



Grein birt 31. desember 2010



[Myndskeið](#) sem sýnir nemendur
vinna með myndbandagerð í tíma á vegum DIVIS.

Michael Dal

Digital video production and task based language learning

The purpose of this article is to discuss how new digital video technology can be integrated in foreign language learning today. New forms of literacies have emerged through the impact of new technology, and one of the main challenges for schoolwork today is to offer students new learning opportunities to help them to develop twenty-first-century skills. Today, digital (video) technology makes it easier to let students work with their own video productions, which has immediate implications for classroom practices, as students feel the need to learn with technology in a context in which the construction of content, media, and language knowledge becomes more meaningful. At the end of the article there is a discussion on how digital video streaming can be activated and integrated into foreign language learning within the framework of task based language learning.

The author is an assistant professor at the School of Education at the University of Iceland.

Stafræn myndbandagerð og tjáskiptaverkefni í tungumálanámi

Í greininni er fjallað um myndbandagerð nemenda og hvernig má lita á þá vinnu sem tjáskiptaverkefni í tungumálanámi. Viðfangsefni greinarinnar er þrjúþætt. Í fyrsta lagi er fjallað um einkenni myndbandstextans og nauðsyn þess að markmálið er sýnilegt í kennslu erlendra tungumála. Einnig er gerð grein fyrir nauðsyn þess að virka nemendur til að tala markmálið í kennslustofunni. Í öðru lagi er leitast við að fjalla um einkenni myndbandagerðar í tungumálakennslu. Myndbandagerð nemenda er lýst sem þrautarlausnarnámi þar sem nemendur vinna bæði með tungumálið, myndefnið og tæknina. Að lokum er leitast við að tengja vinnuferlið í gerð myndabanda við verkefnamiðað nám (e. taskbased learning). Lýst er hvað þarf að hafa í huga við ílag (e. pre-task), gagnvirk tjáskiptin (e. during the task) og frálag (e. post-task). Að lokum er gerð grein fyrir mismunandi verkefnategundum.

Introduction

Nowadays children are brought up in an on-line society where the use of new technology has become an integral part of everyday life. In the teaching environment new emergent technology plays a much greater role than before and students are literate in ways that differ from earlier generations. Reading and writing skills today demand a new dimension as children are *digital natives* (Prensky & Gee, 2006; Prensky & Heppell, 2008) and therefore ready and capable of dealing with multimodal texts that require non-sequential processing. The notion and definition of 'a text' has been changing and nowadays it refers to much more than words on a piece of paper. New forms of multimodal and digital texts, including hyperlinked texts and multimedia, have become a part of everyday life for all generations. New forms of literacies have developed as well as discourses on multiple literacies, and these have, among other things, made their way to the classroom. When talking about 'new literacies' one often refers to new forms of literacy made possible by digital technology, but they do not necessarily have to involve digital technologies to be recognized as such. Normally the notion refers to practices such as instant messaging, participation in online social networking such as Facebook, podcasting, blogging, online discussions, e-mailing, the use of SMS, digital storytelling and so on and so forth (Alvermann, 2002; Gee, 2007). These forms of communication should also be visible in the classroom and one of the main goals of schoolwork today should be to offer students new learning opportunities to help them developing 'twenty-first-century skills' (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006). Examples of these skills include critical thinking, creativity, innovation, communication skills, collaboration, contextual learning, information and media literacy. However, these skills can only be developed if multimedia technologies are used with awareness in the classroom setting. Therefore, the new challenge of teachers is to meet the needs of the new generation of learners by "teaching new skills, not simply teaching old skills better" as put by Professor in Learning Technologies at Harvard University, Christopher J. Dede (2000).

Curricula for both primary and secondary education in many countries – Iceland included – state the importance of integrating technology in classroom practice. The argument goes, that children can only become efficient communicators if they get the opportunity to develop both linguistic and digital competences. However, it is not easy to bring this about, especially not for the teachers who understand technology as a "set of mechanistic, exterior and concrete devices that accomplish tasks and create products" (Bruce & Hogan, 1998, p.99) rather than as a tool to boost meaningful learning.

Today one of the main principles behind using technology in the classroom is that the teaching/instruction is associated with learner-centered teaching approaches which should encourage collaborative learning in one way or another. Bringing new technology into foreign language classes can thus be understood as a good way to activate students and get them to work in a collaborative manner.

Back in the mid to late 1980s language methodologists encouraged teachers to integrate video into foreign language teaching (Allan, 1985; Cooper, Lavery, & Rinvoluceri, 1991). This resulted in a great deal of resource books for teachers and video series were produced for this purpose. Looking back one must conclude that video did not gain a position as a prominent language learning tool. Instead of using video as a stimulus to generate genuine communication in the classroom, video was more used as tool for passive learning. In the following section it will be discussed how media education can be used as an active tool in language classes and how it should be embedded in a more general approach to language learning. The description is based on and refers to a study conducted within the framework of a European project – DIVIS (Digital Video Streaming and multilin-

gualism). The study aims to explore how digital video devices and current approaches to video production can serve as tools for language learning.

From viewing to producing video

One of the things that foreign language teachers and language methodologists agree on is that video, opposed to written or audio texts, offers the viewer a more authentic representation of the reality. Compared to audio or written texts the language learner has a unique opportunity to observe interaction in an authentic context. Video shows different gestures, gazes, discourse modes, registers and, paralinguistic cues that help the learner to grasp the meaning of the text. The video text can also be a tool for learners to witness different communicative situations and help them to transcend physical boundaries, making it possible for them to hear/watch the use of another language outside the classroom (Cogill, 1999). However, this kind of viewing has in most cases been regarded as an opportunity to design exercises such as multiple choice assignments, pairing pictures, and sentences and putting forward questions that students are asked to answer, just like they would have done in typical reading or listening comprehension activities based on written/ audio texts. These kinds of activities must be regarded as 'passive' because they do not generate genuine communication in the classroom. This way of using video was partly due to the limited controllability of analogue videos. The frequent use of the forward and rewind button which is necessary when watching a video in foreign language classes was time consuming and far from motivating for both teachers and students.

Through the years video has been used as a tool for analyzing learners' errors. Students are video-recorded in order to analyze and correct their errors. This is typically done by self-, peer-, or teacher corrections. This kind of activity focuses mostly on the form and structure of the target language and less on meaning. Some teachers have also worked with different kinds of video dramatizations. In these cases the main obstacles have been of a technical nature because video recording, editing and publishing were, until recently, jobs done predominantly by media professionals (Buckingham, Harvey, & Sefton-Green, 1999).

Today video digital technology has made it much easier to produce and edit video in a classroom setting. First of all it is accessible and it is a low-cost activity, because much of the technology already exists as part of the students' mobile phones and iPods, and on the internet one can download powerful editing software for free. Video cameras are now more affordable and are often a part of the technological infrastructure of the schools invested in beforehand. Digital technology simplifies the production process and helps students to find an audience for their productions, e.g. YouTube and/or Vimeo, thus, it is also easier to create multimodal texts. A very important thing is that digital videos, as compared to analogue videos, are easier to control and there is a broad selection of available tools that allow teachers to plan new types of tasks, see as will be elaborated upon below.

However, watching a video can be as boring and pointless as reading a text if students are asked only to complete assignments after the viewing/reading. Learning is only meaningful if the viewing/reading task has a real purpose. Watching a video can be successfully integrated into a video production project, which creates a meaningful context in which students become media producers instead of just being consumers of media (Hobbs, 2005). This has immediate implications for classroom practices, as students feel the need to 'learn from technology' (Reeves, 1998, p. 10) in a context in which the construction of content, media, and language knowledge becomes meaningful.

Language as an activity

Today most language teachers aim to apply a communicative approach to their teaching by making communicative competence the goal of their teaching and by acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication. In other words, foreign language teaching today makes the point that language is an activity and that this activity should be visible in foreign language classes (Long & Doughty, 2009).

This point is also supported by the results of a survey from 2008 conducted by the DIVIS team among 450 foreign language teachers in 10 European countries. The research was a quantitative, volunteer based, and descriptive research. The aim was among other things, to find out what kinds of activities foreign language teachers prioritize in their language classes and whether they claim to have some experience with letting students make video production. Almost half of the participants were teachers in upper secondary schools. One part of the questionnaire was about the participants' teaching background. The aim of this section of the survey included finding out what kinds of language activities the teachers normally design for their classes, and what kinds of activities they find to be most successful in foreign language classes (Dal, 2010).

The participants listed about 110 different activities that they interpret as being the most common or the most successful language activities. Subsequently the activities were classified into two main groups: 1) activities that could be considered to be "active or productive" and 2) activities that could be considered to be "passive or receptive". The result of this classification indicates that a great majority or almost 75 % of the participating language teachers consider "the active or productive activities" to be the most successful and that they mostly design these types of language activities for their own language classes. One can interpret this as communicative language teaching generally having a great impact on foreign language learning and that it is a common aim to get students *to use* the foreign language in the classroom, largely through communicative activities such as games, role play, and problem solving tasks. In clarifying interviews, that were later carried out over *Skype* with 25 individuals from the sample population, the participants strongly pointed out the importance of getting students to use the foreign language when learning a foreign language. Also, a majority considered video production to be a beneficial tool to support this purpose (Dal, 2008).

Video production and principles for teaching a foreign language

Letting students work with video production can be seen as a good example of a communicative activity that can involve e.g. different problem-solving tasks and role playing. Also, it provides a setting for using the target language in an 'authentic' and meaningful way. Often the target language is not visible in the students' surroundings and the only place they hear and have the opportunity to speak and use the language is in the classroom. Today, however, this may not apply as much to English as to other languages, because it has become the 'Lingua Franca' of the Western World and is therefore a visible language in all modern media. But when it comes to learning languages such as German, French, Spanish, the Nordic languages, and other languages as foreign languages, the target language may be "hidden" and not very accessible for the student. Therefore it is often extremely important to establish a visible and authentic setting for the use of the foreign language in the classroom. Letting students work with video production is one of the ways of honouring this principle (Burger, 2001).

Another main principle for modern language teaching is that students should be given an opportunity to learn to express their ideas and opinions. When working with video pro-

duction students will usually be given this opportunity either by using a script for the video production, or if more advanced learners are involved there is also the opportunity to let the students improvise and use the target language themselves. Also, in video production the language learner is given a choice not only about what to say, but also how to say it and how to present a point of view. This is an important approach for teaching a foreign language and can be applied to all communication (Long & Doughty, 2009).

Video production can, in other words, be a powerful tool for the teacher to make the students' usage of the foreign language visible in the classroom. This doesn't imply, however, that the outcome of the students' efforts is without errors. In fact, there is great probability that the finished product will be full of language errors that may occasionally make it a bit difficult for the viewers to fully understand the message of the final product. Today, though, errors are tolerated and in fact are seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills in a foreign language. The general point of view is that students should learn from their mistakes in order to be able to develop their inter-language – that is, the language the learners have within themselves and is neither their mother tongue nor the target language, but a third language with its own grammar and lexicon (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 2004).

Making a video can also be an activity that stimulates communicative interaction between the students and thus encourages cooperation among students in foreign language classes. In that way language learning is not only a matter of the individual but also a matter of the group. In other words, when working with a video production a student contributes to a joint group work and is therefore responsible to the group and not only himself.

Video production as a part of content-based instruction

Using video production in language classes can be understood as content-based instruction. The special contribution of content-based instruction is that it links the learning of a language with the learning of some other content, in our context "how to make a video production". From this point of view, it is important that all manuals and other materials about video making should be available in the target language, so that students have to read the instructions on video making in the target language.

Furthermore, language activities should always be understood as a process that students have to go through. One cannot expect a student to go out and use a foreign language in various situations without proper preparation. If we want the students to take part in a project or theme, e.g. on music festivals or family activities, it is important to give them the necessary vocabulary and structures and a proper instructions, including preparation and rehearsals. This could include an exercise where students use practice material dealing with similar topics. Without this, students will quickly be lost and the language quality will leave a lot to be desired. Because of the necessity of introducing the students to the subject they are going to deal with, and in order to establish some continuity in their language learning activities, it has been suggested that the time should be divided into several sessions covering the various tasks and themes (Burger, 2001).

Making a video can be understood as a study task and a problem-solving activity that should be undertaken during a study session consisting of at least two or more lessons depending on the subject for the video. As such video production can be viewed as a task-based project that aims to provide learners with a natural and meaningful context for language use. As learners work to complete the video task, they have enough opportunity to interact and make decisions on how to finish the task. Such interaction should ideally be done in the target language and it is thought to facilitate language acquisition as learn-

ers have to work to understand each other and express themselves. However, making a video product can be rather complicated technically and only very advanced learners would probably be able to communicate properly about the process of video making in the target language. Therefore the quality of the foreign language and the diction must be supported (Ellis, 2003).

It is important to ensure that the use of the foreign language is present and visible in the preparatory work with the script for the planned video production. In other words, it is in this part of the students' work that one makes sure that the students' video contains a certain amount of language and that the students work with *both* language and pictures. Students tend to make videos with lots of effects and music but only with limited language, more in the vein of a music video than a dramatized or documentary video.

It is suggested that learners use a task-based learning model when working with video production. Such a model has three steps:

- Preparatory stage or pre-task.
- Doing the task or during the task
- Presentation and evaluation of the task or post-task

(Willis, 1996)

Preparatory work – pre-task

In the preparatory stage learners 1) are introduced to the equipment if they have not handled video equipment before and 2) define the subject for the video production. A video project can be created as a production involving the class as a whole. However, it can be difficult to involve a whole class in one big production. It is often better to divide the class into smaller production groups if one has the necessary equipment (e.g. access to more than one video camera and more than one computer).

The preparatory work also includes allocation of individual responsibilities for the class or for the group members. Most video productions demand some kind of research on a subject, but exactly how this research is done and what needs to be researched depends of course on what kind of video production the class or group wants to make. For example, if the class wants to make an introduction of their school for peers in another school, they probably would need to carry out research on the history of their school, gather facts on student population, faculty, etc. If they want to make a video-story based on a short story, the research involves location, the use of visuals, and producing dialogues.

An essential part of the preparatory work is developing a script for the video production. The script should be written in the target language (that is the foreign language) and it is of great importance that the whole production team is involved in the script making. For this reason alone it is a bad idea to have big production teams; a production team of 4–6 persons is preferable. To ensure that the students' script work is targeted it is a good idea to produce checklists and even tables, diagrams, and forms that can make it easier for them to outline a script. Scripts can be more or less complicated depending on the students' age and their language abilities (Kenworthy, 2006).

There are many games and techniques that can be used to help a group of students start thinking of ideas to be presented on video and develop particular themes or stories. These games or introductory activities often enable the whole group to participate in the planning of the video rather than leaving it to the more dominant or articulate members of the class. A simple one, suitable for both younger and older groups, is to play "written"

Consequences, a game in which the participants build up stories by alternating the writing. This, for example, can be done by using computers if the teacher has access to the computer room in the school. Each student or two students together start to write a story on a computer. After a few minutes (for example 10 minutes) the students circulate to the next computer and keep on writing the story that his or her peers have started. In that way ideas of storylines can be developed in a rather short time. The storylines are then presented and the class or group can choose which one or ones they like the best and which one they will choose to develop further. Alternatively, this game can be done by passing a token around in the group (such as a cup or ashtray) and whoever is holding it adds a bit to the story. The exercise should of course be done in the target language (McClellan, 2007).

Another useful game is the so-called *clapping game*. This is an effective way of reducing inhibitions in a group and starting to work on a theme. The idea is to get each person to say something in turn, and to keep the pace up by having the rest of the group clap twice between turns. The teacher could begin by going around the group saying something very trivial, e.g. asking what everyone had for breakfast and then moving on to something closer to the theme the group wants to develop. If, for example, the theme is unemployment in a group of teenagers, one can begin by having them say what jobs they wanted when they were kids. In this way real life experiences can be included to form a story. Anecdotes gained in this way can be further developed by asking two of the group members to go into the middle of the circle while others invent dialogue for them, one sentence at a time, going round the circle.

Yet another way of helping students to develop a story is the *photograph game*. Choose an image from an advert, a movie, a magazine, or a newspaper. Ask the students to reconstruct the image to resemble the original image as closely as possible. Then ask them to make up a story that explains the events leading up to the moment shown in the image or what happened next.

An important part of outlining a script is working with dialogues. For that part of the process it may be helpful if the students have been introduced to common idiomatic phrases that are useable in the particular theme, phrases that they practice using beforehand. This is where, with teenagers or learners at the intermediate level, one could also use an existing sketch or one written for the purpose, which the learners could read as a drama exercise beforehand and then extract phrases for their own creation. This would not only improve their pronunciation but also prompt more ideas for their own scripts (Slattery & Willis, 2001).

In the preparatory phase it is also necessary to decide on where and how the recording should take place. If it is not “on-location” there can be a place to collect visuals and make a “studio”. Also, decisions should be made on the division of work. This includes among other things deciding who should take care of the technical part of the recording and who should be acting in front of the camera.

When the location and the role of each group member has been decided, and the script written, it is time to record the video.

Recording – during the task

Recording procedures include some preparation. It is necessary to try out technical matters, such as the sound and adjusting the settings on the video camera.

An important part of the recording procedure is the rehearsal, where the participants try out the instructions made in the script, e.g. the dialogues and the gestures. This part of the video task is important because rehearsal and repetition can improve both the language and the production in a number of ways, for example, complexity increases, propositions are expressed more clearly, and the learners become more fluent. Some of the ideas in the script may need to be modified or changed when tried out in reality. In that case the group has to make decisions concerning this.

When the equipment and the camera have been prepared and adjusted and the participants have finished rehearsing, the recording can start. When using digital video one does not have to be very strict about cutting and editing during the recording procedure. In fact, it is possible to record as much as you want and then edit it later on. On the other hand, too much editing after the recording stage should be avoided by means of “production control” on the shooting of the material. It is a good idea to encourage learners to plan for a number of short sequences to improve the pace of the final programme. In fact, it is often sensible to plan the sequences as much as possible in detail (Ang, 2005; Hull, 2008; Towse, 2002). Shortening the editing procedure is a good idea and this can easily be done by reducing mistakes when you record. Otherwise the editing process can be very long and tedious.

When the recording is finished the students should import the material to a computer with an editing programme such as *Windows Movie Maker*. In most editing programmes material can be imported into a storyboard with a timeline where it is possible to build the movie with simple drag-and-drop functionality. It also allows editors to delete bad shots and include only the best scenes. In most editing programmes it is also possible to add still pictures into the video, as well as music and other audio materials. Effects, such as different transitions between shots and titles and credit lists can also be added to the final product.

Editing video recordings can be a very time consuming activity, for example, if there is not a script. However, the editing process can in many ways compensate for many of the problems that arise during the recording, and good editing can bring out the ‘plot’ and strengthen the narrative structure. On the other hand the editing, which always takes far longer than the filming itself, will often also take much longer than originally estimated. When editing, students also tend to have very high technical ambitions, because they often have professionally-made movies as their model. This can intentionally or unintentionally result in technically perfect video productions without very much content and speech. That is why ‘production control’ is often considered essential in order to secure a balance between content, speech, and technical features.

Editing the video requires some important decision-making. Questions will probably arise on what scenes should be included or deleted. Also, effects and the choice of music and other sound effects can be a matter of discussion within the group. However, it is important that the spoken language plays a prominent part in the video and that the final product is not drowned by too many effects (Fraser & Oram, 2003).

Due to the nature of the editing process and its technological demands – one computer per editor –, teachers may opt for editing their students’ recordings themselves. Needless to say, although this option is feasible and realistic, it is less challenging and does not contribute to the construction of knowledge nor to the development of skills on the learners’ part.

When editing is complete and the final product is ready for review it should be published in a sharable format such as avi, wma or another similar format (Goodman & McGrath, 2002).

Presentation and evaluation or post-task

The post-tasks have the pedagogic goals of providing an opportunity to present the video and to encourage reflection on how its production was performed. Furthermore the goal is to draw attention to language and linguistic forms, in particular to those forms that proved problematic to the learners when they performed the video task.

The video can be presented to the class, to peers from other classes, and can even be made public e.g. on *YouTube*. However, making a video production available on public sites involves permission from all the students involved and it is also worth considering whether a video of low quality should be made public.

The students can be asked to present a report on how they did the video and explain their choices in the production process. This kind of reflection encourages students to look critically at their own work and even gives them some tools to make better products in the future. Let's say that if there are three or four presentations in one class there is also the opportunity to let the other groups or students make an evaluation of each presentation. This can be done by making an evaluation sheet having elements such as:

- I liked the video as a whole
- The video was OK but I think it could have been a little better etc.

There could also be space for comments. The outcome of the evaluation could become the basis for further discussions on video productions.

Because the video production is part of a foreign language class it is also strongly recommended that students should be invited to focus on language and form. Making a video can be seen as a way of getting the students to use the target language in class and as a tool to develop fluency and competence on many levels. Focusing on language in the post-task stage can be one way to prevent students from developing fluency at the expense of accuracy. That is why it is meaningful at this point to focus on the students' language errors.

The question is: which aspects should be considered? The answer to this question is fairly obvious; teachers should select words, phrases, or sentences that the students use incorrectly while performing in the video or expressions and structures that they fail to use at all. In other words, teachers should address errors or gaps in students' language knowledge. Consideration also needs to be given to how many language elements a teacher should try to address. Should he focus on a single aspect and treat it intensively or deal with a number of aspects? Both approaches are warranted and depend on the age of the students, the level the students are at, and of course the subject of the video. This is also the correct time for the teacher to either expand on the vocabulary, idioms, structures, or pronunciation elements mentioned above or use reinforcement techniques, exercises or games to "make them stick". Without this, much of the gain from the creative activity risks being both very short-lived and restricted.

Types of video presentation

The description above of working with video production in the different task phases here is not specific but of a rather general nature. The aim is not to make a concise guide on

what has to be done in different phases of a video task but rather to point out some of the most important didactic and pedagogical issues when using video in foreign language classes. Exactly how each of the described phases will be formed also depends on what type of video production the students are making. If they are making a short presentation the pre-task will be quite different than if the students are making a dramatization of a short story. Below is a list of common types of video presentations, starting with the simplest one and proceeding to the more complicated.

Photo story

A photo story is a digital story made by collecting pictures, compiling them and making a coherent story out of them. A photo story can easily be made by using *PowerPoint* from Microsoft or another presentation programme. The pictures are imported into a *PowerPoint* show and the students can work further with the pictures by adding titles, text bubbles, and other features. *PowerPoint* also allows users to include narration.

Microsoft has developed a powerful tool for making photo stories, the *Photo Story 3* (Microsoft, 2009). This programme allows students to create stories and projects, via photo slideshows that include interesting transitions, motion, narration, and even music. Students can easily save the video file to a computer, CD, or Web and share it with others.

Short presentations

The learners prepare short statements on topics such as “Introducing myself”, telling others what they like/dislike, what they did during the weekend. Simple presentations should probably take about 30 seconds each. At more advanced levels the presentations can require more analytical or reflective skills, relating to articles on current affairs issues, or to the critique of a film or a book. Such presentations might last one to three minutes. When making a video it is important to stress that the learners should not read directly from prepared scripts. It is much better if they are able to speak without a script, relying only on their notes.

Discussions or interviews

Most students find it motivating to discuss or make interviews on topics relating to their own world. Even if such topics are virtually infinite the teacher should be fairly prescriptive in terms of the topic, structure, and roles in order to ensure that students spend more time discussing a topic than arguing about what topic they should select. At higher levels, such topics can be provided by their curricula in Modern Foreign languages. Depending on the time available and learners’ level, the teacher should allow time for preparation.

Role play

When using role play at lower levels, they should be based on scenes that have already been viewed or a text that has been studied. This is done to ensure that the students have sufficient vocabulary to use during the role-play. Also, there is then a sound basis in terms of the “plot” and the “characters”. The class can then be divided into groups, with each group doing the same task or with a number of different tasks being allocated.

Sketches

When working with more advanced learners, it is possible to let the learners themselves decide more about the content and its organisation. Learners can be encouraged to develop sketches, perhaps taken from television programmes. Experience shows that it usually proves necessary to scale down the more ambitious ideas because of time limits and the amount of equipment and props. However, it is a constant source of surprise how learners harness the creative potential of the medium.

Mini-documentaries

Making a documentary on the school, its neighbourhood, or local town is a very ambitious and time consuming activity. Therefore it is necessary that such an activity is relevant and meaningful for all the students. However, the preparation of short documentaries can be both a linguistically valuable and motivating exercise.

Dramatisations

Short dramatisations are a good activity for more advanced learners. These can be based on short stories or on news items. Such dramatisations can of course be done without consolidating them on video, but it seems to be more motivating for students when dramatizations are recorded. In these scenarios it is advisable to work from a task-based angle. As mentioned before, the students could also practice with “existing material” in order to boost their language skills before entering the production phase. Before the task is carried out it is necessary for the students to get familiar with the text in question. Also they should at this point decide how they can portray the content of the text using video. During the task or the production the students do the recording. Here it is important to be realistic about what can be achieved. Depending on the time available, the age, and the level of the students, group members can either develop the whole script, or they can work from notes and improvise. After the task has been finished it is also important to analyze and comment on the final product.

Other forms of recordings

Today, digital video cameras are quite easy to use and it is also easy to transfer digital video to a computer. This is often done through a USB connection. Most computers that are equipped with a *Microsoft Office* package also have the video editor installed. If not, it is possible to obtain such editing programmes over the internet for free. This makes it easy to make semi-professional on-location recordings. Such recordings are a very useful addition to a visit abroad in connection with an exchange programme, or they can even serve as a news video to be prepared about the school and the region for a partner school in another region of the country or abroad.

The active use of video has proved to be more and more successful in language classes in Europe. Most learners are motivated and enjoy producing different kinds of projects. Seen from a pedagogical point of view it is nevertheless important to be aware that the video productions made by students should not be too complicated and ambitious. In fact, a common and useful rule for all video production is as follows: the simpler, the better.

Concluding remarks

In this article it has been discussed how video productions made by students can benefit the learning of a foreign language. Tschirner (2001) argues that the use of digital videos *per se* does not necessarily contribute to language learning. This view is supported by Karppinen, who states that, “the learning outcomes depend largely on the way videos are used as part of the overall learning environment, for example, how viewing or producing videos is integrated into other learning resources and tasks” (Karppinen, 2005, p. 233). The methodology proposed here is based on task based language learning and the need to integrate language learning and media education to create meaningful and authentic learning contexts as well as facilitating the collaborative and individual process of knowledge construction. Moreover, this proposal helps ensure that learners take responsibility for their own learning through tasks that are intellectually and emotionally challenging and that are related to their lives inside and outside the language classroom.

A comparison of some of the theoretical literature and the practice of language teaching indicates that more research is needed on the effectiveness of the interplay between content, language, and media. Lastly, the regular use of digital (video) technology in today's classrooms should be accompanied by the recognition of the need to "widen the 'canon' of texts we teach to include the new media texts our children are now so familiar with" (McMillan, 2002, p. 9), along with the need to redefine what literacy entails. The term "cineliteracy" presented by the British Film Institute evokes the image that literacy and digital literacy are competences of two languages so closely bound that they should not be learnt in isolation (Parker, 2002). The approach outlined here may be a step towards a more multidisciplinary and multiple literacy way of understanding language teaching and learning in today's world.

References

- Allan, M. (1985). *Teaching English with video*. Essex: Longman.
- Alvermann, D. E. (2002). *Adolescents and literacies in a digital world*. New York: P. Lang.
- Ang, T. (2005). *Digital video Handbook*. London: Dorling Kindersley.
- Bruce, B., & Hogan, M. (1998). The disappearance of technology: Toward an ecological model of literacy. In D. Reinking, M. McKenna, L. Labbo & R. Kieffer (Eds.), *Handbook of literacy and technology* (pp. 93-112). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Buckingham, D., Harvey, I., & Sefton-Green, J. (1999). The difference is digital? Digital technology and student media production. *Convergence*(5), 10-20.
- Burger, N. C. (2001). *Focus on form in task-based instruction: an exploratory study*. København: Københavns Universitet.
- Cogill, J. (1999). The future. In S. Fawkes, S. Hurrell & N. Peacey (Eds.), *Using television and video to support learning. A handbook for teachers in special and mainstream schools*. (pp. 97-100). Glasgow: David Fulton.
- Cooper, R., Lavery, M., & Rinvoluceri, M. (1991). *Video*. Oxford: OUP.
- Dal, M. (2008). *The use of active video in foreign language education*. Reykjavik: University of Iceland - School of Education.
- Dal, M. (2010). DIVIS-survey. Retrieved May 5., 2010, from <http://mennta.hi.is/vefir/danska/divis/DIVIS%20-%20QUESTIONAIRE.pdf>
- Dede, C. (2000). Commentary: Looking to the Future. *The future of Children*, 10(2), 178-180.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fraser, P., & Oram, B. (2003). *Teaching digital video production*. London: BFI.
- Gee, J. P. (2007). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy* (Rev. and updated ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Goodman, R. M., & McGrath, P. (2002). *Editing digital video*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hartford, B., & Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2004). *Interlanguage pragmatics: exploring institutional talk*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum.
- Hobbs, R. (2005). Literacy for the information Age. In D. Lapp, J. Flood & S. B. Heath (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching literacy through the communicative and visual arts* (pp. xxix, 906 s.). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Hull, R. (2008). *The new digital video manual: an essential, up-to-date guide to the equipment, skills and techniques of digital videomaking*. London: Carlton.
- Karppinen, P. (2005). Meaningful Learning with Digital and Online Videos: Theoretical Perspectives. *AACE Journal*, 13 (3), 233-250.
- Kenworthy, C. (2006). *Digital video: production cookbook - 100 professional techniques for independent and amateur filmmakers*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly.
- Long, M. H., & Doughty, C. (2009). *The Handbook of language teaching*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- McClean, S. T. (2007). *Digital storytelling: the narrative power of visual effects in film*. Boston: Cambridge: MIT Press.
- McMillan, C. (2002). *How does digital editing help students develop their understanding of narrative?*: Bfi.org.: British Film Institute, retrieved May 2. 2010 from http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/research/teachlearn/pdf/04_mcmillan_carrie.pdf
- Microsoft. (2009). Photo Story 3. Los Angeles: Microsoft.
- Parker, D. (2002). Show us a story: An overview of recent research and resource development work at the British Film Institute. *English in Education*, 36(1), 38-44.
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2006). Results that Matter - 21st Century Skills and High School Reform. *Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.p21.org/documents/RTM2006.pdf>
- Prensky, M., & Gee, J. P. (2006). *"Don't bother me, Mom, I'm learning!" : how computer and video games are preparing your kids for twenty-first century success - and how you can help!* St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House.
- Prensky, M., & Heppell, S. (2008). *Teaching digital natives : partnering for real learning*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.
- Reeves, T. C. (1998). *The impact of media and technology in schools: A research report prepared for the Bertelsmann Foundation*. New York: Bertelsmann Foundation.
- Slattery, M., & Willis, J. (2001). *English for primary teachers : a handbook of activities and classroom language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Towse, M. (2002). *The complete guide to digital video*. London: Sanctuary.
- Tschirner, E. (2001). Language acquisition in the classroom: the role of digital video. *Computer assisted language learning*, 14(3-4), 305-319.
- Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Harlow: Longman.



Michael Dal. (2010).
Digital video production and task based language learning.
Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2010. Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands.
Sótt af <http://netla.khi.is/menntakvika2010/alm/021.pdf>