

DIGITAL VIDEO TECHNOLOGY IN THE ENGLISH FOR TELECOMMUNICATION ENGINEERING CLASSROOM

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Resumen: Uno de nuestros retos como profesores de Inglés para Fines Específicos es ser capaces de involucrar a los estudiantes de postgrado en la utilización del inglés como una herramienta para compartir sus proyectos e interactuar, en nuestro caso con otros ingenieros, sin perder de vista el uso de la lengua extranjera para la vida cotidiana. Si motivación y autenticidad son dos palabras claves en la enseñanza de IFE, internet y sus muchas posibilidades se presenta como una fuente muy valiosa a la hora de encontrar materiales auténticos, atractivos y motivadores que emplear en el aula de IFE. El objetivo de este artículo es compartir una experiencia práctica en el uso de las tecnologías de vídeo digital para enseñar Inglés para Ingenieros de Telecomunicación, llevada a cabo con alumnos de postgrado de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria durante los cursos 2012-13 y 2013-14. Este curso fue diseñado en respuesta a las necesidades comunicativas de los estudiantes dentro de su propia especialidad, teniendo en cuenta las carencias particulares de cada estudiante, sin descuidar la enseñanza de la gramática y el léxico entre otras herramientas lingüísticas. Para ello, realizamos un estudio previo de las necesidades de estos alumnos. En este artículo, explicaremos las razones que nos llevaron a crear nuestros propios materiales, el proceso de selección y los resultados obtenidos.

Palabras clave: IFE, tecnologías de vídeo digital, Ingeniería de Telecomunicación.

Abstract: One of our challenges as teachers of English for Specific Purposes is to be able to involve post-graduate students in the use of English as a tool to share their projects and interact in our case with other engineers, without losing sight of the use of foreign language for everyday life. If motivation and authenticity are two key words in teaching ESP, internet and its many possibilities is presented as a valuable source to finding authentic, engaging and motivating materials to be used in the ESP classroom. The aim of this article is to share a practical experience in the use of digital video technology to teach English for Telecommunications Engineers, conducted with post-graduate students from the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria during the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. This course was designed in response to the students' communicative needs within their own specialty, taking into account the particular requirements of each student, without neglecting the teaching of grammar and vocabulary and other language tools. We carried out a preliminary study of the needs of these students. In this article, we will explain the reasons that led us to create our own materials, the selection process and results.

Key-words: ESP, Digital Video Technologies, Telecommunication Engineering.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to share the results of a practical experience in the teaching of English in the Master of Telecommunications Engineering program at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. This teaching experience concerns the use of digital video technologies and the use of Internet as a primary source to collect useful and adequate video material. This textbook-free experience is embedded within a constructivist learning environment, more specifically, within the Project-Based Learning, an instructional learner-centred approach built upon the engagement and motivation of the learners. Therefore, learning is designed to engage students in investigation of authentic problems. The course was designed in response to the communication demands of students within their own specialty. These demands also included both general and specific topics related to the other subjects they were enrolled in the degree and their final master project. To plan this course, we took into account these aspects but we did not overlook the teaching of grammar and lexicon among other language tools.

Language for Specific Purposes courses play an important role, integrating academic and professional communication skills with the social and critical competences that students need as citizens and professionals participating in society, as described in Arnó-Macià (2014). In this particular case of the teaching of English for telecommunications engineers, one big challenge concerns their interest in engaging in interactions with colleagues from other countries. Likewise, they need to be able to address the general public in an adequate level of English. With this idea in mind, the aim of this paper is to share a practical experience we have put into practice in the last two years in teaching English in the Master of Telecommunications Engineering program using digital video technologies.

While both CLIL and technology form part of the European agenda to promote language learning at the university (Arnó-Macià, 2014: 13), teachers of English for Specific Purposes (ESP, henceforth) at the University requires reconsidering how to meet our students' communicative demands in a globalized world. This also means addressing recent methodological challenges ranging from the use of new technologies in the classroom to the matter and the future of textbooks. According to Pérez Cañado (2009: 4), in the English teaching profession, we often tend to rely excessively on the textbook, the dictionary, or even the linguistic corpus. However, she also concedes that "these sources are no longer valid in making the link with the 'real' English language which is currently being used beyond the confines of the classroom." In this context, the analysis of Internet as a classroom resource seems

to be very appropriate and timely since it supplies specimens of real language which might be of much help for the students' linguistic progress. This stands in sharp contrast to textbooks, which turn out to be less useful in certain occasions within the classroom setting.

This seeming ineffectiveness of textbooks may be still more severe in the case of teaching specialized English as these books are usually too comprehensive, wide-ranging, and may not address the different fields within a certain discipline (Pérez Cañado, 2009; Bielousova, 2012). The Internet, however, brings about a flavour of authenticity which triggers students' motivation to learning. This also includes the case of digital video technologies of the Web 2.0 that can be used "as cognitive tools for learning" (Krauskopf, Zahn and Hesse 2012: 1194).

This paper is organised as follows: Section 2 includes a brief introduction on the subject of *English for Telecommunications Engineering* within the context of the Master in Telecommunications Engineering. Section 3 presents the procedures that were used to analyse the needs of the English for Telecommunications Engineers' students. Section 4 deals with the use of digital video technologies to teach English for future Telecommunications Engineers. Finally, the conclusions drawn from this study are offered.

2. ENGLISH FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING AT ULPGC

The Master in Telecommunications Engineering is aimed at students who have completed the new Degree in Telecommunication Technologies or at students who have finished any of the former four degrees in Telecommunications Engineering, namely, Telecommunications Engineering at Telecommunications Systems, Telecommunications Telematics Engineering, Telecommunications Engineering at Electronic Systems and Telecommunications Sound and Image Engineering. The maximum number of new students who are allowed to enrol in this Master degree each year is sixty.

The curriculum of the Master's degree in Telecommunications Engineering at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria covers a total of 120 ECTS credits, which are distributed over four semesters. Eighteen of those credits correspond to the Professional Plan module, to which the subject *English for Telecommunications Engineering* belongs, while the remaining twelve credits correspond to the completion of a Master's Thesis. This module focuses on the training of future professionals in aspects strongly related to their professional practice competences.

The academic year is a 40-week period divided into two semesters. Each semester has a workload of 30 credits and approximately 15 weeks of lesson teaching. The ULPGC has established that one ECT credit means 25 hours of student workload.

English for Telecommunications Engineering is a second-year 60-hour subject. Time allotted to the course is 4 hours per week for 15 weeks, distributed into two sessions of two hours each. It follows a communicative approach, which allows students to reinforce and expand their communication skills in English in the specific field of Telecommunications at a B1+ CEFR level. Students, who need to have at least a B1 level of English, are expected to develop the scientific content of the course with various activities of specific vocabulary, reading, writing and speaking, and integrate linguistic structures found in scientific Telecommunications English.

Students range in age from 23 to 30 years old, most of them being in their mid-twenties and showing a correct level of grammatical and lexical proficiency, but their listening and speaking skills are quite limited; this fact is consistent with the idea that most of these students are trained mainly for reading texts in their specialty and sometimes to write reports. According to Bielousova (2012: 1101), “we should get rid of a rather one-sided view of an engineer as an expert in some scientific field using his English knowledge entirely for reading scientific literature.” In fact, as Bielousova (2012: 1101) states, “engineering activities involve much broader repertoire” such as giving presentations, writing technical reports, taking part in technical discussions, participating in social and professional conversations with English-speaking clients or colleagues, among others.

The aim of the subject was for students to reach a level B1+ in all the linguistic skills they will need for their future career such as explaining their projects or writing a resume. To design this course, we took into account the communicative needs of the students within their own specialty and the fact that they were preparing their Master’s Thesis on topics as varied as robots, radars, emotion detector systems based on facial images, or person detection using a wireless sensor network.

The subject was divided into three main modules. The first module included both a grammatical section and practical exercises on the different skills about topics adapted to their Master’s theses. The grammar taught consisted of the use of the passive voice to explain processes, the grammatical points needed to describe procedures, to exemplify, to express cause and effect, that is, grammatical tools students will need to be able to share their research.

The second module was devoted to writing a curriculum vitae and preparing a job interview. This module was intended to prepare students for the job market

and it was divided into two different tasks: the writing of a curriculum vitae and the preparation and practice for a job interview. Both of these tasks were assessed by the teacher.

For the third module, students were expected to write a glossary of terms related to their Master's thesis and hand it to the teacher before the final presentation, prepare a PowerPoint presentation on their Master's research topic, and ask and answer questions from the teacher and the other students about their presentation. The glossary of terms was marked by the teacher while the PowerPoint presentation was both self-assessed and teacher-assessed at a rate of twenty and eighty percent, respectively.

The modules are taught in order. We begin by introducing the grammatical units and the lexical tools that the students will need to be able to perform the tasks they will be asked on the subject, i.e. writing their curriculum vitae, preparing for a job interview, explaining their research, understanding, asking and answering questions on the matter in an appropriate B1+ level of English. In this first part of the course students are also requested to prepare a glossary of terms related to their Master's Thesis, which would eventually help us understand the topic of the PowerPoint presentation. Finally, we explain the final task and evaluation so that learners can begin preparing both the glossary and the presentation. Then, the second five-week module introduces students to notions of curriculum vitae, interviews and the job market. Finally, the third and last module will be the subject of section 4.

The assessment criteria of this course reflect the different parts of *English for Telecommunications Engineering* as well as the commitment and dedication of the students to this subject. We should not forget that as the only subject not directly related to Engineering, it can become an obstacle for students disinclined to foreign languages or a mere formality without practical validity. Moreover, we are talking about adult learners who, generally speaking, are aware of their level and needs, and should be in some measure responsible for improving their level of English proficiency. Finally, our assessment instruments are related to the expected relevant tasks in their future working life.

In terms of the percentages, almost half of the mark corresponds to the students' oral presentation on the respective items of their Master's projects. The teacher decides eighty percent of this mark compared to the student's twenty percent self-assessment. Thirty percent corresponds to the second module tasks, the writing of the curriculum vitae and the job interview, both assessed by the teacher. Homework, participation and attendance shape the remaining twenty-five percent of the final mark.

The assessment criteria for the PowerPoint presentation takes into account four sections, each in turn divided into other subsections:

- Visual Aids and Content: PowerPoint presentation, structure and summary
- Grammar and Lexical Resources: grammar and lexical accuracy
- Sounds of English: pronunciation and intonation
- Communication Strategies: Communicative strategies, fluency, coherence and interaction.

Each section is worth twenty-five percent of the final grade for this task. Students evaluate themselves and so does the teacher; the result thereof is the final mark of this presentation. In the communication strategies part we assess not only the presentation, but also the questions asked to the other students as each of them needs to write at least two questions to the rest of the class at the end of each presentation.

Regarding resources and their availability, ESP books are usually too global to be used in specific situations (Kantonidou, 2008: 49) and our students are interested in different fields within the discipline. The books we found in the Faculty library are quite old-fashioned and scarcely communicative-oriented; they are usually meant for individual work under teacher guidance with a predominance of reading comprehension exercises (Bielousova, 2012: 1101). Kantonidou (2008: 49) advocated “the need for fresh, thought-provoking material.” Internet and its endless possibilities seems the logical source to find new, engaging materials to use in the classroom.

However, as teachers, we have to bear in mind that these students not only have a better standard of digital domain but also they are the only agents in the classroom with sufficient knowledge to assess and ask questions about issues related to telecommunications. Thus, the foreign language teacher is the specialist in the instrumental subject, but students are the ones who master the topic fluently enough to make the conversation flow naturally.

With the third module we aimed both at finding attractive, gripping materials to use in the classroom while promoting students’ participation in topics they could enjoy, without losing sight of the objective of improving the grammatical and lexical level of the students. That was only possible because the number of students in these two years has been small, with usually less than ten students, as those who have a B-level official certificate can have their English level recognised by the university. Participation in class is difficult, encouraging students to speak is hard especially when they do not know much about a topic or have no clear opinion about it. We will deal with lesson planning for this third module in the fourth section.

3. ANALYSING THE NEEDS OF THE *ENGLISH FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERS'* STUDENTS

Needs analysis (NA, henceforth) has traditionally been a fundamental part of ESP courses for syllabus design and materials development. The aim of NA regarding language teaching is to determine the reason why a specific group of language learners needs to learn a language and what methods are needed for this group to improve their target language skills. According to Chostelidou (2011: 403), “the importance of data collection procedures aiming at the identification of the demands of the target and learning situation and the genres to be adopted are widely acknowledged as essential stages for the development of ESP course design”. Long mentions accountability when explaining the rationale for needs analysis and need analysis research: “In an era of shrinking resources, there are growing demands for accountability in public life, including education. In foreign and second language teaching, one of several consequences is the increasing importance attached to careful studies of learner needs as a prerequisite for effective course design” (Long, 2005: 1).

Khansir and Pakdel (2014: 8) summarised Richards’ range of purposes for the use of NA:

- a) it can serve as a device for gathering an extensive range of input into the content, design, and implementation of language programme by involving all the stakeholders,
- b) it can help in setting goals, objectives and content for a language programme by determining general and specific language needs,
- c) needs analysis can be instrumental in providing data which can be used for reviewing and evaluating an existing programme, and finally it can help teachers in understanding the local needs of the students and making decisions in pedagogy and assessment for further improvement.

Our aim when designing the syllabus and selecting the activities and resources for this subject was to prepare our students for their professional and vocational life. With the concept of accountability in mind, the limited number of teaching hours in the Master’s degree, and the experience of a foreign language could become a hindrance if the foreign language does not cater to students’ specific needs. With the possibility that the foreign language may become an insurmountable and unnatural obstacle to finish the Master’s degree, we decided to do some previous simple research on our post-graduate students’ communicative needs.

Following the guidelines set by Chostelidou (2010: 4508) to analyse the needs of students in Greek tertiary education, the basic objectives of the first step of our research were:

- to identify the students' prospective professional needs;
- to identify the students' needs in terms of language skills and tasks;
- to record the students' deficiencies concerning language skills; and
- to elicit the students' preferences with respect to learning styles, methodology, and teacher roles.

For our purpose we chose some of the procedures available for NA mentioned by Long (2005: 31-32). We gathered information using non expert intuitions, classroom observation, as well as by soliciting the opinions of the students themselves through unstructured interviews and survey questionnaires.

3.1 Non expert intuitions

Under this heading we include the information we received from three university teachers and two librarians working at the Telecommunications Engineering Faculty via informal interviews. According to these sources, engineering students are resourceful, inquisitive and cooperative. They enjoy working in teams and analysing methodically. The information received on some generic personality traits helped us decide on the type of exercises and classroom activities these students would like and dislike, their learning styles, some possible common interests and pastimes, and their academic, vocational and professional needs. Our engineering students at Las Palmas de Gran Canaria University love problem-solving activities, puzzles and debates while they find it hard to understand exceptions and some rules in grammar. Regarding topics, they appreciate news on state-of-the-art gadgets and the latest on technology, but they also enjoy activities related to experiences on culture shock.

3.2 Classroom observation

The first lessons of this course were spent assessing the students' level of proficiency in the different language systems, skills and competences through the use of an assortment of activities. Individually, they prepared a short piece of writing about their master's projects and answered some grammatical and lexical

questions. In pairs, they produced and performed a role play in order to help us assess their oral and aural skills.

In these two years we have observed that these students usually have a good, even high, level of grammatical proficiency, but most of them cannot express themselves orally. Listening is also a skill they are not used to, especially on topics connected with their speciality. Generally speaking, students' pronunciation was poor and, when asked about their prior learning experience with English, they commented on lessons based on grammar accuracy and reading and writing activities. However, when discussing their academic and personal needs students recognized the importance of speaking English correctly and understanding others.

3.3 Unstructured interviews

Individual unstructured interviews in class with the students helped us to get to know them better, their personalities and preferences in terms of learning and teaching activities as well as their favourite topics. Post-graduate students are usually aware of their level of proficiency in the different skills even if they are not specialists in foreign language teaching. According to Wozniak (2010: 244) "ESP adult learners generally have a very acute feeling of their language needs."

3.4 Surveys and questionnaires

We prepared a short questionnaire (see Appendix) about students' communicative needs in English, their themes of research, their pastimes. We also asked some questions about their perceptions on their level of grammatical and lexical proficiency; their likes and dislikes regarding foreign language learning concerning, for example, the types of exercises and groupings they enjoy or they do not appreciate. Finally, students were also asked on the questionnaire about their perceived areas of difficulty; this information was important to understand the learning needs of each student in class, their strengths as well as the areas of their greatest need.

Although NA is considered the essential first step in the course design process, the findings must be translated into appropriate objectives and put into practice through the suitable activities and tasks. We should also identify the relevant tasks they will need to perform as professionals in the target language. With our students' goals and learning needs in mind, we explored the Internet in search of engaging and attractive topics that could be adapted to these needs.

Our students' main communicative needs were to be able to make presentations of their work in English and answer questions on the subject, to read the latest news in their field, and to understand and be understood when they talk about any particular project. The relevant tasks students need to perform are to write reports and projects in English, and to prepare a resume and their curriculum vitae. Moreover, they need everyday English as nowadays companies are usually international. Some students also mentioned the use of English for business-oriented social networking webpages.

4. LESSON PLANNING: THE USE OF DIGITAL VIDEO TECHNOLOGIES IN *ENGLISH FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING*

Although tailor-made lessons to cater to the special communicative needs of each of our students seem far beyond our teaching possibilities, from the beginning we tried to design the activities related to the different technical specialities of the class. The number of students certainly helped in this regard as in the first year there were three students and in this second year only six students were coming to class. As stated previously, students with a B-level certificate can ask for their language level to be recognised and they are released from taking the subject.

Bearing in mind that we live in a world where technologies are ubiquitous and that most teachers can hardly compete with our students regarding digital competence, especially if they are being trained to be Telecommunications engineers, ESP teachers should offer something that they will not be able to achieve on their own via Internet.

To design the different units of this module, we took into account the communicative needs of the students within their own speciality, the subject of their Master's theses which included robots, radars, emotion detector systems based on facial images, person detection using a wireless sensor network, as well as the subjects students have enrolled. We found that most students have taken Engineering in mobile applications, technological applications in security, signal processing in communications and audio-visual aids, wireless application development.

With these topics in mind, we organised the weekly two two-hour sessions following this plan:

At the beginning we introduce the topic pre-teaching vocabulary by eliciting students' knowledge about it. Next, learners watch a video and there are some listening activities which include gap fill exercises and close-ended questions. In

the second part of the first session, students answer some open-ended questions and there is usually a debate. If needed, the teacher explains some grammatical structure but mainly this last part of the lesson deals with cultural issues or technical advances that are seen on the video. The second two-hour lesson is devoted to reading, speaking and writing. We try to find a text related to the video and students discuss the different reading exercises in pairs before sharing their opinions with the rest of the class. Finally, there is a written exercise where learners put into practice both the new vocabulary and grammar in a short piece of writing. This planning is flexible and it varies according to the material we have found for a certain topic; sometimes we come upon several videos and articles on a theme, but that is rare.

This part of the syllabus aims at achieving a variety of different receptive, productive and interactive language activities, involving all the skills, e.g. Listening, Reading, Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production and Writing. According to the definition of domain stated in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001: 14), our activities are contextualised within the occupational and educational domains, but both the public and the personal domains are also present in class.

As to the resources, we have employed a diverse variety of resources including different types of texts, manuals, newspapers, journals but, for this occasion, we are interested in the use of digital video technologies from several sources including news channels such as Fox News, BBC, CNN, etc. or webpages such as YouTube, TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) platform, journals such as *The Economist* and many advertisements from several technological enterprises. Kantonidou (2008: 51) states that “empirical research and experience has shown that incorporating authentic materials tends to increase the degree of authenticity in classroom discourse and, hence, the learners’ range of receptiveness.” That has been also our experience; we looked for news clips that would be both engaging, in the spotlight and in some way controversial to force learners to express their opinions.

Many of the topics were related to the subjects students had in common, but sometimes there were some specific video clips aimed at one or two particular students as in the case of robots and television. On those occasions the targeted students led the debate and encouraged others to participate creating controversial, interesting issues. One of the basic principles of many methods, including the communicative, is to create the need for real communication, “activities that involve real communication promote learning” (Richards & Rodgers, 1997: 72), and with

ESP students that need is not always easy to produce. Digital video technologies help to build communication bridges with our students.

There was a unit on drones which combined a *New York Times* article entitled “Amazon Delivers Some Pie in the Sky” with several video clips from the Fox News channel or from YouTube, “Drone delivery a real possibility for Amazon?,” “Octocopters,” Amazon testing delivery by drone,” “Senate to hold hearing to discuss Amazon package delivery drones.” There was a lesson on Humanoid Robots which began with a video clip from the *New York Times* or a lesson to practice the passive voice which began with two advertisements entitled “A day made of glass” on Corning’s different types of specialty. The unit on virtual reality has both a short article titled “Virtual reality: Lessons from the past for Oculus Rift” and a video clip on the topic, both by the BBC; while the lesson on the future of television consisted in an article from the BBC webpage “How technology is creating a revolution on TV.”

To select the video clips we did not only take into account the subject of those videos but also their length, the clarity of the speaker’s speech, the audiovisual media support which helps students follow what is being said in the video, the possibility of having different types of materials to work with a clip, among other features. We also considered some of Scrivener’s (2004: 177) basic guidelines for using video in class such as to keep it short, to exploit the material using the same video for students to do various exercises to practice different skills, and to switch the screen off when the students don’t need to look at it.

A sample lesson plan for the use of a video clip for the teaching of English for Telecommunication Engineering is as follows:

“How technology is creating a revolution on TV”
Background information
Video: http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20131003-new-tube-why-tv-gets-better (3’51)
Aims: To understand the main point of a digital video clip. To interact with a degree of fluency and take an active part in a discussion. To write an essay, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. To read an article on television broadcasting.
Skills: Listening, Spoken Interaction, Reading and Writing
Grammar: Activities on the passive voice with reporting verbs
Procedure: Warm-up activity: Whole-class debate “What is the future of TV?”

Listening activity: Answer the following questions:

- What is the biggest challenge?
- What is the future of TV?
- What changes the shows?
- What is the water-cool effect?

Gap fill activity:

In the past you really, in the United States, just had a few _____ for which to make television shows and now, not _____ in the U.S. but all over the world, you have so many different platforms to create television shows for it. We at Sony, we make a lots of shows here in the U.S., we make a lot of shows outside the U.S. in U.K., India and _____ and what you are really seeing in television is sort of... some people call it a Renaissance, other people would just call it a _____. You are seeing an outpouring of television shows which would otherwise never would _____ produced and for the most part those are new voices. Those are voices we have not heard in the past, those are voices that _____ parts of society that we haven't seen it, that we haven't heard from in the past both demographically and ethnically, _____ that we never would have been heard in the past. And to me that makes it... that just makes to be an incredible place to be right at the moment.

Vocabulary activity:

Explain the meaning of the following words or expressions: challenge, to appeal, to jump out, to catch up, outpouring, pace, to tether, sea change.

Spoken Interaction:

Do you agree with the Sony Entertainment CEO Michael Lynton? Illustrate your opinion.

Reading activity:

Read the article "The Future of Television: Why You Won't Recognize Your Television Just a Few Years from Now" by Scott Puopolo and post a comment with your opinion (50-80 words) on the subject webpage forum.

Grammar exercises on the passive voice with reporting verbs

Homework: Read the other students' comments on the webpage and post, at least, two comments.

Writing activity:

Write an opinion essay: "The TV set will disappear in five years' time" (400-500 words)

The final assessment of this module was based primarily on an oral presentation about their final Master's project. To be able to do that presentation, students also prepare a glossary of terms related to their special branch of Telecommunications Engineering. That glossary was to be sent to the teacher weeks before the final oral presentation as part of the final mark. Besides, from the teacher's point of view, it

allowed the ESP teacher to prepare in advance the topic our students are meant to defend in advance. Students evaluate themselves and so does the teacher; the result thereof is the final mark of this presentation. In the communication strategies we assess not only the presentation, but also the questions asked to the other students as each of them needs to write at least two questions to the rest of the class at the end of each presentation. Our limited knowledge about the different presentation topics and the various engineering fields, even after reading the glossary of terms, was compensated by that of the students. They were able to ask challenging questions to their classmates thus helping our task as teachers.

5. FINAL REMARKS

As language teachers we want our students to master the different skills with a certain level of proficiency even though we are aware that our post-graduate students, in my case from the Master in Telecommunications Engineering program, do not consider English as essential, especially when compared to other subjects from the same Master's degree. Mired in more technical subjects that are directly related to their specialty, the course of English for Specific Purposes should be attractive enough for students to deem it as a useful tool in their future professional and personal life. Given this need, the search for enticing materials becomes urgent. The Internet appears as the answer to the ESP teachers' requirements for attractive and engaging materials.

Among other possibilities, the digital video technologies from the technology section of different news websites have proved a suitable way to introduce issues related to the interests of students and to create themes for discussion in which students wish to participate. Taking into account both students' needs and their choice of subjects, we designed a syllabus and lesson planning which aimed both at teaching the different language skills and at preparing them for their professional careers. And although the Internet offers an endless variety of sources, we limited our search to highly recognised and qualified web pages with technology sections. The BBC, the New York Times, Fox News Channel, YouTube and TED webpages proved to be a great source for video clips and articles on engineering and the latest technological news.

When choosing the clips and articles ESP teachers should have some prior knowledge of the learners' needs and interests to select the themes and limit the vocabulary and the lexical fields we are going to work with our students. Video clips

become some learning centres around which we work for at least two sessions. It is also important to follow some basic guidelines for using video in class and in our case J. Scrivener's recommendations have proved to be very useful.

Teachers and students profited from the use of digital video technologies as a source of materials for the *English for Telecommunications Engineering* class though this pedagogical proposal would require further development and analysis.

APPENDIX

English for Telecommunications Engineering

Please, answer the following questions:

1. What was the topic of your Bachelor Degree Final Project?
2. What is the topic of your Master Degree Final Project?
3. What do you need English for in your everyday life?
4. What do you need English for in your academic and professional life?
5. What type of activities do you like doing in the English classroom?
6. What type of activities do you dislike doing in the English classroom?
7. What do you like doing in your free time? What do you read about or watch on TV?
8. From the different skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening), which one do you think you master and which ones do you think you need to improve with more practice?
9. Do you prefer working on your own, in pairs or in groups in the English classroom?
10. What type of news do you usually read or watch? Where do you usually read the latest news?

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