The Use of Educational Videos to Promote Kindergarten Students' Motivation

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Abstract
Due to the constant stream of stimuli offered by technology, children are harder to motivate, and therefore to teach. According to this, and following today's emerging technological society, states that it is important that school classrooms use and explore technological means of information. Thus, in order to promote a meaningful learning experience, we aim to explore different kinds of educational videos and their effects on students' motivation. During six months, and twice a week we worked with 40 children aged 4-5, learning English as a foreign language through the use of educational videos. Our results suggest that children feel more motivated to learn with videos that require their responding and reflective skills, rather than videos that only require listening and memorization skills.

Keywords: Motivation, Educational Videos, Kindergarten

Introduction

Considering today's social, economic and cultural changes, it should be stressed that each individual has its own personality and most importantly, that children learn at their own pace. Kindergarten, as the students' first step into the academic world, plays a crucial role in the children's motivation and engagement (Jasmins, 2014). As this stage, educators must be prepared to embrace new pedagogical approaches, aiming to promote the development of the child's personal and social skills, by encouraging to communicate within a multicultural environment, stimulating their curiosity and also their critical thinking (Brito, 2010).

Literature suggests that the use of new technologies in kindergarten may promote motivation, new learning experiences, and the development of cognitive and social skills, thus providing multiple learning resources (Fandiño, 2013; Prensky, 2012). The use of the computer inside the classroom supports new learning approaches that are in line with the digital demands of today's society. Using technology within the academic context offers several strategies to learn either languages, arts, or calculation in a resourceful number of ways, allowing children to explore, to create, to make mistakes, and to try again (Marta, 2017).

Learning a foreign language using technology is much more effective than learning through a lecture-based class, providing the child a more dynamic, inclusive and interactive learning approach, but will also preparing them to face the needs of today's society. According to Francis (2017), the inclusion of technology in education provides a multiplicity of educational tools, such as videos, audios, and games, and also, it promotes an inclusive, dynamic and interactive learning, thus boosting engagement and motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Furthermore, the use of multimedia animation, such as videos will help children to develop their vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and reading skills, but also it enhances their motivation to learn foreign languages (Beluce, & Oliveira, 2010).

Studies on Educational Psychology reveal that motivation is a construct responsible for one's behavior, leading them it make decisions and take action (Pereira, 2013). As a construct, motivation has been, throughout the decades, difficult to define, changing according to the social, cultural and economic context. Due to its complexity, the literature suggests that the construct motivation can be observed through two perspectives: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from within, and it is mainly concerned with the self (children playing with each other just because it is satisfying), whereas extrinsic motivation refers to rewards and social recognition (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to Brumen (2011), children are intrinsically motivated to learn because they enjoy the process of learning. Thus, promoting the children's social and cognitive development, by surrounding them with a stimulating learning environment, reinforcing their language proficiency, curiosity and eagerness to learn, will result in a positive attitude towards the learning process (Mosquera, 2017).

Methodology

This study used a qualitative design, as it provided the opportunity to participate, observe, and to carry out a descriptive and interpretive work of the data collected

throughout the research (Amado, 2014; Brannen, 2017; Bogdan, & Biklen, 1994). When conducting this research project we aimed for a holistic perspective, in order to explore the students' opinions regarding the educational videos.

Research Question

Considering the scope of the research project, we wanted to analyze kindergarten students' motivation to learn. Thus, in order to explore the different kinds of educational videos, and their effect on students motivation, we decided to focus on 3 particular research questions, such as:

(1)   Do children feel motivated to learn through the use of educational videos?
(2)   How do children perceive educational videos requiring their responding and reflective skills?
(3)   How do children perceive educational videos requiring their listening and memorization skills?

Participants

The study included 40 kindergarten students, ages 4 to 5 learning English as a foreign language. They were enrolled at a private school in Lisbon, where the research project was held.

Procedure: interview

The research instrument used in this study consisted of a semi-structured interview with the 40 participants who were involved throughout the research (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006). Data were recorded, transcribed and anonymized. We used the NVivo software version 12 in order to review, analyze and organize words to produce a word cloud (Guizzo, et. l. 2013). The interviews were conducted between January 14th to June 17th, 2019.

Data collection Procedure

Each lesson was divided in two parts (20 minutes for the first part and 25 minutes for the second part). In the first part of the lesson, we showed four educational videos in English, selected from different children's channels on YouTube. The first two videos required them to use their listening and memorization skills, while the other two required them to use their responding and reflective skills. The second part of the class was used to discuss the videos with the children. In order for us to understand the children's perspective regarding the videos, we conducted a semi-structured interview with the children's including four open-ended questions: (i) "Do you enjoy watching videos during the English classes?"; (ii) "Did you like the video? Why? Why not?"; (iv) "What did you like the most and the least?"; (v) "Can you remember some of the words used in the video?". This moment of reflection enabled us to understand which kind of video was most effective in terms of motivation, engagement and learning. In total, we displayed 184 videos, being 92 of them focused on the listening and memorization skills, while the other 92, were focused on children's responding and reflective skills.

On the last lesson of the project we asked the children if they could remember some of the words mentioned in the videos, or any particular moment throughout the 46 sessions.

Results and Discussion

1)   Word Frequency

According to the data collected, we used NVivo Software version 12 to analyze word frequencies. We proceeded to include the transcription of the interviews in the referred software, and concluded that the words that showed a higher frequency on the words cloud (see Fig. 1).   were the ones that were on the videos requiring responding and reflective skills, namely: "jump", "shut", "happy", "stop", "open" or "dance".

(Figure 1: Words cloud)

2)   Motivation

Results showed that students were always enthusiastic about watching videos during the English classes, asking questions such as "are we going to watch those videos?", "Can we watch it again"?, "Please play the one with the invisible man.". Such behavior emphasized that students' motivation was in fact promoted by the use of educational videos.

3)   Educational Videos

According to a wider analysis of the data collected throughout this study, and regarding the role of educational videos in kindergarten students' motivation, we came to the following results: (i) the content of the video represented a key factor regarding students' motivation; (ii) students also valued the actor's body language and facial expression. It was shown that students felt more engaged whenever the actor was moving actively rather than just staying in the middle of the video singing or acting; (iii) the actor's tone was also important regarding students' motivation. If the tone was dull while singing the chants, students were more likely to get distracted.

In a narrower sense, we concluded that the videos requiring children's reflective and responding skills were more effective in terms of motivation and language learning

because of several factors such as: (i) the use of bright and vivid colors and landscapes in the background; (ii) the outfit used for each video. Children valued the use of clothes similar to the ones they use. They also enjoyed it when the actors used unusual outfits matching the topic discussed in the video; (iii) Dancing, gesturing and pointing or talking to the camera. Such activities would make children respond to the video either dancing, mimicking or answering the actors; (iv) regarding the videos requiring their listening and memorization skills, data showed that in terms of motivation and language learning, they were not so effective. Although children enjoyed the chants and the animations in the first minute, they would quickly lose their focus. While the video was playing children started to chat and to play with each other. According to the data children couldn't memorize as much vocabulary, when compared to the other type of videos.

Conclusion

Our analysis suggests that the children's are motivated by the use of educational videos during the English class. Although we analyzed the use of two types of videos, one of them promoting responding and reflective skills, and the other one promoting listening and memorization skills, it was found that the use of videos promoting children's responding and reflective skills were much more rewarding in terms of language learning, memorizing vocabulary, and also student engagement. On the other hand, videos requiring listening and memorization skills were not as effective in terms of language learning and student engagement. According to our results this kind of videos were less valued due to the lack of interactivity and dynamics.

Considering that kindergarten is one of the most important educational stages in one's life, which plays an important role in adulthood (Coyle, Verdú, & Valcárcel, 2011), researchers and educators must continue to pursue the most efficient pedagogical approaches in order to promote a meaningful learning environment.

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