Framework for the Management of Multimedia Tools for Teaching and Learning of Spanish Language

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Abstract

In the era of rapid development of information and communication technology, both teachers and students are exposed to a great number of multimedia tools which can be used for teaching and learning purposes. Nevertheless, the biggest challenge faced by teachers is how to use the multimedia tools properly and effectively in classrooms. This study is carried out to investigate the proper management of three main multimedia tools, i.e. PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning, in classroom activities in order to have effective teaching and learning of Spanish language at Engineering Campus of Universiti Sains Malaysia. The set of ideas underlying the basis of the management of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning in classrooms is firstly presented. A framework for the management of classroom activities incorporating the combination of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning with other resources such as games, songs and additional notes is then proposed. An example of classroom activities implemented based on the proposed framework is also given. The effectiveness of the management framework in order to develop students' language skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking is gauged by means of a survey. Preferences of students on the use of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning during Spanish classrooms are analyzed. Outcome of the survey is used as guidelines to further improve the management of the use of these multimedia tools to make teaching of Spanish language more fun, challenging, and interesting to the students.
Key words: *Multimedia tools, management framework, teaching and learning of Spanish*

INTRODUCTION

In the recent decades, teachers have the opportunity to create and use a variety of teaching material using multimedia tools in order to motivate students for learning languages and develop their language skills in listening, reading, speaking and writing. In other words, the use of multimedia tools in teaching and learning have been considerably increased. With the method where multimedia tools are used, teachers can display suitable images, words, voices, video clips, E-Learning materials etc. in an equipped classroom. In this way, students are able to understand the meaning of new words without any translation and memorization.

Researchers have examined how helpful PowerPoint is and how students prefer PowerPoint presentation (West, 1997; Cassady, 1998; Perry & Perry, 1998). In the study conducted by Szabo and Hastings(2000), over 90% of students said that PowerPoint is more attention capturing than the traditional method of lecturing; and 85% found PowerPoint lectures are more interesting than traditional lectures. Nevertheless, many courses that adopted multimedia presentation have not shown a corresponding increase in students' performance (Stoloff, 1995; Susskind & Gurien, 1999). Jones(2003) has highlighted the danger of making PowerPoint presentations available to students. Such practice is said to encourage "students to sit passively through the session since they may perceive they have 'got the notes' ". A major pedagogical issue with PowerPoint presentations is that receivers are "passively engaged" rather than "actively engaged"(Craig and Amernic, 2006). Even though interactive video can help entice learners to pay full attention to learn the material through active interaction between learners and instructional video (Agius, 1999), other studies have reported that there is a little impact of video on learning outcome (Mbarika et al, 2000). Other research study has shown that E-Learning contributes to the enrichment of methodology in the foreign language teaching leading to higher motivation for, and interest of, foreign language learning (Klímová, 2012).   Students can learn at their own pace whenever and wherever they are. Nevertheless, teachers face some disadvantage during the process of teaching and learning of language using E-Learning. Face-to-face interaction between a teacher and students is necessary in order to develop the four different language skills.   Students cannot develop successfully all the skills with the use of E-Learning only.   The efforts by teachers to improve the educational quality of teaching and learning by applying technology give opportunity for   distance learning and thus extends further possibilities of learning(Klímová, 2005).

From the findings of previous research studies, it is evident that multimedia tools must be used in a correct way in order to achieve desired results of developing students' language skills and interests. Specifically, it is believed that proper attention should be paid to the management of the multimedia tools in class. With proper management, not only passive and boring classes can be avoided, students' interest in foreign language learning can be improved through their active involvement in class.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

In this study, a conceptual framework for the management of the classroom activities using PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning in combination with other resources is

proposed. This management framework is designed to allow students to acquire knowledge of the language gradually and develop the four language skills. With this study, more data about how the multimedia tools can help to promote interactive classes could also be known.

In the following section, methodology adopted in this study is first described. This is then followed by examples incorporating the proposed management framework. Feedback gathered from the students for judging the effectiveness and suitability of the proposed framework is discussed before coming to a conclusion.

METHODOLOGY

This study is carried out to investigate the proper management of three common multimedia tools such as PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning for the purpose of effective teaching and learning of Spanish language in order to improve student's ability in communication.

As a result of the evolution of education from the conventional teacher-centred to the constructivist student-centred together with the development of information and communication technology, the biggest challenge faced by teachers is how to use the multimedia tools properly and effectively in classrooms. For that reason, the following set of questions and answers have been used to formulate the general idea of management of multimedia tools such as PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning in the classroom in order to have excellence in teaching.

	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1.	What changes would you like to see about Spanish teaching and learning using multimedia tools?	- INTERACTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING - STUDENTS' SELF-LEARNING
2.	What improvement do you wish the students to achieve using multimedia tools?	- TO IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOP SKILLS
3.	What are the biggest challenges faced by teachers using multimedia tools in classrooms?	- TO AVOID PASSIVE CLASSES - TO ENCOURAGE INTERACTIVE TEACHING - TO ENCOURAGE AND ENGAGE CRITICAL THINKING
4.	How do teachers make sure that students' attentions are captured in most of the time with the use of multimedia tools and to avoid passive classes?	- WITH GOOD PLANNING, TEACHERS ENCOURAGE AND ENGAGE STUDENT'S ACTIVE LEARNING AND DEVELOP STUDENTS' INTEREST

The answers to the above questions have been adopted in formulating the main ideas underlying the appropriate management framework on the use of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning in Spanish class as shown in Fig.1. Details about the main ideas are described in Table 1. These main ideas serve as guidance for achieving success in the classrooms with appropriate management of multimedia tools.
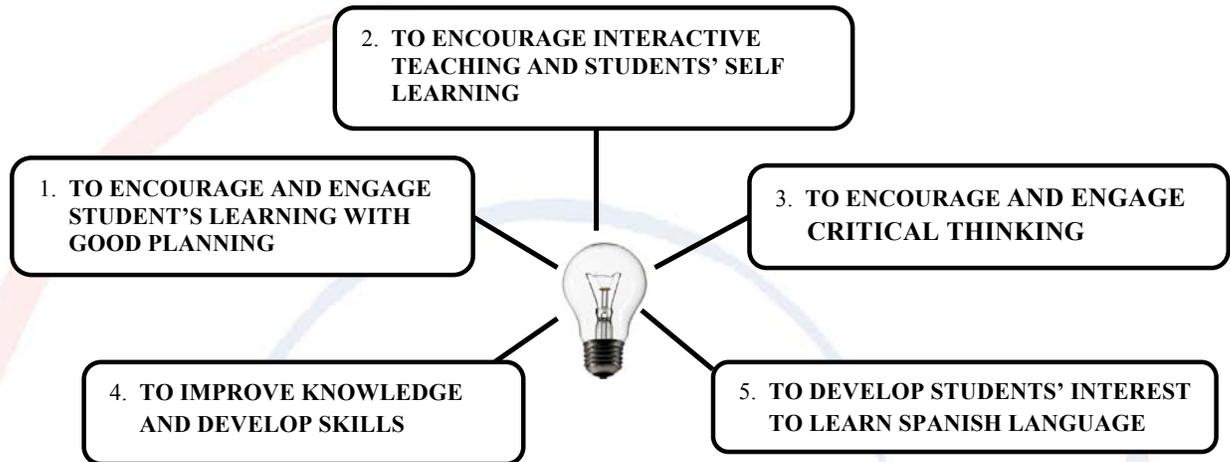

Figure 1. Main ideas for an appropriate management of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning in classrooms

Table 1: Underlying details of the main ideas of appropriate management of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning

1. TO ENCOURAGE AND ENGAGE STUDENT'S LEARNING WITH GOOD PLANNING

a. Providing clear learning outcomes to give ideas what students should learn.
b. Planing and selecting comprehensible materials with an appropriate sequence according to the learning
  outcomes.
c. Planning the time for teaching using PowerPoint, video clips, and E-Learning in the combination with
  other activities (completing exercises, questions and answers in oral practice, discussions) in order to
  make the students active.

2. TO ENCOURAGE INTERACTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENTS' SELF-LEARNING

a. Minimizing English explanation with comprehensible slides.
b. Screening the slides dynamically and video clips in appropriate duration of time together with other
  activities, in order to develop active classes.
c. Organizing activities which involve students working in groups, individually, or whole class participation
  with conducive environment.

d. Developing students' command of language with relevant and comprehensible exercises together with enjoyable activities such as playing games, listening to songs, singing, etc. in combination with PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning. e. Creating an exciting learning environment through watching dialogues in video clips and letting students feel how much they can understand a native speaker, followed by making their own dialogues where students are able to relate and reinforce what they have learned in classroom. f. Providing the exact pronunciation of words, phrases or dialogues with recorded voice in the slides for self-learning. g. Uploading the PowerPoint, Additional Notes and video clips to E-Learning for self-learning.
3. TO ENCOURAGE AND ENGAGE CRITICAL THINKING
a. Creating exercises for students to think and to interact with their classmates. b. During the practice of doing exercises, teacher encourages students to discuss in order to have more interactive lesson.
4. TO IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOP SKILLS
a. Selecting the linguistic tools that students need to learn in order to develop the basics of the language, such as vocabulary and grammatical structures. b. Creating activities where the students acquire knowledge in a gradual way. c. Creating activities where students order words into phrases, phrases into paragraphs by following the correct grammatical structures. d. Providing diverse exercises using PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning in accordance with the students' learning styles and language learning aptitude.
5. TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' INTEREST TO LEARN SPANISH LANGUAGE
a. Creating a stimulating environment that will capture the interest of the students. b. Explaining concepts clearly in more than one ways for better understanding. c. Creating exercises that challenge students' ability. d. Selecting suitable video clips according to the students' level of proficiency in order to improve the listening skill and understanding of the expressions used by people in different cultural context.

With excellent management on the use of the three common multimedia tools such as PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning, students have the opportunity to improve their proficiency in listening, reading, speaking and writing of Spanish Language.

A management framework of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning for learning Spanish languages guided by the above ideas has been proposed. E-Learn@USM, the E-Learning Portal of USM, has been used as the tool for E-Learning in this study. Through this management framework, teachers are provided with guidance to manage the use of these three multimedia tools in combination with other teaching resources

as shown in Fig.2. The process of teaching and learning in the classroom using multimedia tools is summarized in Fig 3. Examples of classroom activities designed using the proposed management framework are shown in Table 2.
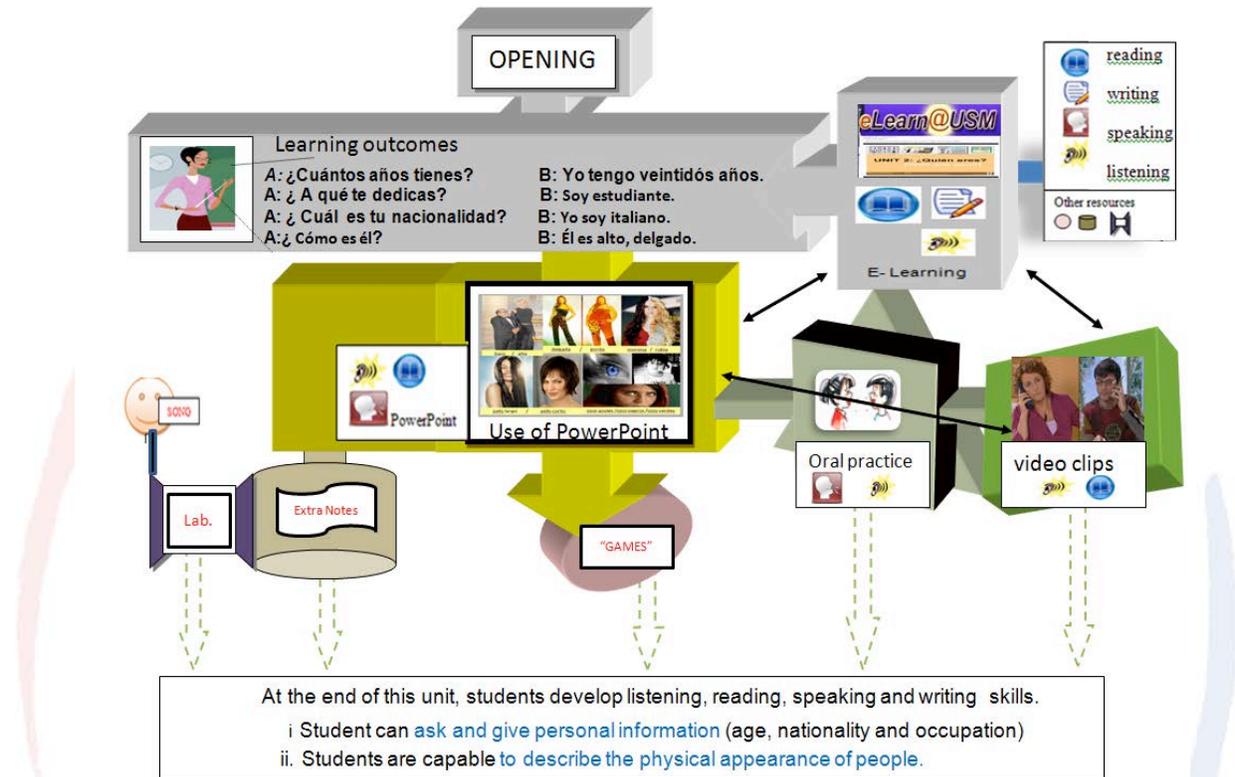

Fig.2: Proposed Management Framework of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning

Fig.3: Process of teaching and learning in the classroom using PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning

Table 2. Example of Spanish classroom activities based on the proposed management framework

UNIT 2: ¿Quién eres? (Who are you?)	
Learning outcomes	By the end of this unit, students will be able : To describe a person according to physical appearance and character

Activity 1: Learning how to describe a person according to the physical appearance and character using **POWERPOINT** with sound and **E-LEARNING** web page in combination with other activities.

a) The teacher prepares slides showing people with different physical characteristics and provide the exact pronunciation of the words and phrases with recorded voice in the slides for self-learning.

During the session using **PowerPoint :**
    - Students have to relate adjective with images and learn the correct pronunciation.
b) Students have to learn the correspondence between nouns and adjective according to the gender and number
c) Practise in pair:
   The students will ask questions about appearance of their family members, using the interrogative pronouns
         ¿Cómo …..?
         ¿Cómo es tu padre**?**   **Él es alto, delgado, …….**
           How does your father look like?   He is tall, thin, …..

Activity 2: Learning how to describe the physical appearance of the people using **GAMES**.

a) Students are required to ask and give information about the physical appearance of somebody.

Students have to ask questions using the verbs **ser** and **tener**:   **¿Es** rubio**?**   **¿Tiene** los ojos verdes**?**

b) A student is required to describe the physical appearance of a famous person and another student is required to tell the name of the person based on the description.

Activity 3: Learning how to describe the physical appearance of a member of family using **VIDEO CLIPS** uploaded to **E-LEARNING** web page in combination with other activities.

a) Students have the opportunity to watch and enjoy Spanish language with **video clips** showing scenes very close to the reality.

* La tía Margarita

   Students answer the questions and fill in the blanks with suitable adjectives and verbs.
c) Writing exercises:
        1. Exercise 1. Haz pareja de contrarios from "Additional Notes LAE100"
        2. Fill the boxes using the verbs **ser**, **tener** and **llevar**

| Activity 4. Singing a song and identifying adjectives in the lyric using **VIDEO CLIPS** uploaded in E-LEARNING webpage |
| --- |
| a) Students identify and underline the adjectives in the lyrics of Mexican **song** "EL AVENTURERO".
 b) Students practice the pronunciation of Spanish words and phrases with the lyrics of **Mexican** song and sing the song. |
| Activity 5: During the practice of using **POWERPOINT**, all students refer to *Additional Notes* uploaded to E-LEARNING web page to ensure the correct understanding of the Spanish grammar. |
| a) Students are required to associate PowerPoint with *Additional Notes*. |
| |
| b) Students are required to answer a variety of exercises. |
| Activity 6: Use **VIDEO CLIPS** produced by the Spanish teacher to improve listening and speaking skills through exercises by answering questions. |
| a) Students are required to answer a variety of questions and develop their communication skill. |
| |
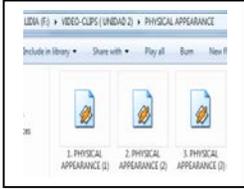
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The effectiveness of the use of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning on teaching and learning on Spanish language has been analyzed based on the feedback from engineering students via questionnaire conducted at the end of the Semester I 2011-2012. The response to each question is summarized in Table 3 and Fig.4.

Table 3: List of questions used in the survey for Spanish Language with a total of 43 respondents.

		Abstain	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	The teacher uses PowerPoint in all classes.	0	0	0	1	11	31
2.	The teacher combines PowerPoint with other exercises during the lesson.	0	0	0	1	6	36
3.	The teacher combines PowerPoint with other multimedia tools for teaching such as videos, YouTube, video clips, and E-learning.	0	0	0	0	9	34
4.	The PowerPoint presentation prepared by the teacher for the classes help students to understand better about Spanish vocabulary and grammar.	0	0	0	0	10	33
5.	The PowerPoint presentation helps students to remember better.	0	0	0	0	17	26
6.	I enjoy learning vocabulary with my classmates using PowerPoint during the class.	0	0	0	1	14	28
7.	The PowerPoint encourages students to explore and learn the Spanish language on an as-needed and as-desired basis.	0	0	1	2	19	21
8.	The related extra notes with the PowerPoint provided by the teacher promote the interest and understanding of the Spanish language.	0	0	0	2	14	27

9.	The PowerPoint has been designed to minimize misunderstanding of the meaning of the words and to ensure correct undestanding of the language by the students.	0	0	0	0	18	25
10.	To maintain student's interest, the teacher uses the PowerPoint as an interactive material which enables students to plan their own learning.	0	0	0	0	18	25
11.	The PowerPoint materials and extra notes have been planned to nicely complement each other for better understanding of lessons by students.	0	0	0	1	15	27
12.	PowerPoint is the most useful way for me to learn Spanish.	0	0	0	9	16	18
13.	The teacher uses very often videos, video clips, in the classroom and in the language laboratory.	0	0	0	4	11	28
14.	I enjoy video clips because some aspects /scenes very close to reality are shown which help me to understand better Spanish language.	0	0	0	1	16	26
15.	After watching video clips in the class, I am able to speak Spanish more confidently.	0	0	1	11	19	12
16.	The teacher uses very often videos, video clips and songs, in the classroom and in the language laboratory.	0	0	0	4	11	28
17.	I prefer watching video clips, etc. during the class.	0	1	1	5	19	17
18.	Watching video clips is the most useful way for me to learn Spanish.	0	1	1	10	21	10
19.	The teacher uses E-Learning for teaching during the whole semester.	0	0	0	5	15	23
20.	The learning materials in PowerPoint uploaded to E-Learning webpage help students to practise Spanish pronunciation.	0	0	0	1	15	27
21.	E-Learning is useful for self-learning.	0	0	0	6	16	21
22.	I enjoy learning vocabulary alone by myself using E-Learning			9	10	11	13
23.	I prefer watching video clips, etc. after the class through E-Learning.	0	0	8	13	14	8
24.	I prefere to use E-Learning during the class.	0	3	1	17	14	8
25.	E-Learning is the most useful way for me to learn Spanish.	0	0	0	12	20	11

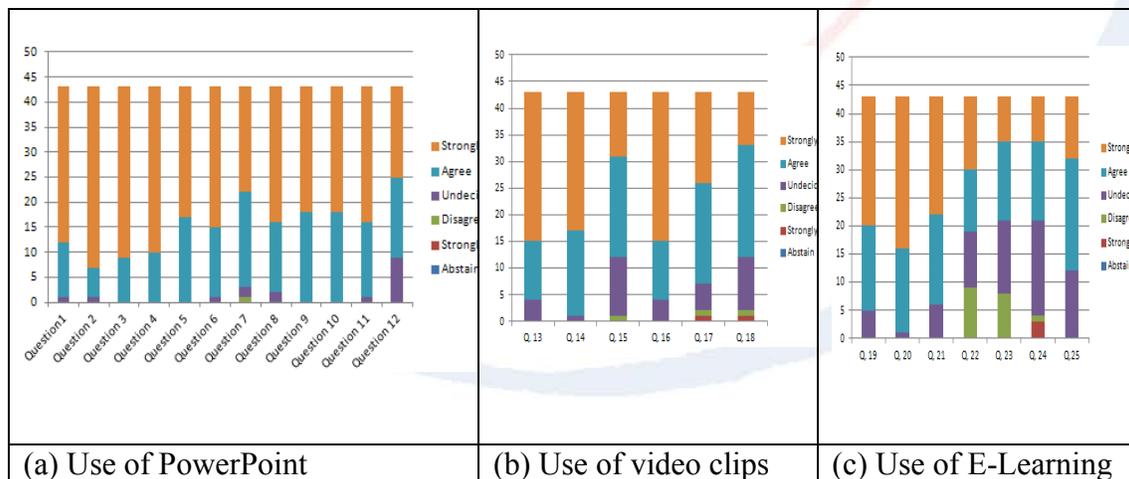| (a) Use of PowerPoint	(b) Use of video clips	(c) Use of E-Learning

Fig.4: Summary of survey results for Spanish class

The total number of students taking part in this research is 43. Overall, the response of the student was found to be very positive. The framework for the management of Power-Point, video clips and E-learning in the process of learning Spanish language was shown to be effective as positive response (agree and strongly agree) of at least

72% was observed in all questions. From the feedback gathered, the following observations can be made:

i) Teacher used very frequently PowerPoint(97%), video clips(90%), and E-Learning (83%);

ii) 79% of the respondents agreed with question 12: *PowerPoint is the most useful way to learn Spanish* while 72% of the respondents agreed with question 19 and 25: *Watching video clips is the most useful way to learn Spanish* and *E-Learning is the most useful way to learn Spanish,* respectively. Based on their answers, we can assume that students come from the media generation;

iii) Interestingly, students enjoyed learning vocabulary during the class using PowerPoint as well as self-learning using E-Learning as shown in the questions 6 (97%) and question 22 (55%), respectively. The methods for teaching and learning Spanish using multimedia tools are useful for the generation of students surveyed;

iv) Students enjoyed watching video clips during class and after the class through E-Learning; and

v) The education for the generation of students surveyed cannot be separated from the use of multimedia tools.

CONCLUSION

In this study, a framework for management of three common multimedia tools namely PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning for the purpose of effective teaching and learning of Spanish language has been proposed, implemented and evaluated for its effectiveness in class. Through the employment of this management framework, teachers are provided with guidance to manage the use of these three multimedia tools in combination with other teaching resources. With appropriate management of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning, a teacher:

i) Encourage interactive teaching with multimedia tools and students' self-learning;

ii) Encourage students' engagement in the learning process with creative and critical thinking;

iii) Improve student's knowledge growth and develop communicative thinking; and

iv) Develop students' interest to learn language and culture.

The feedback gathered from students at Engineering Campus of USM has shown the preferences of students on the use of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning in the process of teaching and learning of Spanish language. It can also be concluded that students have found the use of PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning in class as an approach which is challenging, fun, interesting, easy to understand, engaging and effective for learning foreign languages and culture. Furthermore, the study shows that the proposed management framework is effective for teaching and learning of foreign languages with the use PowerPoint, video clips and E-Learning, three common multimedia tools.

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