

# Video Talks in English Laboratory: An Effective Tool in Promoting Self-motivated Language Learning in the ESL Context of Indian Learners

M. Senguttuvan Dr. Laxmi Dhar Dwivedi

Assistant Professor, Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, VIT University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

## Abstract

Videos are an essential component in language labs and its usage has risen rapidly owing to the increasing stress on communicative practices. It is evident that the use of videos is a big advantage for language teachers in inspiring and facilitating the learners towards learning the target language. A large-scale survey by Canning-Wilson (2000) clearly indicates that the students like learning language through the use of videos. The learners are exposed to videos which are either streamed through programmed language software installed in computers or played separately. The videos situated in the learning software operate in a pattern that aims at certain skill development like following the native pronunciation pattern or teaching body language, etc. Such skills could also be achieved through the use of videos which focus on speeches by experts.

**Keywords:** language lab, ESL, proficiency, video, video talks, language learning, speeches, self-motivation

## Introduction

In recent years, the utilization of English laboratories has gained an indispensable position in the application of curriculum. Their evolution, in close connection with technology, continues to accommodate innovative materials and pedagogical resources in better ways and helps teachers to embed them with the existing teaching practices to unearth the learning capabilities of its learners in a natural learning environment.

Some learners consider that watching videos in language laboratories is merely an act of a re-telecast of the TV programs through a projector for a private study. Others believe that the practice of videoing the presentation of the learners and playing it back to them would better the skills. But the video talks are valuable resources that will be very welcome by both teachers and language learners and it can promote a natural way of learning to a great extent. The insertion of video speeches in such platforms can greatly help the ESL learners in myriad dimensions:

## Initiating speaking

In the Indian context, it is needless to say that the language teachers would like to acquire some know-how on engaging students in speaking activities. This is all the more true, when it comes to involve the students who have had their primary and secondary education in the vernacular medium. Such students find it very difficult not because that they are deprived of exposure to the language but it is very often the dearth of supply of materials. A material with good content will provide them immense support and generate great amount of confidence in their delivery. But how can this problem be resolved?

## Pursuing the appropriate materials that suit their interest

It is not that all the people hold a common outlook of their lives. Every individual is distinctive and has different opinions. Some have a meticulous approach and some have a happy-go-lucky attitude towards life. It is this basic understanding of human psychology and principle of learner autonomy which but stresses the argument that the learner can be selective about the speech videos they may use for their learning. But this is possible only when they are exposed to a variety of speech videos.

Incorporating technology into the classroom - particularly among low-level learners - has also been shown to generate greater student autonomy and instill lifelong language learning skills (Leung, 2004). Website like [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), devoted to spreading ideas, house videos of short and powerful talks which cover almost all topics — from science to business to global issues. These speeches normally last for 18 minutes or less and mostly employ simple language that even a common man can easily understand. Such brief video talks are easy to access and the diversity of content and cultures will be enjoyable to the learners. Hence, they can serve as an ideal source to initiate the talk.

## Presentation on the speeches

As the first activity, the beginners of language could be asked to make a presentation on the speech of their liking. If a student finds a particular kind of clip particularly interesting or useful in language learning, he or she can freely investigate all clips that might be of a similar vein (Watkins & Wilkins, 2011).

When the presenter picks out a speech video of his own interest, he would be enthused about sharing the crux of the problems to other learners in his group (peers) in the form of a presentation. This will stimulate learner autonomy and student centered learning. According to Benson and Voller (1997), the term *learner autonomy* is generally used to suggest any combination of five ideas: first, the responsibility of language development rests primarily on the students; second, students should acquire learning skills that they can apply to any aspect of their language development that they choose; third, students should have opportunities in which they can successfully learn independently from teachers or classmates; fourth, the specific course of language development is a path students ultimately decide; fifth, students innately crave self-guided education, but their desires are regularly thwarted by their academic institutions.

All of these are very much associated with these tasks. The freedom of choosing a video of their interest would substantially ease out the learner's concern of authenticity and the worry of what to say because it is a well-known fact that such TED talks are delivered by experts in their fields and are widely recognized by many. Takaesu's findings on TED talks as an extensive listening source (2013) state that TED talks offer authentic, easy and more natural English. Besides, the presentation would take place in a third person perspective, in the style of reporting, which obviously would not burden much about the narration.

### **Role-play**

Advanced level learners could be asked to model these speeches and emulate them through role-play. When they have a clear understanding of the speech, they could be asked to assume themselves to be the speaker and deliver the same content but using their own words. The students could also be asked to reword the transcript in the written form. More creativity might be applied here as they might try to improvise their talks to fit in the situation and emulate the characters they are role playing. This experimental practice will also enlarge their understanding of other cultures when they are supposed to follow the aspects of appropriateness and suitability.

### **Reading the transcripts**

When learners stumble upon comprehending the exact words used by the speaker, the transcript of the speech will come to their rescue. This practice would initiate a great amount of reading and help acquire vocabulary used in such situational contexts.

### **Further written assignments**

The learners may further be encouraged to submit assignments on the video talk answering questions like how they felt the speech was, how suited their interest, which part of the speech they liked the most and how motivated are they after listening to it. These questions focusing on their experience with the speech will move them towards the process of writing sentences using first and third person narrative styles and gradually hone their writing skill with the help of teachers. They will be raring to tell others as the answers have much to do with their personal likes. This would certainly make them expressive and launch a great move towards the four major productive skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

### **A positive approach towards language acquisition**

TED speeches are delivered by different people from different disciplines and cultural backgrounds not just by native speakers alone. So exposure to such video talks will advance the learners' energy levels and approach towards learning the second language. This is a natural process due to so many psychological factors: For example, if, any point of time in the speech, the audience laugh in the video, the learner would obviously be interested to know why. He/she may also personally be stimulated to tell others why he particularly liked the talk. This, according to the presenter, may throw some light on his/her personality and establish an identity among others. When they pay attention on the visual clues and paralinguistic features that are related to the organization of the content such as the rhythmic hand and arm movements, head nods, gesture, posture, etc., they learn the details of the environment and relate its mechanism with the speech making process. At times, a regular study on such aspects will help them understand the meaning even without listening to the speaker. Above all, their encounter with copious speeches will instill confidence and hope and create a mark in their mind that they too can become eminent in their realm one day.

### **Conclusion**

It is a clear statement that speeches in the form of videos make learning an excellent experience. It is unarguably one of the advanced tools in second language learning and teaching. A short and succinct talk, especially on a topic of personal interest, can evoke great attention towards language and content and introduce a variety of methods to learn and teach. What counts is the issue of availing these most appreciated materials in the right time and right manner to induce positive contribution to learning. Thus, the TED video speeches can largely promote self-motivated learning and can be used to create a natural and successful language learning

environment.

### References

- Allan, M. (1985). *Teaching English with Video*. Harlow: Longman.
- Arntsen, T. (2014, April 1). *TED Talks for English Language Teaching*. Retrieved from <http://blog.tesol.org/ted-talks-for-english-language-teaching/>
- Benson, P & Voller, P. (1997). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. London: Longman.
- Canning-Wilson, C. (2000). *Role of Video in the F/SL Classroom*. 69-76. In S. Riley, S Troudi and C. Coombe. (ed.) *Teaching, Learning and Technology*, TESOL Arabia 1999 Conference Proceedings, TESOL Arabia 1999 Conference March 8-10, 1999.
- Leung, A. (2004). *Fostering learner autonomy among weak students via information technology*. The HKU Scholars Hub. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10722/3065>
- MsStewart. (2010, August 25). *TED Talks for English Teachers*. Retrieved from <https://inforgood.wordpress.com/2010/08/25/great-ted-talks-for-english-teachers/>
- Takaesu, A. (2013). "TED Talks as an Extensive Listening Resource for EAP Students". *Language Education in Asia*, Vol. 4, Iss. 2., Retrieved from [http://www.camtesol.org/Download/LEiA\\_Vol4\\_Iss2\\_2013/LEiA\\_V4\\_I2\\_A5\\_Takaesu\\_TED\\_Talks\\_as\\_an\\_Extensive\\_Listening\\_Resource\\_for\\_EAP\\_Students](http://www.camtesol.org/Download/LEiA_Vol4_Iss2_2013/LEiA_V4_I2_A5_Takaesu_TED_Talks_as_an_Extensive_Listening_Resource_for_EAP_Students)
- TED: Ideas Worth Spreading*. (2015.). Retrieved from <http://www.ted.com/>
- Ted Guest Author. (2014, August 26). *How teachers can best use TED Talks in class, from the perspective of a student*. Retrieved from <http://blog.ted.com/how-teachers-can-best-use-ted-talks-in-class-from-the-perspective-of-a-student/>
- Watkins, J & Wilkins, M. (2011). "Using YouTube in the EFL Classroom." *Language Education in Asia*, Vol.2, Iss.1. Retrieved from [http://www.camtesol.org/Download/LEiA\\_Vol2\\_Iss1\\_2011/LEiA\\_V2\\_I1\\_09\\_Jon\\_Watkins\\_and\\_Michael\\_Wilkins\\_Using\\_YouTube\\_in\\_the\\_EFL\\_Classroom.pdf](http://www.camtesol.org/Download/LEiA_Vol2_Iss1_2011/LEiA_V2_I1_09_Jon_Watkins_and_Michael_Wilkins_Using_YouTube_in_the_EFL_Classroom.pdf)
- Wright, A. (1976). *Visual Materials for the Language Teacher*. Essex: Longman Wilson.