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The Effect of Using Authentic Videos on English Major Students' Prosodic Competence

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of using authentic videos on the prosodic competence of foreign language learners. It is hypothesized worldwide that authentic videos have a positive effect on the EFL learners' prosodic competence. The population of the study included 32 students majoring in English Language at Taibah University in KSA during the academic year 2011/2012. The sample consisted of two sections, a control group and an experimental one. A pretest was administered to both groups to ensure that they were homogeneous. The control group was taught prosodic aspects of language using a traditional approach while the experimental group was taught authentic videos. About four months later, a posttest was administered. To treat the raw scores statistically, T.test, One-Way ANOVA and Scheffe were used. The results of the study showed that there was much progress in the experimental group which significantly outperformed the control group in the different aspects of prosody but they did not show much progress in the prosodic aspects that are related to intonation, pause and juncture. These findings confirm the hypothesis which read videos can have a positive effect on the EFL learners' prosodic competence.

Keywords : Prosodic competence, authentic videos ,Saudi English major students as EFL learners, intonation, pronunciation, stress, pause , juncture , rhyme , prosodic aspects of language .

1. Introduction

Applied linguistic research on the teaching and learning of pronunciation has been growing steadily over the last two decades, particularly in the second half of the 1990s and up to the current decade. They are now stressing the importance of pronunciation, not just in the interest of encouraging near-native accents, but more importantly for communication. Thus, going beyond individual sounds and phonemes to sentence-level stress and intonation has become a must in language teaching (Hardisom , 2009).

Current research in the field of computer assisted language learning (CALL) focuses on a more effective integration of computer technology into the learning and teaching languages and on including the prosodic factor into the process of language learning. The main goal is, therefore, to integrate both segmental and supra segmental aspects, especially in discourse and interaction, and to suggest a complex framework for studying foreign language pronunciation. Due to its inherent complexity, lack of knowledge about adequate prosody processing both for linguistic and technological needs, as well as lack of attention to the difficulties in their acquisition, problems of intonation and other prosodic phenomena like rhythm and voice quality were ignored in language teaching for many years (Hirata , 2004). When a learner can produce individual sound segments which are very similar to those produced by the teacher, they may still sound 'wrong' due to overall voice quality. A part from these points, attention should be paid to acoustic features involved in the realization of intonation. For example, the software could (a) instruct learner's to compare the steepness of their falling or rising pitch movement to that of the native speaker, and/or (b) provide a quantitative measurement of the actual pitch slopes of both the native speaker and the learner. An effective feedback of this kind requires implementation of some kind of pitch stylization and normalization (Peter , 2002)

Accordingly, contrastive analysis is purposefully used by linguists to identify potential pronunciation difficulties of nonnative speakers of a language. The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis suggests that by contrasting the features of two languages, the difficulties that a language learner might encounter can be anticipated (Crystal, 2003). Features of many languages were catalogued by linguists, but it was not possible to systematically predict which areas of English would be difficult for speakers of particular native languages. A less predictive version of the hypothesis was eventually put forth that focused on cross-linguistic influence, which claims that prior language experiences have an impact on the way a language is learned, but these experiences do not consistently have predictive value (Brown, 2000). From this work, linguists have been able to develop lists of sounds that native speakers of particular languages may find problematic in learning English. For example, speakers of Asian languages may have difficulty producing /p/ and /r/ sounds; speakers of Spanish may have difficulty distinguishing between and producing /sh/ and /ch/ sounds. These lists for specific language backgrounds are

now featured in pronunciation texts, such as Sounds Right (Braithwaite, 2008), and pronunciation software programs, such as American Speech Sounds (Hiser & Kopecky, 2009). Teachers can also learn a great deal by observing the English learners in their classes as they communicate with each other. By noting the places where communication breaks down and determining the pronunciation features that caused miscommunication to occur, teachers can identify pronunciation features that they should focus on in class. When students are giving presentations or working together in pairs or groups, the teacher might use a checklist similar (Harison, 2004) to note when a student is not understood or when several students make the same pronunciation mistake.

Additionally, prominent language and speech specialists agree that prosody plays a crucial role incomprehensibility of speech and that prosodic training is imperative in pronunciation training. Ordinary people who know nothing of phonetics or elocution have difficulties in understanding slow speech composed of perfect sounds, while they have no difficulty in comprehending an imperfect gabble if only the accent and rhythm are natural(Bell,1916).Learners who use incorrect rhythm patterns or who do not connect words together are at best frustrating to the native-speaking listener; more seriously, if these learners use improper intonation contours, they can be perceived as abrupt, or even rude; and if the stress and rhythm patterns are too nonnative like, the speakers who produce them may not be understood at all(Celce-Murcia,1996). When students start to learn a new language, sometime is usually devoted to learning to pronounce phones that are not present in their native language. Yet, experience shows that a person with good segmental phonology who lacks correct timing and pitch will be hard to understand.

Prosodic pronunciation problems are pervasive. Different acoustic or even grammatical means are necessary to produce the same prosodic results in different languages, thus creating communication problems for non-native speakers of a language. For example, Japanese speakers of English put equal stress on each syllable, have troubles with schwa, insert vowels, have difficulty in understanding the link between stress placement and meaning, and have low flat pitch (males) (Eskenazi , 1999). More importantly, theories of discourse intonation that have emerged in by the beginning of 2000 reflect the current view that intonation provides some measure of redundancy to linguistically- coded messages, but also supplies additional cues to express the full meaning that speakers wish to communicate. Many researchers would agree that sentence prosody is determined more by communicative intentions or functions than by formal rules, as in traditional and structural or phonological approaches (Hardison , 2004) .

In most accounts, intonation is found to be multi-functional, though different theories emphasize different aspects or functions. For example, Crystal (1987) lists several functions, the most important being to signal grammatical structure, which includes marking sentence, clause, and other boundaries, and contrasting grammatical structures, such as questions and statements. Haliday (1967) focuses on a second function, how intonation reveals information structure. A third function of intonation is to communicate attitudinal or affective meaning (e.g., sarcasm, puzzlement, anger, as emphasized by O'Connor & Arnold 1961) . More recent theories have tended to focus on the discourse-level. Brazil (1978) is particularly interested in the way participants in a conversation use intonation to control interactive structure. Furthermore, intonation, stress, and general "melody" of speech are said to be among the first aspects of speech that human infants attend to, react to, and produce themselves (Abramson, 2000). It has also been shown that child learners of a second language have little difficulty in acquiring native-like pronunciation and intonation in the second language (L2) (Clarke & Luce, 2005). Intonation is thus an important aspect of language that seems to be easily, if not automatically, acquired by children in both first language (LI) and L2.

Moreover, Tarone (2005) states, "It is an undisputed fact that intonation has an important role to play in the expression of emotions and attitudes. The linguist's task, therefore, is not so much to determine whether intonation expresses a speaker's inner states or not but rather how much of this expression is indeed linguistic" and whether international features that express emotions are universal or language-specific (pp. 173-174).

More obviously to the views of many linguists, there are different degrees and consequences of transfer. Inevitably, transfer of sounds and/or intonation from LI to L2 will result in a "foreign accent," which needs not hamper understanding. More serious, though, would be problems of comprehension or misunderstandings that arise from the so-called "negative transfer." Gibson (2008, cited in Varasarin, 2009) suggested that whereas transfer at the level of the phoneme is "self-limiting", transfer at the prosodic level is more serious because it is "cumulative".

As these findings suggest, there is increasing awareness that more emphasis must be placed on supra segmental than on the segmental phonemes, or that they should at least be given equal attention. This helps learners most

closely approximate a native-like accent and, more importantly, avoid pragmatic and sociolinguistic types of misunderstandings due to transfer from LI.

However, in the cases of teaching both second and foreign languages, there are compelling reasons for advancing the current trend toward communicative proficiency. In order for language learners to become more proficient communicators, they must be taught how to use and perceive discourse intonation.

Moreover, pedagogical applications for discourse intonation in language syllabi have differed somewhat in the fields of English as a second language (ESL) and the teaching of other languages. While the ESL profession has made a notable effort in the last two decade to incorporate the teaching of supra-segmental phonemes into their materials and curricula, the foreign language (FL) community has been moving towards proficiency-oriented methodologies and meaning- and comprehension-based approaches. However, the EFL community has only recently begun to recognize intonation as an important component of linguistic and communicative competence (Gibson, 2008, cited in Varasarin, 2009). The contemporary literature on TEFL emphasizes the view that videos can be integrated into intonation instruction to provide opportunities for interactions between speakers. Pennington (1989), who advocated meaningful instruction in speaking and listening, pointed out that computers can both provide training in production and perception of speech, and create environments that facilitate interaction. Citing the work of Richards (1986), Pennington stressed the need for language learning software to move to skill-based and task-based learning activities that not only offer users practice in listening comprehension, but also elicit and practice specific types of interactions, language forms, sound contrasts, or nuances of meaning signaled by intonation. Besides providing learners with auditory and visual feedback of their intonation patterns and having them engage in dialogue with each other, technology can be integrated into intonation instruction as a research tool. Tracking tools can be built into the software, so that the software can serve simultaneously as a pedagogical tool, a data collector, and a testing instrument.

In light of the above, this study sheds light heavily on the role of authentic videos on developing the Saudi learners' prosodic competence majoring in English since language prosody develops their communicative competence and proficiency as well.

1.1 Background of the Study and Statement of the Problem

The researchers' long experience of teaching English as a foreign language has revealed that Arab learners of EFL have problems in pronunciation. They speak English with Arabic pronunciation. This might be due to the fact that FL teachers are generally taken as models. They themselves have problems in pronunciation (Al-Hamash, 1990). As a result, this defect might lead to problems in communication, because the musicality of oral messages plays a role in clarifying and deciding the exact intended meaning in speakers' mind and heart. Otherwise, a kind of misunderstanding might occur in communication, which might lead to misconception, clashes, hatred, enmity and war. Therefore, to fill the gap, EFL teachers should teach languages using native forms of language in different environments depending on electronic technology. In addition, though Arab students have had twelve years of learning English by the time they join the university, they still seem to be incapable of distinguishing between certain sounds, rhyme, and the non-segmental elements of speech, such as intonation, stress, pause, and juncture. The problem is a serious one as it frequently affects FL teaching and learning. FL specialists, especially FL curricula designers and methodologists should, therefore, think of what can best be done to improve the prosodic competence of the target groups in FL classes. For example, sophomores in the English Department may say (able) instead of (apple). In such a case, blame should not be only on the students for negligence, but also the teacher might have shared in the problem because he/she is the model for him/her. This example might lead the researcher to say that some of FL students' errors are due to as (Corder, 1983: 32) stated, "there has not been enough effort on the part of the learner or enough explanation or practice on the part of the teacher". The teacher should be aware of the difficulties his/her students face and consider.

Furthermore, learning foreign languages is not an easy task. It needs much hard work and practice, especially in the areas which are different from the student's native language. Acquiring good pronunciation depends largely on the teacher, since he/she is the one who trains the students to listen and produce the new language sounds. The bad speech habits that students acquire in elementary and high school need special attention from the FL teacher. Students in English departments study the principles of phonetics in college, but they continue to pronounce English words incorrectly and spell them in the same way they pronounce them. Therefore, the FL learners' competence should be highly taken into consideration by using videos to teach recorded models by native speakers. These assumptions led the researcher to form the study hypothesis as "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of students' prosodic competence before and after being exposed to authentic videos.

Pronunciation itself is a complex of sounds, syllables, and intonation, and each of them needs special attention because pronunciation is as important to the learner as culture, grammar, vocabulary, and the other aspects of language. The aim of this study is to enable the learner to talk intelligibly through correct pronunciation of the language.

In terms of second language acquisition, "singing" of foreigners may signal a deviation from the given norm in the target language. In the classroom, however, it is very difficult to discuss and correct unwanted musicality, on a strictly intuitive basis. Teachers and students need more tangible speech factors to work with. Consequently, the researcher tries to explore the phonetic correlates of language musicality, or "singing" in the pronunciation of second language learners with the support of authentic videos.

Additionally, this study aims at investigating the effect of authentic videos on the EFL learners 'prosodic competence by answering the following question: Do videos have an effect on the EFL learner's suprasegmental competence?

This study sheds light heavily on a very important issue in FL/SL teaching, since the mechanics of speaking are rarely considered in traditional EFL classes. Moreover, it emphasizes the role of authentic videos in the acquisition of the prosodic competence of language.

The significance of this study can be manifested in the following aspects:

- This study could be one of the few studies to be conducted about the effect of authentic videos on EFL students' prosodic competence.
- The importance of this study stems from making English language teachers, supervisors, examiners, textbooks writers and curricula designers feel conscious about the importance of authentic videos in teaching and learning a foreign language since language is an ear and a tongue.
- The study is expected to be of great use for the ministries of education in the non-native countries of English, especially for textbook writers to accompany English language textbooks with CDs that include recordings of native speakers of English as models for teaching the pronunciation of speech sounds, intonation, stress, pause, and juncture.

1.2.Question of the Study

Do authentic videos have any effect on students' prosodic competence?

1.3. The Hypothesis of the Study

The study assumed that:

1: There are no significant differences at $p \leq 0.05$ in students' prosodic competence due to the use of authentic videos .

2. Review of related literature

This section contains a brief review of some of the more important theoretical and practical studies that reflect the growing trend towards more pragmatic, discourse-oriented approaches to the acquisition of phonology, particularly the acquisition of supra segmental phonemes. Despite the increasing interest in intonation, there is relatively little applied linguistic research devoted to the teaching and learning of prosody. The second section discusses the effects of using instructional technology on the acquisition of the prosodic aspects of language.

2.1 Studies on the Importance of Prosody to Communicate Meaning

James & Leather (1987) dealt with prosodic aspect of intonation, which is a significantly larger proportion than would have been found in previous decades. The paper by Leather (1990) investigated how adult speakers of non-tonal languages (English and Dutch) perceive and learn to distinguish tonal patterns in an L2 with lexical tone (Chinese). The paper by Dechert & Raupach (1987) was concerned with the prosodic components of so-called "proceduralized speech" and suggested that the processing of L2 speech may be greatly aided by prosody. The paper by Cruz-Ferreira (1987) dealt with the perceptual processing of L2; she believed that misperceptions and misinterpretations due to defective comprehension of intonation often go unrecognized and therefore also uncorrected. The results of her experimental study of non - native prosodic competence with English and Portuguese speakers indicated that listeners use various strategies to interpret prosodic meaning.

Similarly, Lepetit (1989) found in a study of the acquisition of French intonation by native speakers of Canadian English and Japanese that cross-linguistic influence in intonation is of central importance in the learner's acquisition of the target system, and that the degree of complexity of this should not be underestimated. In his study, intonation was limited to the domain of phonosyntax, where prosodic cues are correlated with syntactic units.

In addition, Morley (1992) discussed the major influences on the changing patterns of pronunciation teaching in ESL in the U. S. and cited two main catalysts in bringing about change: (1) the urgent needs of ESL learners whose pronunciation difficulties may result in professional or social disadvantages, and (2) a number of emerging principles that seem to reflect an underlying belief system shared by many new pronunciation programs. Her list of principles included the growing trend towards communicative approaches. Recent research on discourse, both in theoretical linguistics and in second and foreign language pedagogy, has focused on describing rules for the comprehension and production of coherent verbal interaction. The contributing elements of coherent interaction are not simply the rules of grammaticality in any given language, but also include the pragmatic or functional rules that govern the use of utterances in spoken discourse.

Furthermore, Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson & Koehler (1992) found that prosodic deviance by nonnative speakers may affect comprehension more adversely than does mental deviance. A subsequent study found that when nonnative speakers of English were rated by native speakers with regard to pronunciation, deviance in prosody, and syllable structure, all showed a significant influence on pronunciation ratings, but the prosodic variable proved to have the strongest effect.

By the same token, in investigating the question of transfer and prosodic aspects, Morley (1996) looked at how intonation is perceived by second language learners and presented two types of evidence that transfer plays a role in the *perception* of Chinese tone by English speakers. The first involved how easily each of the four Mandarin tones was perceived in different positions in strings of two and three syllables. Only one of the tones, the falling tone, seemed to be affected by position. This is the only tone that is markedly similar in its acoustic properties to a common English intonation contour.

More importantly, Pennington & Ellis (2000) reported on two experimental studies of Cantonese speakers' memory for English sentences with prosodic cues and found that their memory was generally poor, both when the contrastive focus was implicit in the experimental task and when it was the explicit focus of attention. Learners' performance was improved significantly when their attention had been explicitly directed to intonation, but only for sentences in which prosody cued a marked informational focus.

Like others, O'Brien (2006) offered principles to evaluate Computer Assisted Pronunciation (CAPT) systems, and we review CAPT systems for a wide variety of languages. It focuses on three areas: basic pronunciation software, software with ASR (Automatic Speech Recognition), and software using visualization techniques .The article provides charts comparing visualization software and the kind of feedback used in different software titles. The review also compares the typical pedagogy, input, assessment techniques, and assumptions about learner autonomy for different uses of technology. This flyover view of commercial CAPT capabilities will be helpful to those who need to identify applications that may be of use for their own situations.

More importantly, Mostow & Aist (1997), after summarizing the research on the teachability of L2 phonology, concluded that physiological, psychological, and sociocultural factors are mutually reinforcing in the development of phonological competence and in the retention of a distinctive accent in adulthood. As a result, she asserts that both language learners and language teachers must accept the fact that the acquisition of phonology beyond childhood is a gradual and extended process.

In sum, the theoretical arguments for viewing language as an interactive process that potentially involves intonation - a process in which information and intent are both transmitted as well as received - were present in the research of the 1980s and into the 2010s. The logical implications were that models of both communicative competence and proficiency models should include the ability to use intonation as one of the tools in managing discourse. In the classroom, at the very least, the proficiency-oriented teacher should attempt to foster communicative language proficiency by making learners explicitly aware of the role that intonation plays in successful and coherent communication, and begin to incorporate the teaching of intonation into the second and foreign language curriculum. If, and more importantly, even before this attention to intonation is affected, one would hope that intonation would find its place in future proficiency guidelines.

As indicated in the previous literature, many studies reaffirmed the growing importance of prosody and intonation in current research into the acquisition of phonological proficiency, particularly with regard to the perception of prosodic patterns. They suggest that, for L2 learners, it is not sufficient just to be able to produce appropriate patterns; learners also need to be able to correctly decode patterns they hear.

2.2 Studies on the Effect of Authentic Videos on the Acquisition of Prosodic Aspects of Language

Richards (1986) described in general how conversationalists use prosody to initiate and sustain verbal encounters. Prosody helps listeners to hear a stream of talk and group words into clauses or utterances, as well as to distinguish meaning from qualifying phrases and parenthetical remarks. He stated his goal of investigating how intonation functions to make "social interaction more than the mere exchange of words, namely a real-time encounter between conversationalists who establish and negotiate units of talk as situated meaningful activity".

By the same token, Politzer & Weiss (1969) used experts' knowledge about systematic pronunciation errors made by L2 adult learners in order to diagnose and correct such errors. One such system is the European Community project for automated assessment and improvement of foreign language pronunciation. This system uses advanced speech processing and recognition technologies to assess pronunciation errors by French or Italian learners of English as second language, and provide immediate corrective feedback. One technique for detecting consonant errors induced by inter-language transfer was to include students' L1 pronunciations into the grammar network. For example, the grammar network also includes /t/ or /s/, that is, errors typical of non-native Italian speakers of English. This system, although quite simple in the use of ASR technology, can be, for every Italian speaker of English, effective in diagnosing and correcting known problems of L1 interference. However, it is less effective in detecting rare and more idiosyncratic pronunciation errors.

In addition, Leather & James (1991) reported that second language learners (L2) often feel more comfortable speaking to computers than in face-to-face situations. In other words, they feel more comfortable practicing pronunciation without feeling embarrassed from their errors. Moreover, when oral production is supported through the use of visual aids, students are able to practice more effectively and confidently. Additional benefits of using multimedia can be realized where a networked environment is present. Interactive multimedia over a Local Area Network (LAN) can help to promote peer support and collaboration, encourage students to produce considerably more output than each could do on his/her own. This could be more likely to produce higher levels of negotiation of meaning and better comprehension. Basically, any multimedia should be able to provide feedback if it is to reinforce positive learning outcomes and increase learners' confidence.

Furthermore, Leather & James (1991) discussed the existing technological applications in pronunciation training at that time (visual displays of speech parameters). He described future "instrumental aids" as consisting preferably of computer-managed pronunciation training. This training makes use of synthetic as well as natural speech models, which processes learners' productions to provide visual displays of salient features together with an assessment of phonetic accuracy. This leads the individual learner through a series of perception and production training activities selected according to ongoing performance, while simultaneously compiling a detailed record of progress for teacher supervision. He cautioned, however, that before applying any new technology in practice, one must first have a better understanding of L2 phonological acquisition and pronunciation teaching theory in order to know which natural learning processes can or should be facilitated.

In recent work, Pennington & Esling (1996) provided a basic technological account of computer-aided pronunciation software; Pennington & Ellis (2000) presented an overview of the promise and limitations of using computers to improve pronunciation in a second language. Two of her ten principles for software design were to "link pronunciation to other learning and communicative goals" and to "raise awareness of contrast with LI and a range of targets for L2.

Moreover, Ehsani (1998) discussed the idea of having a useful application of speech recognition and processing technology, which researchers have demonstrated through a number of research projects and commercial laboratories in the area of pronunciation training. Voice-interactive pronunciation tutors prompt students to repeat spoken words and phrases or read aloud sentences in the target language for the purpose of practicing both the sounds and the intonation of the language. The key to teaching pronunciation successfully is corrective feedback, more specifically, a type of feedback that does not rely on the student's own perception. A number of experimental systems have implemented automatic pronunciation scoring as a means to evaluate spoken learner

productions in terms of fluency, segmental quality (phonemes) and supra-segmental features (intonation). The automatically generated proficiency score can then be used as a basis for providing other modes of corrective feedback.

More specifically, Pennington (2000) reported on a study of the training of intonation on the computer comparing seven different pedagogical orientations. The study underscored the need to explicitly focus language learners' attention on prosody and also served as a basis for pedagogical recommendations. One of the recommendations was that software should provide support using both visual and auditory models. The researcher would suggest four specific functions for technology that can be integrated into instruction and research. Computers and computer software can be used: (1) to provide learners with visualizations of their patterns and with specific feedback to help them perceive the meaningful contrasts between LI and L2, so that they can improve their speech production; (2) to provide learners with authentic and extensive speech and cultural input, and in turn, to hone learners' perceptual abilities; (3) to facilitate, record, and analyze interactions between and among speakers; and (4) to build tools for research purposes(e.g., data collection tools to record student performance, progress, and steps toward self-correction (Chun 1998).

By the same token, Neumeyer(2000)puts some of the important steps to verify automatic speech recognition (ASR)'s accuracy in a CAPT program. It showed how machine scores and human scores are correlated in evaluating pronunciation, and it addresses the key to any ASR system, the corpus of speech (native and nonnative) on which recognition is modeled.

More importantly, Peter (2002) emphasized that a number of techniques have been suggested for automatic recognition and scoring of nonnative speech. Generally, the procedure consists of building native pronunciation models and then measuring the non-native responses against the native models. This requires a model strained on both native and non-native speech data in the target language, supplemented by a set of algorithms for measuring acoustic variables that have proven to be useful in distinguishing native from non-native speech. These variables include response latency, segment duration, inter-world pauses (in phrases), spectral likelihood, and fundamental frequency. Machine scores are calculated from statistics derived from comparing non-native values for these variables to the native models.

In addition, Smith (2002) suggested a system for teaching the pronunciation of Japanese long vowels, the mora nasal, and mora obstruent's which was recently built at the University of Tokyo. This system enables students to practice phonemic differences in Japanese that are known to present special challenges to L2 learners. It prompts students to pronounce minimal pairs (e.g., long and short vowels) and returns immediate feedback on segment duration. Based on the limited data, the system seems quite effective at this particular task. Learners quickly mastered the relevant duration cues, and the time spent on learning these pronunciation skills was well within the constraints of Japanese L2 curricula. However, the study provides no data on the long-term effects of using the system.

Moreover, Neri&Strik(2003)found an accessible, general treatment of the pluses and minuses of ASR. It highlights four key issues in the use of ASR. (1) Can ASR recognize nonnative speech successfully? (2) Can ASR provide are liable assessment of pronunciation? (3) Can ASR be used to identify specific errors? And (4) Can ASR provide remediation? These questions occur in one form or another in many of the articles addressing the use and effectiveness of ASR.

Similarly, Spaai& Hermes (2003) argued that the correct usage of supra-segmental features, such as intonation and stress, has improved the syntactic and semantic intelligibility of spoken language. In spoken conversation, intonation and stress information not only helps listeners to locate phrase boundaries and word emphasis, but also identifies the pragmatic thrust of the utterance (e.g., interrogative vs. declarative). One of the main acoustical correlates of stress and intonation is fundamental frequency; other acoustical characteristics include loudness, duration and tempo. Most commercial signal processing software has tools for tracking and visually displaying contours. Such displays have been used to provide valuable pronunciation feedback to students, especially if the student's contour is displayed along with a native model.

Derwing & Rossiter (2003)) conducted research in which ESL learners who had been studying for an average of ten years, participated in a speaking improvement course that focused on the supra-segmental features of pronunciation (e.g. stress, rhythm, intonation). Thirty-seven native listeners transcribed speech samples (true/false sentences) taken at the beginning of a 12-week course in order to assess the learners' intelligibility. Each sample was rated in order of comprehensibility and degree of accentedness. In the end, there was a significant improvement in the intelligibility, and better ratings over time of comprehensibility and accentedness. They showed that 30 language learners could alter their pronunciation in a reading task.

More importantly, Hardison (2004) examined whether computer-assisted prosody training leads to improved prosody, and as a bonus, to improved segmental accuracy and lexical recall. The treatment involved intensive practice of sets of 30French sentences with varied prosodic contours. Rather than being models for the subjects, native French speaker sentences were used as feedback to the subjects' initial production. The most provocative result of the study is the spillover effect of the prosody training. The intensive practice led subjects to notice segmental features that were not in focus.

By the same token , Hirata(2004) examined how learners of Japanese acquired pitch and duration contrasts, is an excellent example of how CAPT can be used to suggest answers for research issues and directions for teaching. Japanese is a pitch accent language, with words distinguished by their patterns of high and low pitches. It is also a language with phonemic lengthening. The interaction of these two prosodic features allowed the researcher to examine prosody acquisition more fully than is usually the case in research studies. Training included some subjects receiving word-level and other sentence-level practice. Although the research questions lent themselves to minimal pair practice, the researcher did not include this as a treatment. Training was effective, and training of words in sentences was more effective than word-level practice.

Like others, Seymour (2007) believes that other types of visual pronunciation feedback include the graphical display of a native speaker's face, the vocal tract, spectrum information, and speech waveforms. Experiments have shown that a visual display of the talker improves, not only at word identification accuracy level, but also speech rhythm and timing. A large number of commercial pronunciation tutors on the market today offer this kind of feedback. Others have been experimented by using a real-time spectrogram or waveform display of speech to provide pronunciation feedback.

The above research is important for L2 teaching (and, of course, learning) because it suggests that prosodic deviance by language learners contributes significantly to the perception of foreign accent, affects comprehensibility and may affect intelligibility as well. Of interest to second language teachers is the implication that improvement in nonnative speaker comprehensibility is more likely to occur with improvement in prosodic (and grammatical) proficiency than with a sole focus on correction of phonemic errors.

More obviously, Varasarin (2007) concluded that it is increasingly necessary to train language specialists in applied linguistic programs to become familiar with the use of technological systems for the recording, storage, and delivery of speech sound information. He stressed the importance of methods of instruction in phonetics courses as well as that of software design being consistent with principles of second language acquisition theory and with language teaching methodologies. His own *Phonetic Database* system for microcomputers emphasized the use of the computer as a tool instead of a tutor, for cross-referencing several forms of written and auditory information in order to build associations between sound and symbol, for analyzing prosody holistically as a learning exercise as opposed to a point-by-point didactic style, and for observing language from the prosodic and indexical perspective before concentrating on segmental phonology.

To have a more comprehensive outlook on the effects of multimedia on EFL students' supra segmental competence, Barani (2011) illustrated the effects of computer language learning on listening and pronunciation. To reach the aim of study, the researcher chose 60 Iranian EFL learners and assigned them to experimental and control groups randomly. During 20 session instruction, the researcher presented and practiced all listening activities to the subjects in the control group. However, throughout the same period, he presented and practiced all these listening activities through CALL to the experimental group. The finding of this article demonstrated that computer assisted language learning has a significant impact on the listening pronunciation. The data showed that users of computer outperformed nonusers in a listening and pronunciation tests. What is new in this study is that it investigates the effect of using authentic DVDs and videos on the supra-segmental competence of the EFL learners in Saudi Arabia.

All the studies mention above showed that using technology in general and authentic videos in particular play a major role in learning the mechanics of speaking . The present study is similar to the mentioned studies in the general aim. However, what distinguishes this study from the other previous study is that it investigates the effect of using authentic videos on EFL learners' prosodic competence .

3. Methodology

3.1 Population of the Study

The population of the study is related to students majoring in English Language at Taibah University. Specifically, it included thirty two university students who registered for *the Pronunciation* course in the first semester of 2011-2012 academic years.

3.2 Procedures of the Study

The main procedures adopted to carry out the aims and verify the hypothesis of the study are as follow:

- Identifying the prosodic aspects of language to be studied, including pause, juncture, intonation, pronunciation, rhyme, rhythm, and stress.
- Designing a scale of scores in the prosodic aspects of language, ranging from 0 to 100.
- Scores were distributed logically among the prosodic aspects of language.
- A pretest was administered to find the actual level of both groups before being exposed to the new experience of teaching.
- Then, the control group was taught traditionally, while the experimental group was taught via videos. Two months later, a posttest was administered to find out if any change occurred and in favor of either group.
- Both the pretest and the posttest were in a form of oral interviews done by native specialists of English.
- The native interviewers wrote clear and detailed reports about each student's performance in the supra-segmental aspect of language. Their reports were accompanied with scores that ranged from 0 to 100. The total score of each examiner in the prosodic aspects of language was out of one hundred.
- To get rid of subjectivity, every examiner on the examination team of interviewers was responsible for evaluating one prosodic aspect of language.
- Then, the total score was calculated to be out of one hundred for every student.

3.3 Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze data and to evaluate any possible difference or any statistically differences between scores for the pre/post-test between the two groups in order to answer and accomplish the questions and objectives of the study. Mean scores, standard deviations, and significance levels were conducted. A T-test, One Way ANOVA and Scheffe tests were used to find the prosodic aspects of language that the learners developed more as a result of using authentic videos.

3.4. Validation of the Tool

What is important before using any tool of investigation is to make sure that it meets all the requirements of a good tool. i.e., it should be valid, reliable and with an acceptable degree of difficulty. To make sure that the test meets all the above-mentioned criteria, the following steps have been followed:

3.4.1. Face Validity

In order to ensure face validity of the test, it was given to a jury of three specialists who are well-known for their long experience in the field of teaching EFL. They gave some suggestions on the items concerning the distribution of the scores among the prosodic aspects of language.

3.5 *Reliability of the Test*

One of the methods that can be used to find out the test reliability is the test-retest method (Storm, 1969). This retest technique was used. A random sample of eight students was selected from another *pronunciation* section at Taibah University. Two weeks later, recordings of their oral performance were assessed by the native raters. By using Pearson's formula, the pilot administration of the test has shown that, the correlation coefficient between students' ranks on both evaluation occasions were calculated and found to be 93%. According to Pearson's formula, the reliability coefficient of a test would be acceptable if it is not less than 0.50 (Stempell, 1981). Thus the test can be described as being highly reliable.

3.6 Instruments of the Study

During the second semester of the 2011-2012 academic year, the researcher devised a scale or a criterion for research in prosody. It ranged from 0 to 100. It was applied on students in a *pronunciation* course. Scores were distributed logically among the prosodic aspects of language; 30 scores for intonation, 30 for pronunciation, 20 for stress, 10 for pause, and 10 for juncture. The assessment of students' overall prosodic competence was made according to the scale found by the researchers.

Recordings of students' oral performance in both groups were made at the beginning of the course. These recordings were evaluated by four native specialists of English who are specialized in teaching English language. Every student as a foreign was evaluated independently according to the scale of judgment. The total score was out of one hundred. The examiners wrote fully detailed reports about the actual supra segmental competence of every student in both groups before starting the experiment. These reports were accompanied with scores because scores are more objective and reliable than words.

The team of examiners consisted of four experts; one of these experts was responsible for evaluating students' pronunciation of speech sounds, while the second had duty of evaluating students' intonation. The third was responsible for evaluating word and sentence stress. The fourth was responsible for evaluating students' use of pause and juncture. After interviewing each student independently, scores were given by the team of examiners. Then, the total score was calculated to be out of hundred for every student in both groups.

Table 1: The Control Group's Prosodic Competence Before the Experiment

Student's number	Pronunciation of speech sounds out of 30	Intonation out of 30	Stress 20	pause and juncture 20	The total out of 100
One	18	17	11	12	58
Two	16	16	10	6	48
Tree	13	11	4	3	31
Four	11	8	4	3	26
Five	20	18	15	16	69
Six	23	24	17	16	80
Seven	27	23	14	15	79
Eight	23	20	15	13	71
Nine	11	13	8	10	42
Ten	9	7	5	8	29
Eleven	12	10	8	6	36
Twelve	14	16	10	9	49
Thirteen	25	20	13	14	72
Fourteen	24	22	15	16	77
Fifteen	18	18	13	12	61
Average	*17.6*	*16.2*	*10.8*	*10.6*	*55.2%*

Table 2: The Experimental Group's Prosodic Competence Before the Experiment

Student's number	Pronunciation out of 30	Intonation out of 30	Stress 20	pause and juncture out of 20	Total out of 100
One	19	18	13	12	62
Two	16	15	10	7	48
Tree	12	14	12	13	51
Four	11	12	13	9	45
Five	19	17	13	19	68
Six	21	18	11	11	61
Seven	18	18	9	9	54
Eight	17	20	14	13	64
Nine	18	19	13	13	63
Ten	14	16	13	12	55
Eleven	13	15	9	8	45
Twelve	12	19	8	9	84
Thirteen	16	18	11	10	55
Fourteen	18	19	11	11	59
Fifteen	20	19	12	13	64
Sixteen	19	21	14	15	69
Seventeen	16	17	13	15	61
Average	*16.4*	*17.3*	*11.7*	*11.7*	*57.1*

Table 3 : Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Two Groups on the Pre-test.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
Pretest	**Control**	15	55.2	18.4	.80	30	.563
	Experimental	17	57.1764706	19.23			

Table 1,2 and 3 show that the control and experiment groups' prosodic competence before starting the experiment were almost equivalent in the pre-test. Then, the students of the experimental group started listening to authentic English using authentic videos technology to acquire the prosodic aspects of language efficiently and effectively, whereas the control group studied the same material traditionally. This experiment continued for four months. Then, the subjects of the study were re-interviewed on the same topics and functions of language. These interviews were made by the same team of examiners using the same scale and distribution of scores among the prosodic aspects of language (30 scores were given for pronunciation of speech sounds, 30 for intonation, 20 scores for stress and 20 scores divided between pause and juncture).
Table 4 shows the performance of the control group in the prosodic aspects of language after being taught traditionally .

Table 5 shows the performance of the experimental group in the prosodic aspects of language after being taught through authentic videos. Table 5 shows that the prosodic competence of the experimental group improved considerably because of the new experience of teaching, where the average score of the total of totals in the pre-test equals (mean 57.17 with SD=19.23), whereas the mean was 67.27 with =8.47 on the post-test.

Table4: The Control Group's Prosodic Competence After the Experiment

Student's number	**Pronunciation out of 30**	**Intonation out of 30**	**Stress out of 20**	**pause and juncture out of 20**	**Total out of 100**
One	16	18	10	11	45
Two	17	18	9	6	50
Tree	12	12	6	3	33
Four	10	7	4	5	26
Five	19	18	15	17	69
Six	24	25	17	15	81
Seven	26	20	16	14	76
Eight	22	19	14	13	68
Nine	10	14	7	11	42
Ten	11	13	7	11	42
Eleven	10	9	10	7	36
Twelve	12	17	11	8	48
Thirteen	26	21	11	15	73
Fourteen	19	20	11	13	63
Fifteen	18	16	11	10	55
Average	*14.8*	*14.5*	*9.3*	*9.3*	*57.4*

Table 5: The Experimental Group's Prosodic Competence Performance After the Experiment

Student's number	Pronunciation out of 30	Intonation 30	Stress out of 20	Pause of juncture out of 30	Total out of 100
1	22	19	15	14	70
2	22	19	16	13	70
3	19	16	13	14	62
4	15	15	12	11	53
5	26	22	16	15	79
6	28	23	15	17	83
7	29	25	18	19	91
8	27	24	16	14	81
9	15	10	9	11	45
10	13	10	9	9	41
11	12	17	9	9	47
12	22	14	13	12	61
13	28	23	15	16	82
14	26	22	15	15	78
15	20	18	14	14	66
Average	*21.6*	*18.46*	*13.66*	*13.53*	*67.27%*

Table 6 : Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Two Groups on the Post-test .

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
Pretest	**Control**	17	57.44	18.21	2.27	9.74	.056
	Experimental	17	67.27	8.47			

The T-test comparison between the mean of these two samples proves that authentic videos have a great effect on the EFL learner's prosodic competence.

Statistically, the Two-sample T. Test was used to estimate scientifically the amount of difference between the performances of both groups on the post test and to decide objectively if there was a significant difference between both groups.

The two-sample T. Test was found with the T. Value equaling 2.27 and the P. value equaling 0.02 . These results indicate that there is a significant difference. Accordingly, these statistical results prove that the hypothesis of the study which reads, "Authentic videos have a great effect on the prosodic competence of EFL learners" is confirmed.

4.Discussion

After investigating the effect of authentic videos on the subjects' supra segmental competence, the results of the study have shown that there is much progress in the experimental group's prosodic competence. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study, "Authentic videos have a great effect on the EFL learner's prosodic competence" is confirmed.

The results of the study showed the mean of scores of the experimental group on the prosodic aspects of language on the post-test was much higher than the mean scores on the prosodic aspects of language on the pre-test.

Moreover, the results of the study showed that there was also a large gap between the mean scores of all participants in every prosodic aspect of language on the posttest when compared with that on the pretest. Additionally, the results of the study showed that there was much difference between the mean of scores of all members in the experimental group on the pretest if compared with that of the posttest.

Finally, the researcher found out that there was much improvement in students' prosodic competence on the post-test that was administered after a four month experiment of being taught authentic videos. In this setting, EFL learners acquired the prosodic aspects of language efficiently and properly. These recordings were presented in different environments and in different speeds from the mouths of native speakers who are of different jobs, ages, sexes, contexts of speaking and educational levels and social classes because language with its prosody varies from one situation of discourse to another.

The results of the study also revealed that thirteen out of fifteen subjects have improved their overall prosodic competence, while there was no change in the other remaining two students. This is difficult to explain, but as educators know, a class is composed of a variety of students, some with excellent study habits and others without good study habits, and some students simply are not interested.

The numbers of these cases of low performance were low. It was 2 out of fifteen. Approximately,11% of the students showed no changes and 89% improved their prosodic competence. The highest progress was in students' use of stress, and pronunciation . However, the lowest progress was in pronunciation of speech sounds, especially in pronouncing those consonants and vowels that do not exist in the students' native language.

Students who scored the highest total score on the posttest did not show much progress intonation, pause and juncture. This might be due to the effect of the learner's native-tongue. The team of examiners also noted that hesitation and stress have to some extent affected students' performance. Their hesitations sometimes created more pauses and junctures than expected.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study limitations are that the findings are limited to university EFL learners majoring in English language and similar samples. According to the native experts' analysis of the prosodic competence of the seventeen non-native speakers of English in the experimental group, the researcher found out that there was much progress in their prosodic competence in terms of perception and production of speech sounds and lexicons when they were exposed to authentic recorded texts and dialogues taken from the everyday life of the English language community that were presented. According to the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that EFL teachers should teach language aspects, specially the supra segmental aspects of language at the university level,

- Have in-service training programs on how to use technology to teach the prosodic aspects of foreign languages, and
- Focus on meaningful communication by emphasizing authenticity and avoiding artificiality.

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He has multi – experiences in curricula , teaching English as global language , teaching English as foreign language, methodology, conferences, quality assurance, Muslim-Christian dialogues, human rights and peace. He has new orientations towards having change in foreign language classes, because he strongly believes that language is an ear and a tongue.

He believes in teaching language with its culture, because language can be regarded as a body and its culture is a soul.

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