs on the whole were a good way to study English. Furthermore, the data suggests that learners felt that working with the wordless videos assisted them in finding their own way of explaining themselves.

### 6.3. Talkies

The Talkies factor combines the notion of a preference of WVLs over prior English lessons with the perception that WVLs were a positive experience that helped learners to practice autonomous self-expression. In addition, learners seemed to expect something more out of the videos and would have preferred to have videos with some kind of dialogue. One reason students expect a dialogue or narrative to be included in the videos could be attributed to the unorthodox nature of the wordless videos or that learners imagined studying from 'normal' videos would be less demanding as educational material and simply resemble watching TV

shows or movies.

#### 6.4. Stress factor

The Stress factor showed a significant correlation ( $r = -.347$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between students reporting that it was normally very stressful for them to speak in English in class, and that WVLS caused them very little stress. As a part of the lessons, teachers elicited responses based on lists generated during video playback. Learners seemed relieved to have been able to check their spelling against what teachers wrote on the board by themselves, which indicates that they noticed their spelling deficiencies.

Learners voiced an apprehension to speaking in general with 84% agreeing that speaking in English classes was stressful for them. However, 84% reported that WVLS did not cause them stress. The Pearson's Correlation of these two questions was measured as significant ( $r = -.347$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) indicating a potential for this feeling to be applied across the general population. Thus, one possible interpretation is that wordless video lessons may be creating a space where students feel more comfortable with speaking tasks as compared to other types of speaking lessons.

#### 6.5. List Generation factor

Students in the study appeared unfamiliar with the notion of brainstorming, a technique used in the speaking activity prior to video playback, but one that nevertheless warrants discussion. As shown in Figure 1, the questionnaire revealed that 75% of the students had never done brainstorming prior to taking this course. Of those who had tried brainstorming, just over half had done it less than three times in their entire lives. In other words, 88% of the learners had done brainstorming no more than three times. Not a single individual had done it in excess of ten times.

Once students learned brainstorming they appeared to like it and seemed to recognize value in the process with 92% agreeing that brainstorming was a useful activity for learning language and 76% agreeing that these lessons enlarged their vocabulary. The List Generation factor indicated this relationship to be a significant one with Pearson's Correlation measuring at the level of  $r = .669$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . These data indicate learners believe a link exists between list creation and enhancement of their vocabulary. Such a link may tie into the area of meaning-focused output (Nation & Chung, 2009), which is regarded as an effective way to learn vocabulary.

Figure 1. Brainstorming Experience of the Learners

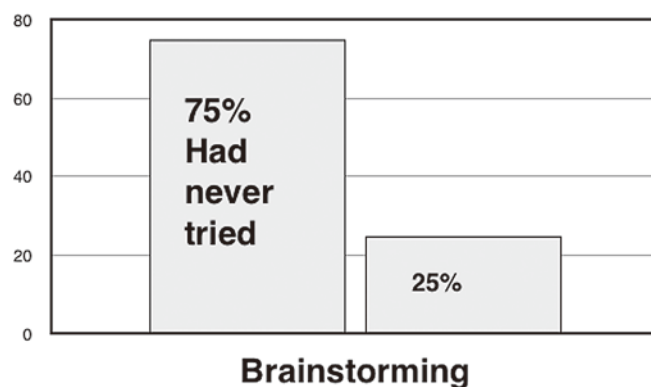


Figure 1. A high percentage of learners reported no experience with brainstorming before taking the course in this study.

## 6.6. Offshore factor

The Offshore factor reveals significant correlations ( $r = .402$ ,  $r = .306$ ,  $r = .302$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between the development of the skill of organizing words into associated groups with learning about world cultures and the reporting of a desire to travel abroad. To offer one possible explanation, perhaps the process of writing lists of thoughts about video imagery leads to a deeper level of reflection about the material on the screen, which fosters a greater sense of curiosity about the world. Widdowson (1978) states, “If he [a learner] can be shown, however, that the foreign language can be used to deal with topics which he is concerned with [ . . . ] then he is likely to be aware of its practical relevance as a means of communication.” In the Offshore factor, learners may be hinting at an awareness of the practical nature of learning English for use in real-life situations while traveling abroad.

## 7. Conclusion

This present study represents an exploration into student beliefs on the classroom use of video for speaking lessons. In synthesizing the factors together, a picture emerges to show that students self-reported largely positive attitudes toward developing speaking skills with the unusual video format. The wordless videos seemed to aid in creating a supportive environment for language study while exposing learners to elements of world culture. In addition, the video-based lessons appeared to influence a self-perceived enhancement in speaking ability coupled with a wider worldview. At the same time, learners seemed to expect language input from the videos, and speaking remained a struggle for the participants.

From a practical standpoint, this small-scale project identifies several points for EFL teachers to consider in light of developing learners' speaking skills. First, learners in the study seem to be unaware of brainstorming. While it remains difficult to generalize, the students at three universities agreed that they had almost no experience with the technique. Speaking activities in many textbooks make the assumption that brainstorming is second nature to learners. Teachers could spend time insuring that learners understand this task better. Secondly, learners welcome video into the classroom. Designing lessons or choosing textbooks that include video could promote more interest in EFL classes, and has potential to raise learners' awareness of English as a tool for communication. Third, speaking activities related to video may help students alleviate some of the discomfort often associated with speaking tasks. Further investigation of the wordless-video format is required before more definitive conclusions can be reached.

Each of the factors uncovered in the data emerge as potential areas for a more fine-grained examination. Classroom research comparing data from video-based classrooms to those without video would be of interest. However, with the maturation of video for the language classroom and the ubiquity of media today in teaching materials, a more beneficial research paradigm would investigate how varieties of video genres affect speaking lessons, which agrees with other researchers studying video-based material (e.g., Herron, York, Corrie & Cole, 2006). Such research would contain valuable insights for both classroom teaching and online learning. Finally, to better understand how videos relate to classroom speaking activities, a qualitative design including audio or video recordings of classroom discourse could paint a more accurate picture of any influence of video on interaction.

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**Appendix A – English version of questionnaire items with final responses in percentages**

	SA	A	TA	TD	D	SD
1. I have used videos to learn English in the past in other classes.	21.6	23.9	6.8	5.7	11.4	30.6
2. I think watching videos is a useful activity for language learners.	21.6	47.7	22.7	5.7	0	2.3
3. I noticed a difference in the way the wordless video lessons were taught compared to language classes I have previously taken.	24.1	39.1	16.1	13.9	5.7	1.1
4. I preferred other language classes I have previously taken to wordless video classes.	2.3	11.5	12.6	48.3	17.2	8.1
5. I enjoy watching wordless videos in class.	28.7	36.8	27.6	4.7	1.1	1.1
6. I think using wordless video is a good way of learning English.	17.2	35.6	37.9	5.9	3.4	0
7. The music in the wordless videos made them more interesting to watch.	18.2	15.9	26.1	31.8	5.7	2.3
8. I would have preferred to watch videos for language learning that contained dialogue.	9.1	18.2	37.5	27.2	5.7	2.3
9. I would have preferred to watch real TV news programs to learn English.	5.7	13.6	28.4	39.8	6.8	5.7
10. Watching videos without language and dialogue was a good experience for me and let me find my own way to talk about them.	6.8	14.8	33	31.8	12.5	1.1
11. It is normally difficult or stressful for me to speak in English in class.	26.4	26.4	31.1	8.1	3.4	4.6
12. The wordless video lessons helped make it easier for me to speak in English.	0	8.1	35.2	42	10.2	4.5
13. Using the wordless video lessons caused me stress.	1.1	3.4	11.4	31.8	25	27.3
14. I would have liked the lessons to include different kinds of activities after watching the videos.	1.1	9.1	27.3	46.6	11.4	4.5
15. Brainstorming is a useful activity in language learning.	13.6	39.8	38.6	5.7	2.3	0
16. The wordless video lessons enlarged my vocabulary.	9.1	30.7	36.4	15.9	6.8	1.1
17. In my word lists written in class I noticed spelling mistakes after the teacher wrote the words on the chalkboard.	25.4	21.8	18.4	26.4	4.6	3.4
18. I'm better at explaining myself in English after taking wordless video lessons.	3.4	9.1	47.7	31.8	5.7	2.3
19. Wordless video lessons helped me to improve my English pronunciation.	1.1	8.1	31.7	45.5	9.1	4.5
20. I developed a skill of organizing words into associated groups.	4.7	24.7	35.3	24.7	8.2	2.4
21. During the wordless video lessons, I was given more time to speak English than in classes I have previously taken.	5.7	19.3	38.6	29.6	5.7	1.1
22. I learned about cultures of the world from the wordless video lessons.	20.5	48.9	29.5	1.1	0	0
23. I am more interested in visiting a foreign country after watching the wordless videos.	43.2	34.1	14.8	4.5	2.3	1.1

SA=Strongly agree, A=Agree, TA=Tend to agree, TD=Tend to disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly disagree

1. Had you ever done brainstorming before this class?    Yes = 25%    No = 75%

2. If yes to number 1 above, how many times had you ever done brainstorming ?

A. 1-3 times = 13%    B. 4-10 times = 12%    C. 10-20 times = 0%    D. 20+ times = 0%