

IMPACT OF VIDEO BASED INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC THROUGH MULTIMEDIA FOR AN ENHANCED LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN READING AND VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN EFL CLASSROOMS

A Case Study of Tertiary Students of Dhofar University, Salalah (Oman)

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Abstract: No one can argue that music is one of the most favored art form that permeates every human society today. It humors everyone. Foreign-language teachers should reflect about effectual modern ways to produce better foreign-language teaching or learning milieus that are supported by music. This study focuses on how video based music can play an important role in achieving a higher degree of concentration, interest and motivation of EFL students particularly in the acquisition of reading and vocabulary skills. What effects does the use of music have on the students entering the class and how it helps making the learning process enjoyable as far as acquisition of vocabulary is concerned. For this justification, a questionnaire was given to a group of tertiary students at Dhofar University, Salalah. It was established that the synthesis of music with the reading and vocabulary acquisition was a dynamic, motivating and mesmerizing factor in EFL classrooms, leading to certain cardinal suggestions focusing on the achievement of learning objectives.

Keywords: music, motivation, EFL activities, learning, teaching.

Introduction: This research paper argues for the effectiveness of the use of video based instrumental music for boosting the absorption and intensification of students' focus particularly at the time of introducing and revising the vocabulary already taught or to be taught in context through multimedia. Multimedia creates a fused and diversified sensory experience presenting the material through text, images, graphics, audio and video. It has been established that a mixture of words and pictures always integrates a large amount of information (Mayor, 2001:55). To this pedagogical framework if a tinge of music is added, it makes the students learn best. Music can set a mood. Students are at the best when they are cheerful, good tempered, cordial, relaxed and calm. "I would teach children music, physics and philosophy, but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning."-Plato. Billions of music loving teenagers and young adults can be seen all around using personal audio devices. This is because that music is deep embedded in our soul. Every child that comes into this world is born with a feel for music. A mother can make a crying child smile by just clapping or snapping her fingers or by just making any musical sound. It may even be a whistling. "I was born with music inside me. Music was one of my parts. Like my ribs, my kidneys, my liver, my heart. Like my blood. It was a force already within me when I arrived on the scene. It was necessity for me -like food or water (Ray Charles). This inborn stuff with which a human personality is shaped has been evoked in the language learning process. Music is used in military to motivate and inculcate a sense of discipline. In a musical band, it was discovered to have sense of harmony, cohesion

and togetherness. All these attributes of music were utilized in an EFL classroom and the results were studied leading to certain pivotal suggestions.

Literature Review: Researchers like Philip F. Schewe (2009) suggests music improves brain function. Renate Nummela Caine and Geoffrey Caine (1990) identified 12 current brain -based principals that explain how thoughts, emotions, imagination and predispositions operate concurrently. Meaningful learning requires "relaxed alertness, immersion and active processing."

(Caine & Caine, 1990). Here what they mean by music is the use of songs that rhyme together created for the children and not something for the adult learners. Hans Mol (2009) highlights the importance of songs and suggests that "Songs are a part of daily life for most people. Language teachers can use songs to open or close their lesson." A song offers students a possibility to minimize the facts into parts yet work it as a complete unit. But this scenario cannot be played out the same at the tertiary level as with older learners the situation that crops up is more demanding and requires a more engaging language design. The state that reigns with adult learners is quite different from that of young children. Further the dominating prevalence of exams and the spirit of competition that inhibits the real life situation make the language learning process more stressful. Peer pressure is another negative aspect as the learners at the tertiary level may feel unconfident to use the language fearing that they may be wrong. They are often embarrassed by their lack of vocabulary of the language and may develop a sense of inadequacy

Francis H. Rausher (2003) explored the relationship between spatial / temporal skills and music with high risk preschoolers and concludes: "learning with music

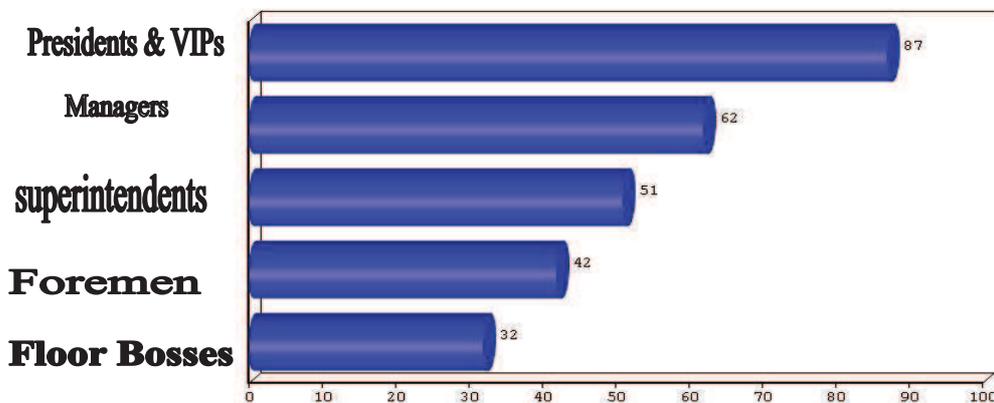
is important development activities that may help at-risk children compete academically on a more equal basis with their peers". But this research paper purports to present a different approach for improving the vocabulary level of adult learners through video based music particularly of Dhofar region while presenting and reinforcing the vocabulary already discussed in context. Here the students think learning English is not a necessity of the day but a subject which is a university requirement. They come to the class because a certain percentage of attendance is mandatory. They announce to the teachers that the lecture time is finished which is suggestive of their mood how serious they are. The said study was prompted by such factors and a solution was found out in presenting the vocabulary mixed with video based instrumental music. Vocabulary is a key area for all the language skills. . Ludwig Wittgenstein (2011) argues' "The limit of my language is the limit of my tongue." The real problem of the DU students can be expressed in terms of their lack of vocabulary which is not even 2000-3000. "It is however very interesting to note that the most frequently used words are just about 200-3000. They are as John Sinclair says the power house of the language. The students were discovered developing aversion towards learning the new vocabulary. The result was introducing the vocabulary with something sweet to listen and something thrilling to watch. Their brain, eyes and ears were caught up and engaged. Sally Gardner (Maggot Moon, P.24) maintains, I collect words – they are sweets in the mouth of sounds.

"Teachers have three loves: love of learning, love of learners, and the love of bringing the first two loves together."- Scott Hayden. The teacher is not only a source of knowledge for the students. He also acts like an awakener. Here the word awakener is very important in the perspective of learning a second language. The students at DU come from a poor English language background at the time of joining the university. Here they discover a wide gap between the standard that they bring and the quality, level, caliber and merit demanded by their studies. Consequently, the students start hating English and express this gap by uttering a word repeatedly , difficult , difficult or help ! Help! It has often been observed that mostly DU students say it two times in order to reinforce this rift of knowledge. They develop a sort of aversion for the classes and majority of them say that they come for the sake of attendance. This is clear evidence that they have started hating English. Now at this juncture it becomes very difficult for the language teacher to arouse the interest of the students in their studies 2000-3000 words." In such a situation some soft music was tried as the students entered the class in

order to humor them. L.C. Edwards/K.M. Bayless/M.E. Ramsey (2010) and Cindy Zhan (2008) have stressed the importance of music in classrooms. Teachers at the tertiary level could also embrace similar practice to make the teaching and learning process more effective in an entertaining, engaging and fruitful way. Spolsky (1989) speaks about conditions that are essential for language learning. If these conditions prevail language learning would be very effective and successful. Oxford (1990) suggests memory strategies to aid learning like applying images and sounds. Groot (2000) avers that "the natural word acquisition process consists of gradual acquisition through repeated exposures and this reinforcement was tried with music.

Objectives of the study: During the tenure of my teaching, particularly in the Dhofar region t, I discovered that the most of the students were afraid of writing. In the Middle East, writing is one of the most talked about skills and the funniest part of this aspect is that most of the students at the tertiary level can't write a paragraph of hundred words correctly, although they have gone through an intensive course on writing. The reason behind this is that they are taught the structure of paragraph or essay comprising thesis statement, topic sentence; supporting sentence etc. Structure and vocabulary are not given their due. The students are left on own and they start hating English and ultimately English starts hating them. They develop a gap between themselves and the language, and the teaching faculty keeps lamenting the poor academic state of the students. This paper doesn't argue the causes of their poor academic state but it suggest the ways with which we can make our students fall in love with English and when they start loving English, and English starts loving them. Therefore a new experiment was made to make the students attract towards learning new words encountered in the learning process of their text books. The purpose of this research was to find out a situation where the students of DU don't take vocabulary as a strenuous and boring task. When we talk of vocabulary we talk of ideas, notions and concepts that each word represents. When the opportunity comes to express those ideas we fumble for words, if there is a sufficient stock of words available with the speakers, he gives the impression of a fluent speakers or he/she starts stammering thus giving an impression of a mediocre personality. "Actions speak louder than words." Do you agree? Sure, but sometimes words speak louder than anything else."(Vocabulary, Spelling City .Com). It is really very shocking when a person looks very sophisticated, courteous, well educated and dignified but when he opens his mouth, he leaves the others' mouths open in aghast. The researcher Johnson O' Connor, well reputed for his famous

studies about the effect of vocabulary observes, “A person’s vocabulary level is the best single predictor of occupational success.” He demonstrated this with the following bar chart.



The present research also tries to show the impact of extra efforts done on vocabulary rather than on writing or any other skills. The researcher establishes the fact that if the students have adequate amount of words with them, they feel themselves in a comfortable zone in terms of other skills. In the present research the contextual vocabulary which was already exposed to the students was mixed with a musical based video in order to make the learning an enjoyable experience

Research Methodology (Instrument development): The instrument used in this study is that of survey through the means of questionnaire to analyze the learner’s the attitude towards the musical video based presentation of vocabulary at the tertiary level. The instruments deployed for data collection included observation, interviews and questionnaires. The results were discussed and some effects were

spotlighted. Two units of the textbook were taught in two different sections using video based music to reinforce the vocabulary and two units without the video based music. The questionnaire was circulated in order to know the difference. It was further tested by giving a vocabulary exercise. The results were observed and graphically presented to have a quick view of the study. To offer a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of the two practices, that is one group with the use of music and the other without the use of music, the study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The level of vocabulary knowledge for a particular unit was first assessed through an exercise and later ascertained after the targeted technology.

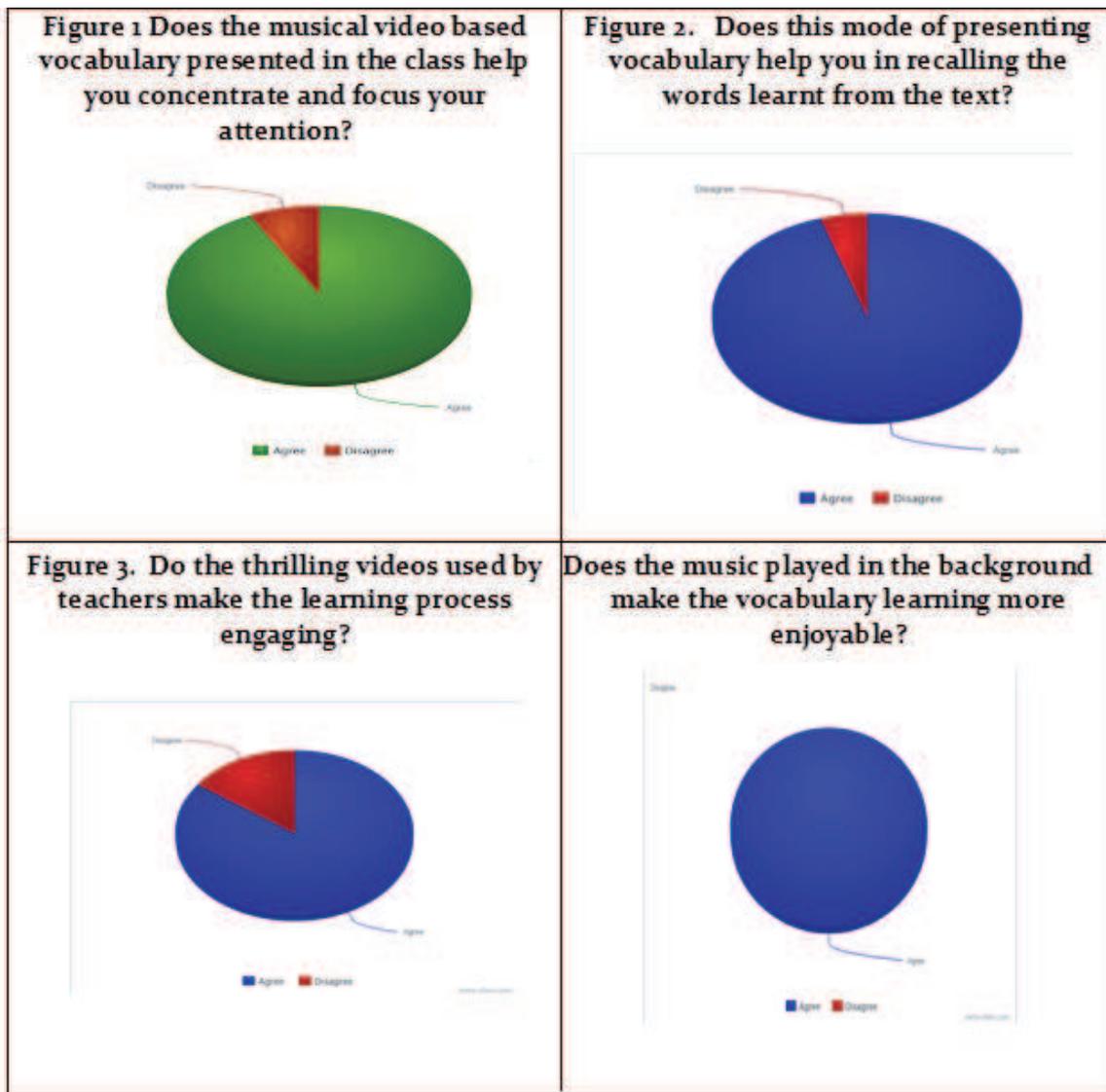
The following questionnaire was used for obtaining the students’ responses:

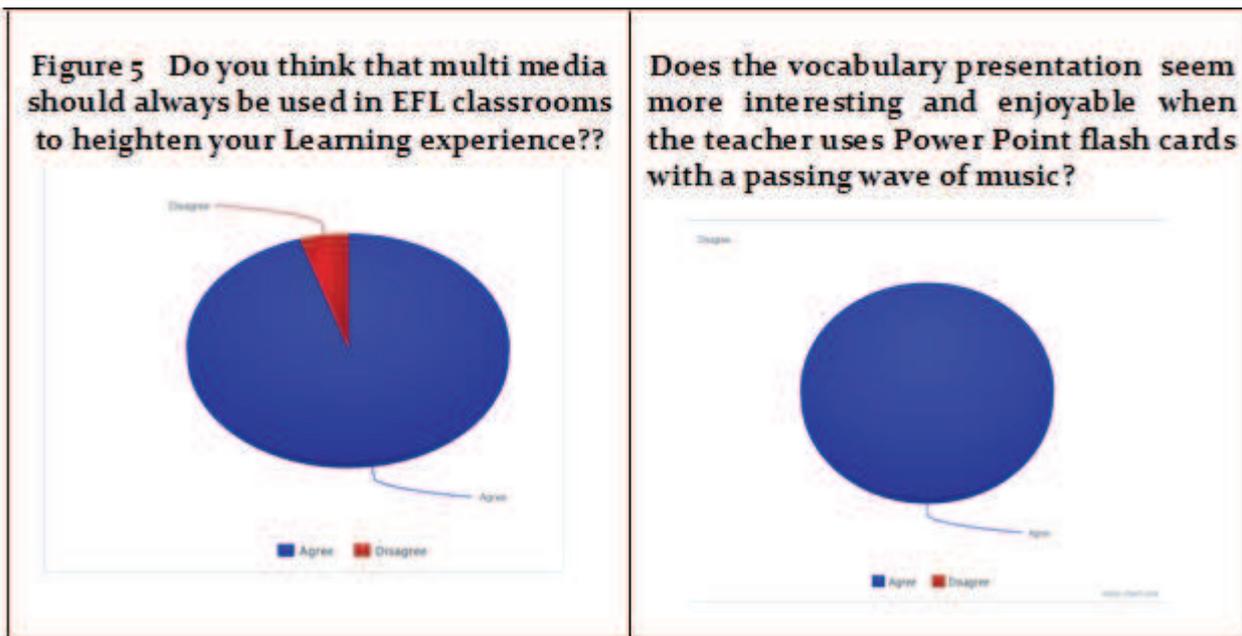
1. Does the musical video based vocabulary presented in the class help you concentrate and focus your attention?	Agree	Disagree
2. Does this mode of presenting vocabulary help you in recalling the words learnt from the text?		
3. Do the thrilling videos used by teachers make the learning process engaging?		
4. Does the music played in the background make the vocabulary learning more enjoyable?		
5. Do you think that multi media should always be used in EFL classrooms to heighten your Learning experience?		

6. Does the vocabulary presentation seem more interesting and enjoyable when the teacher uses Power Point flash cards with a passing wave of music?		
7. Does musical Video based presentation of vocabulary every time make lessons interesting?		
8. Do you think that such musical videos, films, and CDs can be supportive for advancing EFL SKILLS?		
9. Do you think the vocabulary should be presented using video, sound and music?		
10. Do you think that video based lessons are more pleasant and effective than conventional lessons?		

Your Comments

Results





Analysis and Results: This present study spotlights some crucial considerations that show the ineffectiveness of teaching and learning of the vocabulary under present pedagogical practices particularly at DU. In Dhofar region where the vocabulary is supposed to be a matter of cramming only. Therefore, the communication skills of students are not high. This gives rise to the practice of mechanical or habitual learning and a tendency to copy and paste paragraphs from internet or from the scripts of some good students. This all happens because the students don't pay much attention to vocabulary learning and the vocabulary presented in the class is boring and traditional .

Innovation and cognitive development is thus lost in this kind of situation. The role of teacher in solving students' vocabulary problems and his or her own ability to deal with the deficiencies displayed by students seems to be restricted. The students can't express their academic problems to their advisors and teachers. Sometimes the teacher has to resort to some peer translator for an effective communication. This is all due to the lack of interest and an utter deficiency on the part of students in learning new words.

It is also perceptible that there is much to be required as far as the reading habits of DU students are concerned. Most of the respondents were discovered wanting in the culture of reading words from the basic prescribed text. It is also established that this lack of culture of reading words reflects not only language difficulties but also disconnects teaching and learning that arises from a number of factors. The students do not feel motivated enough to engage with the vocabulary that is being presented. Elements of drilling the words through the video based music

are missing in the syllabi which appear distant and a far flung idea.

It is deduced on the basis of the above reasoning, survey; questionnaire coupled with students' responses in personal interviews that reading and vocabulary learning is an uphill task for the tertiary level students of Dhofar University. They dislike this activity in class as well as at home.

It was also observed that such disinclination results into poor reading with a lot of stammering.

Poor reading or faulty reading tendencies lead to wrong pronunciation which ultimately results into wrong spelling in writing.

The atmosphere of the class should be tuned to humor students through music as they enter the class. The lesson should always be started with the revision of vocabulary through flash cards with a passing wave of music. The repetition of vocabulary taught in the previous class should be made enjoyable through thrilling Videos supported by sonorous music. This helps in capturing the students' whole body which is a primary concern in achieving a higher degree of concentration. When the students are exposed to the same set of words with a musical sight and sound tinge till the duration of the lesson which might run to a two to three classes in an engaging way the words get deeply embedded in their long term memory. This automatically leads to an overall improvement in all their language skills. The students don't get disinterested and fatigued out of learning process. The student community enters classes smilingly and leaves the classes cheerfully with high degree of a sense of achievement. The teachers can well read their faces which exhort him to prepare his lesson for the next class with more of such a variety

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