Foreign Language Research into the Curriculum: Extensive Video Viewing in the University Classroom

Classroom-Based Research and Original Version Audio-Visual Input research seminar

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Universitat de Barcelona
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Collecting data for 3 pre-doctoral students

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Two key issues in EFL: vocabulary and grammar

Essential:
- FL learning
- Mastering a high proficiency level

However,

Traditional teaching approaches (vocabulary lists, translations, verb formation)

Demotivation
Grammar and vocabulary learning

More motivating teaching options:

- More contextualized
- Clear, well-defined learning objectives
- Meaningful, related to daily habits → (TV) watching with L1 subtitles, L2 captions or no captions) (“enhanced”)

Positive impact on learning after multimodal exposure

- Dual codification theory (Paivio, 1986, 2007)
- Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2014)
- Wide array of other studies
POTENTIALLY INTRUSIVE & OBTRUSIVE

- 8-10 sessions
- 25 mins each episode
- Warm-up / follow-up / series vs serial
- Pre-tests, proficiency tests, aptitude tests, questionnaires, activities pre- / during / post-episode + post-tests
- To be subtracted from regular F2F class time
- Control group
‘Integrate’ – key word

- Media Studies
- From day 1
- University context → research and teaching innovation (besides teaching)
- Academic flexibility as long as it fits the official teaching plan
- All the materials published here

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<tr>
<th>Data de publicación</th>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>&quot;The Good Place&quot; - &quot;Someone Like Me as a Member&quot; S0109</td>
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<td>&quot;The Good Place&quot; - &quot;The Eternal Shriek&quot; S0107</td>
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Intra-formal Language learning (Alm, 2019)

- Connecting one’s EFL learning with one’s daily habits
# Official teaching plan

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<th>In-class activities (language-focused)</th>
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### Official teaching plan

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Almost all along the portfolio, in most activities, following the reflective nature of this tool.

30% (less than 1 point in total) for just doing the tasks (+ online option - EdPuzzle if class missed)
Class day 1 & 2

- Oxford Placement Test
- Questionnaire on viewing habits
- Questionnaire on learning styles

- Writing and speaking class activities on language learning motivation, needs, current skills, personality and learning history

http://kaleidoscope.helsinki.fi/
Introduction to the portfolio

- My linguistic snapshot (writing)
- My relation with English so far (metaphorical image + caption)
- Me as an audiovisual communicator (video)

And so the learning journey starts!
In this task you are to upload a composition in a Word document (NO PDF or .pages, please!!!) about yourself as a language learner.

After completing the entry tests (grammar, listening, dictation and 10-min composition) and browsing the Kaleidoscope for inspiration, write a 300/350-word essay including the following points. You SHOULD NOT answer each question below separately. Instead, write an essay with PARAGRAPHS where you include the information below. You can organize your essay however you like.

- Your relationship with the English language:
  - in your daily life
  - in the past
  - in the future (do you see yourself using it in your daily life, at work, how?)
  - in formal (class) and informal contexts --> get inspo from 'My daily use of English' survey
  - is this relationship positive or negative?
Linguistic snapshot: instructions

• Your relationship with **subtitles** --> use survey done in class and 'My daily use of English and subtitles' survey for inspo:
  • do you think watching series and movies in English can help improve your English level? Why? In what skills (reading, listening comprehension, writing, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation...)?
  • in your opinion, what is more helpful, watching audiovisual materials with or without subtitles?
  • which language do you choose for subtitles, your mother tongue or English?
  • what is your experience with subtitles: When did you start using them? Have you changed your habits throughout the years?

• Your present **strengths and weaknesses** in English, in writing (first day composition), spelling (dictation), speaking, listening (OPT Listening), reading, grammar (OPT Grammar), vocabulary (X-Lex / Y-Lex), aptitude tests for learning languages (LLAMA), pronunciation (yes/no test results and reading list) --> use your scores in the placement tests and corrections in the first-class composition to support your opinion
Linguistic snapshot: instructions

• **Motivation** (positive, negative, intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, instrumental...) --> in-class speaking activity

• **What** you need English for now and in the future and how to manage with your present strengths and weaknesses

• **Learning style(s):** what do you do to learn/practise a language, what kind of activities do you prefer (role plays, reading, book exercises, videos...)? --> use the Kaleidoscope + results on the 'learning styles' survey and materials presented in class

• **Turning point** in language learning experience: Is there a moment or an event that marked a significant change in your English abilities (a trip, a teacher, a friend...)?
ME AND MY ENGLISH

My relationship with the English language in my daily life is continuous even though I didn’t have a close relationship with the English language in the past. I wasn’t interested in English because I liked French. I saw myself learning more English in the future and even using it for work or because I will be traveling in informal contexts. I rarely use English because I don’t have any English friends. The relationship that I have with English is positive, at least for me, because it’s good to learn new things every day even if I think that they’re hard or that I can’t do them well.

Watching TV series with subtitles in English, if you’re a beginner, improves your English level because subtitles can help to link the dialogue to the words of the subtitles. Subtitles also help with listening, writing and even grammar. I prefer watching series with English subtitles because when I started using them I didn’t know too much, but now I’ve learned a great deal of vocabulary.

I think that I have intrinsic motivation because I have liked learning languages since I was a child. I think that we, all the humans, need English because it’s an essential language that we have to learn if we want to travel around the world, so we can communicate with the local people.

Grammar is something that has always been difficult for me, but when I’m writing, it’s not difficult. I think that my strengths are reading and listening, maybe because I read in English very often and I listen to music in English.

When I’m learning a language, because I learn better with visual and auditory things, I like to start a new series with the language that I’m learning. Also, I like to watch videos in English. I do so, for instance, while I’m having breakfast.

Unfortunately, I don’t remember having a turning point that made me realize that I had to learn English, because if I’m learning English is because I like learning new languages so I can travel around the world. 
Procedure (one academic term)

- APTITUDE + PROFICIENCY TESTS
- VOCABULARY/GRAMMAR PRE-TEST
- VIEWING SESSIONS (8 - 10)
- VOCABULARY/GRAMMAR POST-TEST

Pre-viewing presentation or activity

Vocabulary/Grammar Pre-task
Watching the episode
Vocabulary/Grammar Post-task

Post-viewing presentation or activity

- Experimental Group(s)
- Experimental and Control Groups

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Pre-test:
grammar

Note on the test words: 1 Sentence transformation: Fill-the-gap. 2 Complete the gap with a correct form of a word in brackets.

Appendix B. Examples of test items from the pretest and immediate/delayed posttests

I. Sentence transformation exercise:

Complete each sentence with two to five words, including the word in bold

1. “We can help you with finding a flat,” said my friends.  
HELP My friends said __________________ with finding a flat.
2. I hate it when people ask me what  
FOR I hate it when people ask me what  
____________________ because I am unemployed.

II. Complete the gap with a correct form of a given word:  
Complete the sentences using a form of the words in brackets

3. The fisherman has sold about 500 _______(shrimp) this morning.
4. ______(cold) it got, ______(many) clothes they had to put on to keep warm.

III. Fill-the-gap exercise:  
Complete the gaps with the appropriate word:

5. Let’s go to the theater, ______ we?
6. You can’t trust her, she always ________ her promises.

I Love Lucy - Warm-up & pre-viewing activities

- Contextualizing them: *ILL* – 60s and the Golden Age of Hollywood
- Language-focused: pre-teaching
- Serial: what happened in the previous episode? What do you think will happen next?

I Love Lucy – while-viewing questions

"Lucy Visits Grauman’s"

1. Escoge la respuesta correcta (A, B o C).
Fred es muy fan de una actriz. ¿Cuál?
A) Ava Gardner.
B) Katharine Hepburn.
C) Audrey Hepburn.

¿Qué recuerdo de Lana Turner guarda Lucy?

A) Una foto firmada.
B) Una manzana con su firma.
C) La marca de su pintalabios.
Clichés

‘Which car do the spies usually ride in?
‘Spies? Yeah.’
‘This wouldn’t by any chance be the Orient Express, would it?’

Other clichés?

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<th>Airplanes</th>
<th>Conversation</th>
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<td>Motorcycles</td>
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<td>Skydiving</td>
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Topics – vocab related to the cinema

- Role of women: dishwater blonde vs frowsy redhead
- Characters
- Cameo
- Guest star
- Film a scene / si:n/
- Make an appearance
- Appear in a movie
- Movie star
- Starstruck
- Real acting retake

Post-viewing activities
Ever been starstruck?

Have you ever met a celebrity/someone you admire? If so...
• When/where/how was that? How did you feel?
If you haven’t...
• Who would you like to meet?
• What would you say to them?
• How do you think you would feel?

And now, be honest...

Would you like to become a celebrity yourself?
Previewing activities

- American culture
- Vocabulary & informal style
- Previous episode recap
II. A content comprehension activity.

A content comprehension multiple-choice activity aimed to check that the participants understood the general content of the recently watched episode, and did not contain any examples of the target constructions. Choose the correct answer to the questions about the episode that you have just watched.

1. How has Jianyu managed to stay undiscovered so far?
   a. He is very smart
   b. Tahani has been helping him
   c. He hasn’t spoken a word

2. What is the name of the restaurant recently opened in The Good Place?
   a. The Good Plates
   b. Angel Cakes
   c. The Food Place

3. Why does Eleanor get no food in the restaurant?
   a. She is on a diet
   b. She is on a hunger strike
   c. She was on a hunger strike in the past

4. Why doesn’t Eleanor want Jason Mendoza to be himself?
   a. She doesn’t like his music
   b. She thinks she will be in trouble
   c. She thinks it will hurt Tahani’s feelings
Pre- or post-viewing activities

- Work on:
  - Abbreviations
  - Slang
  - Wordplay
  - ...

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<td>MIA</td>
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<td>ASAP</td>
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Silly Billy, sillybilly

A person, who acts in a special way and is not afraid to do so. Usually a small, cute, person who is very happy and can make you laugh whenever they want to. Also some one who is very fun to be around and acts in the silliest way possible.

Why are you so cute, you sillybilly.

Betwixt

Literary form of ‘between’
Post-viewing activity

What makes The Good Place a good place? How/With which means is it portrayed?

- Audiovisual devices
- Material elements
- Dialog / wording
- Any of those that you consider humorous?
Post-viewing activity: Subtitles vs CC
The Good Place and the comedic event

The Comedic Event & Humor through The Good Place
Comedy theory from the Media studies and Humor studies perspective

The Myths of Comedy

- “Comedy comes in threes.”
- “Comedy is exaggeration.”
- “Comedy is mechanical.”
- “Comedy is about feeling superior to other people.”
- “You have to be born funny.”
- “If you try to explain the joke, you’ll kill it.”
- “Comedy is making fun of other people.”
- “Comedy is only about timing.”
- “Comedy is easy.”

Here are 7 word-pictures. There’s no backstory to them. Read them carefully and discuss:

1. Man slipping on a banana peel.
2. Man wearing a top hat slipping on a banana peel.
3. Man slipping on a banana peel after kicking a dog.
4. Man slipping on a banana peel after losing his job.
5. Blind man slipping on a banana peel.
6. Blind man’s dog slipping on a banana peel.
7. Man slipping on a banana peel, and dying.

Which of these statements is:
- the funniest?
- the least funny?
- the most comic?
- the least comic?
Funny vs. Comic

You can make a baby laugh dangling keys, pulling out your tongue, but is it comedy?
And from here on... another journey started, applying the theory to all the characters and some selected scenes in TGP.

The comic equation

• Comedy is:
  • About an ordinary guy or gal: a mess, a less than perfect person
  • Struggling against insurmountable odds: whatever your struggle, you know it ain’t easy
  • Without many of the required skills and tools with which to win
  • Yet never giving up hope!
Humorous / comic excerpts were selected. Students explained them in their own words and rated them in terms of funny and comic (humor studies – General Theory of Verbal Humor)
What if I just don’t get it?!

- You didn’t recognize it
- You didn’t understand it
- You are missing one of the script oppositions
- Your personality and creativity

Funny vs comic
Three scenarios

Contrived intentional humor
• A character’s production of an utterance and communication of a meaning with a view to amuse → Dr House teasing Cuddy and Foreman at times.

Contrived unintentional humor
• Funny characters *per se* (silly, inept) → Joe from *Friends*, Baldrick from *Blackadder*

Contrived unintended humor
• What the character says has no humorous intention yet it makes you laugh. And so, those characters themselves become the butt of the joke.
Metareflection starts again...

- Portfolio View 2 composition

Morale behind it all
If a joke is not funny to you, this doesn’t necessarily mean you didn’t understand it.

Or you actually didn’t!
1. English as a Foreign Language
2. sociocultural knowledge
3. (humor personality + creativity)
Types of humor – SHQ + characters in TGP

**Types of humor: characters’ personality & interpretation**

**Affiliative Humor:** tendency to share humor with others, tell jokes and funny stories, amuse others, make others laugh, enjoy laughing along with others.

**Self-Enhancing Humor:** tendency to maintain a humorous outlook on life even when not with others, use humor in coping with stress, cheer oneself up with humor.

**Aggressive Humor:** tendency to use humor to disparage/denigrate, put down, or manipulate others; use of ridicule, offensive humor; compulsive expression of humor even when inappropriate.

**Self-Defeating Humor:** tendency to amuse others at one’s own expense, self-disparaging humor; laughing along with others when being ridiculed or put down; using humor to hide one’s true feelings from self and others.

**Source**
What’s the natural writing activity that stems from all this?

Any thoughts?
Script writing – in-class task for credits

Episode scene-writing competition!

The producers of The Good Place are looking for new ideas!

How is Tahani going to keep Eleanor in The Good Place? What is her plan? Write a conversation between the main characters describing what they are going to say to each other and what they are going to do to save Eleanor.

Write between 200-220 words. Try to use as many phrases as you can from what you heard/read/learnt while you were watching The Good Place show.

Write the first conversation of the next episode using the background story given.

You have 20 minutes to complete the task.

INT. MICHAEL’S OFFICE AT THE GOOD PLACE - ....(TIME?)..............

Tahani, Chidi, Jason, and both Eleanors break into Michael’s office without knocking and interrupt his conversation with Janet. Tahani impatiently sits on the chair and starts explaining her plan. Everyone is listening to her and discusses her plan when she finishes.
Any potential follow-ups?

Share your views!
Reflective task on portfolio - View 2
My experience with TV series, comedies & *The Good Place*

After having watched 10 episodes of the fantasy-comedy TV series *The Good Place*, now is the time to reflect on the experience.

Write an essay, with paragraphs, where you will develop the following points:

• How was the experience of watching a TV series in class?
  You watched this TV show with captions. Would you have preferred to watch it with subtitles (in your mother tongue) or without them instead? Why?

• Did you expect to learn anything from watching the TV show? If so, what: grammar? vocabulary? pronunciation? fixed expressions? American/cultural knowledge?

• You have the results of the two grammar pre-tests and of the two grammar post-tests: How do you feel about them? Have you learned what you expected, more, less...? What do you think made you (not) learn? Why?

• You also have the results of the pronunciation perception pre-test and post-test. Is there a large difference in them? Have you learned what you expected, more, less...? Why do you think this is so?
Reflective task on portfolio - View 2
My experience with TV series, comedies & *The Good Place*

- Considering that *The Good Place* is a combo between fantasy and comedy, what factors make it "different" from any regular comedy show?

- How would you qualify the humor used in *The Good Place*? Provide examples to justify your answer.

- Along this course, you filled out several surveys related to your sense of humor: 1) your approach to humor in everyday life (Sense of Humor Survey /168 - Enjoyment of Humor, Kind of Laughter, Verbal Humor, Finding Humor in Everyday Life, Laughing at Yourself, Humor Under Stress), your personality in relation to humor (affective, social and cognitive dimensions - SHQ-6 revised; and Rod Martin's types of humor - affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, self-defeating), and your deal of creativity (which has been found to positively correlate with a better disposition to humor), while rating several excerpts from *TGP* according to how funny you found them. How do you think the type of humor you have and your degree of creativity influence on the way you interpreted those excerpts?

- Who was your favorite character in terms of humor? You might want to get inspiration from the statements you've been rating weekly at the end of the "Humorous excerpts analysis" worksheets and that can be found [here](#).
Reflective task on portfolio - View 2
My experience with TV series, comedies & The Good Place

• Going back to the types of humor presented in class (affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, self-defeating), which character impersonates each of them?

• Which characters did you like the most and the least, in relation to humor?

• Which was your favorite episode in terms of humor? Any scene in particular that you would like to highlight? Why this one in particular?

• Did watching The Good Place in English and having the subtitles in English make it difficult for you, you think, to grasp the jokes or puns, or was it convenient? Why? Would you have preferred to watch it with subtitles in your L1?

• If you missed some joke, what do you think caused it?

• You also wrote a short scene for TGP that should contain some humorous bits. Was it difficult/easy to create such a scene for you? If so/if not, why do you think this is so?

• You analyzed quite a few humorous excerpts from the series. How do you feel about this? Was it helpful when it came to writing your own scene?
After the experiment: Class session

- Reviewing all target items and distractors → mystery solved!
No significant differences between experimental group and control groups ($p = .000$).
Students’ feeling of learning

![Bar chart showing the feeling of learning in different areas for all participants.]

- Vocabulary: 47.79
- Expressions: 61.76
- Grammar: 11.76
- Pronunciation: 13.23
- I don't know if I'm learning: 19.11

EuroCALL online gathering 2020
To what extent does students’ experience with the different viewing modes affect preferred viewing mode?

![Viewing mode preference all participants](chart.png)

- **L1 Subtitles**
  - Beginning of the course: 56.45%
  - End of the course: 47.54%

- **L2 Captions**
  - Beginning of the course: 72.58%
  - End of the course: 11.47%

- **Without Captions**
  - Beginning of the course: 27.41%
  - End of the course: 59.01%

*EuroCALL online gathering 2020*
Some conclusive remarks

- Extended exposure to L2 viewing led to positive feeling of learning → positive experience
- Enhanced captions group → higher feeling of learning
- Expressions and vocabulary are perceived to be learned the most → emphasis in other language areas or explicit instruction (Sydorenko, 2010)
- It is easier to notice vocabulary and expressions (multi-word collocations) than underlying abstract constructions (rules)
- There is a switch from L2 captions to without captions → learner confidence might have been fostered

Further research:

- Different results mediated by proficiency levels
- Use of watching strategies should be looked into
How did the teacher deliver?

- I always provided them with the scores (not the right answers except comprehension) and almost immediate feedback.
- Missing students → Replaying the episode in class the following day + EdPuzzle or similar platforms.
- Credits for just doing the viewing-related research activities.
- At the end of the term, the results of the post-tests, the keys to the tests, and the rationale behind the experiment was explained, including test elaboration, distractors and preliminary research conclusions.
Lay beliefs vs metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness

Final reflection in the portfolio: Conclusion
Write a text with paragraphs or record yourself answering the following questions. Since this assignment will be posted on your portfolio as a text block or as a blog entry, start thinking of it in multimodal terms (hyperlinks, images, different font types, colors, layout, etc.).

- Report on your overall learning process and outcomes during this course.
- Do you think that you have improved in any of the language skills in English in relation to your initial objectives? If so, indicate which ones and how.

Have any of your reflections (e.g., linguistic snapshot, the metaphorical images, viewing habits and learning through TV series, humor through *The Good Place*, Booktuber video peer-evaluation) helped you to take some action to change your learning experience(s) or habits?

During the PW, you received several types of feedback (from your teacher, from your classmates, from the other group partners). Did you or your group take some action after receiving the feedback on your PW from your teacher (first presentation – comments on Google Drive), your own classmates (SWOT presentation) and from the other group (sections 3, 4, 5.1-5.2)? How? What’s your opinion about this procedure?

- How would you describe your experience with the electronic portfolio and dealing with multimodality?
- How would you describe both your own BookTuber experience and the feedback received from it?

What is your...:
- best contribution in this subject?
- worst contribution in this subject?
- most personal contribution in this subject?

Mention the activities that you liked and did not like doing during the course and give reasons. Alternatively, state any course task that you would have liked to do.

- Give yourself a grade. Be objective and critical with yourself and your work.
- In hindsight, give a piece of advice to yourself or the partners that have taken this course.
22 out of 33 students (66%) considered watching a TV series in class was the best activity of the whole subject. Why?

- 19 out of 22 (86.3%): because they had learned vocabulary both from the series and the activities related to the episodes
- 15 out of 22 (68.2%): because it was a very entertaining experience
- 2 out of 22 (9%): because they had had the chance to learn about their degree (Golden Age of Hollywood)
Students’ quotes

- If I had to name my most favourite activity during the course, I’d say that watching I Love Lucy was the best. Ludic reasons aside, it was a good way to learn new words and to know when it’s appropriate to use them. Also, I liked the episodes, so it’s a win-win situation. (Student 1, EG)

- The activity that I liked in this course was watching the show I Love Lucy because I learned new vocabulary while I was enjoying the TV show. (Student 5, EG)

- Without any doubt, the activity that I liked the most was watching I Love Lucy! It was fun but at the same time so useful: new vocabulary, new set phrases, listening to the American accent, and discovering new knowledge. For example, I didn’t know who John Wayne was till I watched I Love Lucy! (Student 7, EG)
Integrating OV in the students’ life

• 8 out of 22 (36%) said watching *I Love Lucy* in class made them realize (and even lose fear) they could actually watch subtitled / captioned tv at home.

• 5 out of 22 (22.7%) claimed this experience had made them change their watching habits and so now they used captions instead of subtitles.

• One student said she had realized watching TV could also be useful to learn EFL on a regular basis, not just a passive leisure activity.
Pedagogical implications

- In EFL learners from different proficiencies, authentic videos can promote **vocabulary learning**.
- Videos need to be accompanied by a set of focused and active learning **tasks** (unguided viewing).
- Need to **adapt the materials** to learners’ proficiency level: if challenging, they may draw on their language aptitude.
- **Six principles** so as to use videos in the EFL classroom (Webb, 2015):
  1) Language learning benefits must be clear to everyone involved
  2) Learners should be at the appropriate level
  3) Listening comprehension needs to be supported
  4) Precise comprehension should be a goal, not a requirement
  5) Classroom-based viewing as a guide for out-of-class viewing
  6) L2 video viewing should be fostered as much as possible
Thank you!

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