

## FILM AS AN ENGLISH TEACHING TOOL AT TERTIARY EDUCATION LEVEL

### FILM KAO NASTAVNO SREDSTVO POUČAVANJA ENGLESKOG JEZIKA NA FAKULTETIMA

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#### *Abstract*

Film is an attractive medium for teaching of different aspects of the English language such as syntax, morphology and semantic. Also, it is connected with motivational purposes. Namely, learning objectives are accomplished via the performance of diverse assignments and students are motivated if they are acquainted with the topic and visually see the characters involved. Films can be used in an English language class in numerous ways some of which are shown in our paper. In fact, films show us parts of life and provide a realistic and entertaining way of studying foreign language. Regardless the language, students are faced with the film cultural environment that can be used as a means of comparison. The pre- and post- watching film activities are in accordance with our designed curriculum. Finally, it should be pointed out that films contribute relaxation to the language classroom.

#### *Sažetak*

Film je privlačan medij za poučavanje raznih aspekata engleskog jezika poput sintakse, morfologije i semantike. On ima i motivacijsku svrhu. Naime, ciljevi učenja se ostvaruju provođenjem raznih zadataka, a studenti su motivirani ako im je tema poznata te ako vide likove uključene u sadržaj. Filmovi se mogu koristiti na satu engleskog jezika na bezbroj načina, od kojih su neki i prikazani u radu. Filmovi pokazuju isječke iz stvarnoga života te pružaju zabavniji način učenja stranog jezika. Osim jezika, studenti se susreću s kulturnim okruženjem u filmu što se može koristiti za uspoređivanje različitih kultura. Aktivnosti prije i poslije gledanja filma su u skladu sa zacrtanim nastavnim planom i programom. Trebamo naglasiti da filmovi doprinose opuštanju na satu učenja engleskog jezika.

## 1. Introduction

Films downloaded from You tube on Organic farms and "Love Actually" by Richard Curtis have been exploited. Some of the assignments from the course book have been modified and some new ones prepared.

Film is an excellent medium for teaching of various aspects of the English language such as syntax, morphology and semantic. It is also connected with motivation since learning objectives are achieved through conducting various assignments. Students are motivated if they are acquainted with the topic and see the characters involved. There are numerous ways of using films in the English language class. They show us spheres of life, and thus give a realistic and amusing way of studying foreign language.

## 2. Students and benefits from films

We have realised that films can be used in a number of ways. One of them is to promote new ideas and expand the students' horizons. Students should be encouraged to get the global idea in the first place, and only in some instances should be asked to focus on bits and pieces of language itself. Apart from being faced with language, the student encounters the film cultural environment. What film to choose is very important in the process and presents a big challenge. Since it is in accordance with our designed curriculum (inform them on food production, organic food, arable crops - agriculture) students textbook activities were also used.

### 3. What to do while planning a video lesson

There are three main things to remember before selecting a film.

1. The most important thing is to be sure that teacher has watched the video unit before taking it into the classroom. Namely, classes are different and you may need to do some extra background work with the students before watching the film. The duration of the film is another aspect to be kept in mind. Long films can be used, but thorough planning is required to divide the film into several viewing sessions with pre-viewing and post viewing questions.
2. Check that all the students can see and hear the video, and that equipment works properly.
3. The activities should be prepared in a way to encourage students to discuss the issues and topics both before and after watching. In this way they are exchanging personal opinions, and preparation is not needed. In cases where they are required to compare their culture with the UK and other English speaking countries you may need to prepare the discussion by providing information about your country (what problems do Croatian farmers and British/American have in common? How to solve them? ) and elicit ideas from the students.

### 4. Activities conducted

#### 4.1. Pre-watching film activities

There are several ways of starting a video lesson but these activities can be done prior watching the video or as a part of the video lesson, as a preview. Students work in pairs and are showed parts of the material to discuss. They are asked what the unit is going to contain. They are well prepared and felt more confident when they watch the video.

Activities included:

- pair and group discussion – each group was given two of the 9 love stories from the film "Love Actually" and sections from the film Organic farms in Nebraska
- brainstorming / guessing – students were supposed to guess what would happen to the pairs from the story (predicting and matching exercises) /How would growing organic food reflect on the social life of the communion – better communication, knowing each other ...etc.
- vocabulary exercises – Christmas vocabulary, relationships, single mothers/fathers.../ manure, synthetic fertilizers, compost, advantages, disadvantages

#### 4.2. While-watching film activities

Students were doing the aforesaid activities while watching the films. Teacher read the instructions to students before playing the film and check they understand what they have to do. Students are asked to watch the film once without writing. Then the film is played again while they put down their answers. Before playing the film again students check answers in pairs, or can elicit answers from a few students and see if they need to watch more carefully (as a part of cooperative learning). Apart from these traditional viewing activities, freeze-frame techniques can be implemented to highlight some important images. For example, the introduction scene of PM and Natalie can be freeze-framed and we can ask students to guess what will happen next with them (Love Actually) or some crop production procedure/treatment can be freeze-framed. After watching a second time, we went through the answers with the students and watched the film again to confirm all needed.

Activities included:

- checking answers to *Before you watch* questions from their course book "New Opportunities – Intermediate"/ English in Agriculture I
- ticking things students saw in the video (pre-prepared material)
- matching information (pre-prepared material)
- completing tables
- deciding if sentences are true or false (pre-prepared material)
- multiple choice (pre-prepared material)
- circling the correct answers (pre-prepared material)
- remembering what students saw
- identifying pictures "New Opportunities – Intermediate"(they have a picture from the film in their course book)

#### 4.3. Post-watching film activities

Students compare themselves and their own culture with that of the British and Americans. There is no need to watch the video again. The activities consist mainly of a writing task.

Activities included:

- group work and pair work: brainstorming and discussions
- writing tasks

*Follow up activities*

a.) *Guessing game* – students choose a love couple from the film and try to finish their story as an essay (250 words)

- 1.) Sarah and Karl
- 2.) Sam and Joanna
- 3.) Peter, Juliet and Mark
- 4.) Daniel and Carol

*b.) Discussion Activities* – students can be put in small groups and discuss these questions:

- 1.) Whose story were you most interested in? Why?
- 2.) Whose story were you least interested in? Why?

*c.) Role-play* – put students in pairs and ask them to act out this conversation:

- 1.) Student A: You are Aurelia. Tell your sister about Jamie. Ask for advice.
- 2.) Student B: You are Daniel. Tell your friend Karen about Carol, a young mother you met at your son's school. Ask for advice.

*d.) Homework* - write movie reviews and tell your opinion about the film

## 5. Revision

All the above-mentioned activities are focused on thematic issues, which we tried to extract from our national curriculum and student's course books. In a way, students have revised several grammatical and functional aspects of English language and they had fun while doing it. They have found new enthusiasm to bring more films to the classroom and now we are faced with new lessons to prepare for them. In exploiting a film in class, we found out that the only difficulty lies in designing tasks from it, because they are quite time consuming. As

stated above, the teacher should adapt the films to the learners' level of proficiency and conceptual competence.

## 6. Conclusion

To sum up, the use of films is becoming more common since you can easily download them from internet. Good films can serve as a valuable pedagogical aid, both for classroom use and self-study. The ultimate goal is to give rise to motivation in the students and to stimulate their imagination and creativity. Likewise, films are a rich source of idiomatic expressions, which, thanks to the context, are easy to grasp and internalise. The possibilities for using film in the foreign language class are numerous.

They also add fun and students engagement to language classroom.

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