

# Teaching Learning Strategies by Using Video\*

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## I. Introduction

The importance of the quantity and quality of input in the target language has been recognized in the language classrooms since Krashen advocated the input hypothesis. According to Krashen (1985), the focus of instruction should be on the message in the target language, and it should be comprehensible to the learners in the classroom. In other words, the language instruction should be English in an English class, and it should be comprehensible to the students in the contexts of its use. Some empirical studies at Otaru University of Commerce (Oshima 1996; Kobayashi 1996; Murahata 1996) have also stressed the maximum use of the target language in the classroom. The use of the target language is essential in the classroom to maximize the opportunity of language acquisition in the circumstance like Japan where English is not used outside the classroom.

These researchers also stress the importance of language instruction with appropriate academic contents. University students who have successfully finished their high school curriculum have already reached a certain level of cognition. Though they are beginners in oral skills of

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English, students already have general knowledge of the world and basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in English. They are frustrated if the class activities do not meet their cognitive level. This is one of the reasons why a conventional English class is less effective in learning how to express themselves in English.

This paper will discuss the importance of cognitive oriented methods in language instruction that activates appropriate learning strategies among learners, and introduce an experimental teaching method to grow such learning strategies through class activities in using video as a teaching material.

## II. Theoretical background

There are several important findings concerning learning strategies in second language acquisition. Initial researches were based on the interviews with good language learners and the classroom observations by the researchers. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) summarize notable researches on learning strategies. They identify three kinds of strategies that are effective in improving students' performance: metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies entail planning and thinking about the learning. They include monitoring learning process and self-evaluation of the learning activities. Cognitive strategies involve manipulation of learning materials to accomplish the learning tasks. Social/affective strategies are related to cooperative learning with peers. The cognition has thus been recognized as an important role in second language acquisition processes.

Cognition is explained by Cummins (1983) in terms of academic language proficiency. He describes language proficiency with two continua that relate to task difficulty and the degree of contextualization in

which language is used. Difficulty varies from cognitively undemanding tasks in daily use such as reading road signs, to cognitively demanding tasks in an academic situation such as reading textbooks. The context for language use varies from a full of contextual cues such as gestures, facial expressions, or other paralinguistic and linguistic cues, to reduced cues in academic tasks. According to Cummins, the academic tasks are initially cognitively demanding and difficult, but gradually become easier. The performance of those tasks becomes cognitively undemanding and automatic.

This notion has been elaborated by Anderson's stage-related theory of learning (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). According to Anderson (1983, 1985), language learning skills are acquired through three stages: the cognitive, associative, and autonomous stages. During the cognitive stage, the learners observe a native speaker or a teacher doing the task, or receive instruction how to do the task. For example, one can memorize vocabulary and the structure of sentences when repeating sentences after the teacher. During the associative stage, each acquired skills are connected and errors in doing tasks are reduced. In the final stage, autonomous stage, the performance of skills becomes automatic and the learners become to perform the skills effortlessly without errors that inhibit successful performance of the skills. This Anderson's stage-related theory of learning articulates the notion of Cummins' continuum of task difficulty: Any tasks start with cognitively demanding and become autonomous with cognitively undemanding, which completes the acquisition of a skill to execute the task.

On the bases of the theories of cognition, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) investigated the cognitive processes by using the longitudinal foreign language study, and reclassified the learning strategies found

previously in other studies done by themselves and others. According to them, planning for learning is an essential strategy for reading and listening comprehension in second language learning. Previewing the expected ideas or principles of a task is called “advance organization.” In listening comprehension, students are expected to review their knowledge of the topic and generate some language in the listening passage before they actually listen to the passage. In production tasks such as writing a summary of the passage, “organizational planning” strategies were recognized to be used among the subjects in their study. Students plan the sequence of the main ideas and the organization of the discourse in the summary. Eventually, they should have a plan of the language functions to be used in production of the summary. Besides of these metacognitive strategies, “imagery” strategies were recognized as one of the cognitive strategies that involve actually handling the material mentally or physically by using a specific technique for dealing with a task. Students are expected to use mental or actual visuals to understand information. Social and affective strategies were also reported to be recognized in their study though they were not used frequently by the subjects of the study. “Cooperation,” or working with peers is one of them. Students are expected to solve a problem, pool information, or get response to oral presentation. The study clarified that effective learners of a second language are supposed to use significantly more learning strategies than otherwise.

In cognitive psychology, there are very little studies on how strategies are used with second language learning tasks. However, there are a few studies of the keyword method with students learning a foreign language (O'Mally and Chamot 1990). In comprehension or production, students are given the keywords of the passage to use for executing a

task. This method corresponds to a cognitive strategy, “note taking” defined by O’Mally and Chamot. It is defined as “writing down key words and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form to help performance of a language task.”

### III. HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED

Looking back on the related literature and previous studies on cognitive strategies, the author would like to state the following hypotheses to be tested in an experimental class using video as a teaching material.

Hypothesis 1: Having students view a scene without the sound track will activate their cognitive, imagery strategies (O’Malley and Chamot 1990) which help students understand the scene with sound and improve their listening skills.

Hypothesis 2: Guessing the story of a scene with silent viewing will help students understand the content of the film. In the silent viewing activities, students talk about the sequence of the scene without sound with their partners, and summarize together what they have just seen. Thus talking about the story works as an advance organization (O’Malley and Chamot 1990) to understand the content of the scene by listening in later activities.

Hypothesis 3: Making an oral presentation of a scene in the silent viewing activities will help students use an organizational planning strategy (O’Malley and Chamot 1990) for listening comprehension of the story.

Hypothesis 4: According to cooperation strategies, one of the social and affective strategies as O’Malley and Chamot (1990) defined, cooperative learning will motivate students to involve language tasks in the classroom activities. Therefore, talking about a scene with a partner

using an information gap will motivate students to do the task filling information gaps.

#### IV. METHOD

##### A. Subjects

A regular English class using video as a teaching material has been chosen as an experimental class. This class was offered to the first year students as a required English course at Otaru University of Commerce during the academic year of 1995. There were forty-eight students registered and most of them are eighteen years old who were right out of high school. During the high school days, they had been taught English with Grammar-Translation method. As Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979) state, the major characteristics of Grammar-Translation method are as follows: 1) Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language. 2) Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words. 3) Long elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given. 4) Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words. 5) Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early. 6) Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis. 7) Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue. 8) Little or no attention is given to pronunciation. Since most of them have not had enough oral language training, students right out of high school are not familiar to a class conducted almost whole class in English. According to the result of the CELT (A Comprehensive English Language Test for Learners of English) Form A, administered at the beginning of the course, the average of the score was about twenty-one

points out of fifty questions in listening section; in fact, most students (83%) could not reach the half of the total score, fifty points.

### B. Teaching plan

The main objectives of this class were set up and notified to the students in the beginning of the class as follows: 1) Students are able to summarize the story of the film in English. They are required to write five pages of summary of the film in English at the end of the course instead of taking a final examination. 2) Students are able to present the summary orally in English. The class evaluation has thus done by the five page summary and oral presentations students made during the class hours.

A movie, "Field of Dreams" was used as a teaching material. The script published by the screen play was assigned as a reference book available at the university book store. The movie was divided into eleven units by the author and exercises were made for each unit. Each unit would be finished in two or three class hours according to the academic schedule, thirty class hours in a year. Roughly speaking, each unit consists of four major classroom activities: previewing, silent viewing, main viewing, and postviewing activities.

In the previewing activities, characters, names of places, and other proper nouns in the scene are introduced either in a handout or teacher's explanations. The focus of teaching is on raising students' consciousness of cultural comparison between the United States and Japan. Students are always expected to answer the questions orally regarding the topic of the activities as a form of previewing exercises.

In the silent viewing activities, students are paired to view a scene without listening to the sound track. One in the pair who watches a scene is expected to describe the scene verbally in either English or

Japanese to the partner who is expected to take a note for writing a summary of the scene later together. Since each scene is more than five minutes long, the role of a partner alternates a few times in the middle of the activities. Then they cooperate to make a summary of the scene for an oral presentation. In oral presentation, students are expected to make an outline of the summary they have made together, and do the presentation using the outline. The rest of the students as audience participates to evaluate the presentation according to the criteria the teacher made as follows. There are five categories with five scale evaluation criteria from poor to excellent:

- 1) Eye contact: Does the student speak to the audience?
- 2) Loudness: Is his or her voice loud enough for you to understand?
- 3) Contents: Are the contents relevant to the topic and easy to understand?
- 4) Rhythm: Does his or her intonation sound authentic in English?
- 5) Feedback: Are you motivated to ask questions or state comments?

Students use a mark sheet for conducting this evaluation, and are then encouraged to ask questions and to state their own comments on the presentation. In the end, they are asked to write and give a note of comments for the speaker.

In the main viewing activities, students are given questions related to the topic and listening comprehension in the form of exercises on the handouts. After completing the exercises, students are expected to answer orally to the questions the teacher asks in English. Questions are usually asked to extend the class activities to discussions on the topics in English in the classroom. First, students are instructed to read the comprehension questions or the dialogues for focus listening and then watch the scene. For the focus listening, students listen to the sound

track of the film without seeing the picture. Focus listening is assigned to listen for numbers, or key words that the teacher selected when he made an exercise.

In the postviewing activities, students are given a topic related to each unit for making a composition. The topic should be chosen in the cross-cultural comparison between the United States and Japan by the teacher. As an example in the unit two, students are asked to compare the family of Annie and Ray, main characters in the film, with their own family or an ordinal family in Japan. Students are then asked to make an outline out of their own writing and do an oral presentation in class. For the presentation, the student evaluation is used as in the previewing activities.

### C. Instruments

In the beginning of the course, the CELT (A) of the listening section was administered to see the students' listening proficiency, and in the end of the course the CELT (B) of the listening section was done to see the improvements of their proficiency.

In the end of the course, a ten-item questionnaire was administered to see students' evaluation of teaching methods, teaching materials and their own improvements of oral communication skills. Each item was evaluated with five scales from 1 as the most negative evaluation to 5 as the most positive evaluation. The first question is whether students like this movie. The second is the degree of understanding students perceive themselves. The third is whether the English subtitle was useful. The fourth is whether the script was useful to prepare for the class. The fifth is whether the previewing activities were useful to understand the content of a scene. The sixth is whether the silent viewing activities were useful. The seventh is whether the main viewing activities were useful. The

eighth is whether oral presentation was useful. The ninth is students' self-evaluation on the improvement of speaking skills. The tenth is students' self-evaluation on the improvement of listening skills.

Besides of these two objective instruments for analyses of students' strategies, the author taught this class as a teacher so that the class observation data and students' summaries have been used to evaluate this experimental class.

## V. RESULTS

The results of the CELT (A) and (B) are analyzed statistically and are shown in Table 1. The total number of the students in the class is forty-eight. The total score of the listening part for both CELT (A) and (B) are fifty points. The mean score of the CELT (A) is 21.39 while the one of the CELT (B) is 25.72 points. The difference between the mean scores of (A) and (B) is 4.33, which is statistically significant at the level of 0.01 probabilities according to the result of the t-test, which tests the significance of the differences between two mean scores, CELT (A) and CELT (B).

Table 2 shows the results of the questionnaire with ten questions regarding the evaluation of the class activities and materials as well as students' self-evaluation on their communication skills. Students were asked to rate the degree of the perceived usefulness of each item with five

Table 1. The result of the t-test for the CELT (A) and (B)

CELT A (pretest)	CELT B (post test)	Difference
21.39 (mean score)	25.72 (mean score)	4.33**
4.25 (S. D.)	5.52 (S. D.)	
**p<0.01		

scales from the most negative response to the most positive one.

The first question (Q. 1.) in the questionnaire asks whether students like the movie, "Field of Dreams." According to the results, most students like this movie very much. However, there are a few students who show a negative attitude toward this movie. Reading their term paper on the summary of the story, the author noticed that some of the reasons why students disliked this movie was that they didn't know about the baseball, and were not interested in the plot of the movie. The content of the writing tends to be poor if the students are not interested in the film.

The second question (Q. 2.) is about the degree of understanding the contents of the film. No students marked the scale 1 showing zero to 20 percent of understanding. Seventy-eight percent of students show their understanding more than 60 percent of the contents in the film. When students are asked about this kind of question on comprehension, they tend to prejudge that the question is about listening comprehension since video has been mainly used for listening comprehension practice. From this point of view in the results, this class was successful for listening comprehension skills' development.

In the main viewing activities, the film with English subtitles was used in the class. The students were asked whether the subtitles were helpful for listening comprehension in the third question (Q. 3.) of the questionnaire, where 70 percent of the students claimed that the subtitles were helpful. It is interesting to know that 6 percent of students responded negatively in this column. Since the film scripts were available to the students, the English subtitles were not essential. From the observation of the class activities, it seems that students had better read the scripts before or after viewing the film but not concurrently.

The fourth question (Q. 4.) asks whether a book of the film scripts of English with Japanese translation was useful. No students showed negative response to this question. It must be very helpful to the students when they prepare for the class and use it for the review.

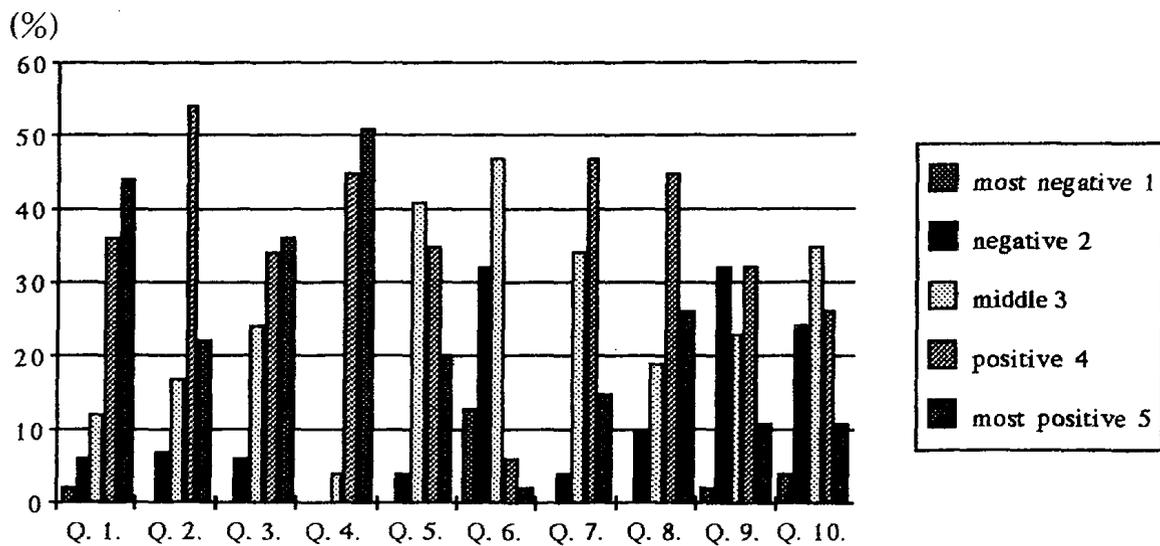
The fifth question (Q. 5.) regards whether the previewing activities were useful for understanding the contents of a scene and improving their communication skills. Fifty-five percent of the students give a positive response. It is not surprising to know that there are quite a few students (41%) who are indecisive.

The sixth question (Q. 6.) asks whether the silent viewing activities were useful: specifically, a pair work activity in which a student explains what he or she sees on the screen to the partner in English or Japanese. Unexpectedly, 45 percent of the students responded negatively. They think this activity was not useful to understand the contents of the film. Only 8 percent of the students gave a positive feedback on this activity. This activity was experimental for giving students more interaction among themselves. Initially, the teacher encouraged the students to use English as much as possible when they explained the scene to their partners. However, there were very few students who could continue using English for explanation of the screen. Gradually, many students seemed to feel a burden on using English and became silent, while some of them continued the activities in Japanese.

The seventh question (Q. 7.) is about the main viewing activities: whether the students thought they were useful to understand the content of the film and improve their communication skills. Sixty-two percent of the students responded positively. The exercises in these activities mainly focused on listening which gave students a clear objective in these activities. This may have induced positive students' feedback on this

Table 2. The results of the questionnaire with five scales.

	1 negative	2	3 middle	4	5 positive
Q. 1.	2%	6%	12%	36%	44%
Q. 2.	0	7	17	54	22
Q. 3.	0	6	24	34	36
Q. 4.	0	0	4	45	51
Q. 5.	0	4	41	35	20
Q. 6.	13	32	47	6	2
Q. 7.	0	4	34	47	15
Q. 8.	0	10	19	45	26
Q. 9.	2	32	23	32	11
Q.10.	4	24	35	26	11



item.

The eighth question (Q. 8.) is about presentation: whether it is useful for the students to understand the film and improve their communication skills. Seventy-one percent of the students responded positively and 10 percent of them negatively. Presentation has done in the silent viewing activities and postviewing activities, and was evaluated by the

students and the teacher for their grade.

The ninth question (Q. 9.) is about students' self-evaluation on their listening skills: whether they think listening abilities have been improved in this class. Forty-three percent of the students perceived that their listening skills have been improved in this class, while 34 percent of the students reported negatively. Though there was a significant improvement of the listening abilities statistically, students' perception toward their own ability is rather low. They are modest when it comes to their own self-evaluation on their abilities.

The last question (Q. 10.) is about students' self-evaluation on their speaking skills: whether they think speaking abilities have been improved. Thirty-seven percent of the students perceived that their speaking skills have been improved in this class, while 28 percent of the students thought otherwise. It is notable that there were 35 percent of students who answered neither positively nor negatively. Though the presentation activities were stressed as one of the class objectives, the number of students in one class was about fifty, which was too large for each student to have enough time to practice speaking in the classroom.

## VI. DISCUSSIONS

According to the result of the CELT that shows the statistical significance of improvement in students' listening skills, the first hypothesis saying that silent viewing activities will help students understand the contents of a scene and improve their listening skills is supported in this study. In the activities, students were instructed to talk about the scene on the screen to their partners, which constructed a clear image of the story they were going to listen afterwards. By using video for listening comprehension, students are provided a full of input with visual context

in a scene, and their “imagery” strategies (O’Mally and Chamot 1990) are activated and learned to use the strategies for listening comprehension through doing activities such as the silent viewing.

The second hypothesis stating that the guessing the story of the scene with silent viewing will help students’ comprehension of the film has also been supported from the results of the CELT and the questionnaire. The second question in the questionnaires is asking how much students understand the movie. Seventy-eight percent of the students responded that they understood more than 60 percent of the contents of the film. In the silent viewing activities, students were expected to summarize the story in pairs. During the period of their working together, the author observed how they were making a summary and received questions from them if any. From the observation, they discussed what they watched and tested it on each other whether their understanding was logical enough. Through these activities, students developed the schema of the story, which would help students understand the contents of their listening in the main viewing activities. In other words, this schema became an “advance organization (O’Malley and Chamot 1990)” for listening comprehension, and the students learned to develop and use this metacognitive strategy for understanding the contents of the film.

The third hypothesis stating that an oral presentation is useful to activate students’ organizational planning strategies for listening comprehension is supported by the results of the CELT and questionnaire. Students highly evaluated the usefulness of presentation in the eighth question of the questionnaire. Seventy-one percent of the students gave a positive feedback on this activity. Before they made a presentation, they were expected to outline the summary they wrote, and came up in front of the class to make a speech with the outline on their hand. Their

performance was evaluated by the teacher as well as by the other students as an audience, and one of the important criteria for evaluation was an eye contact: a speaker was expected to look at the audience and speak to them. Therefore, they were not allowed to read the summary at the presentation. Instead, they were taught to make an outline of their summary for the presentation. This is how the students have developed their organizational planning strategies.

The last hypothesis stating that the silent viewing activity with an information gap would motivate students to increase interactions among students is not supported according to the results of the questionnaire. Students evaluated this activity less effective for improving their communication skills in English on the sixth question in the questionnaire. One is because that students were allowed to use Japanese when they explained the scene to their partner. The author decided that students were allowed to use the first language judging from the results of the listening test of the CELT (A) administered in the beginning of the class. Their communication skills in English were beginners' level so that they could not help using their first language to explain the scene moving in sequence according to the story of the film. Therefore, students may have rated this activity low in terms of communication skills in English.

Another possibility we can think about is that students were getting tired of this activity by doing with the same partner. In the beginning of the course as far as the author observed, they were very active explaining the scene to be shown on the screen to their partners, but were getting quieter as the course came near to an end. The questionnaire was administered in the end of the course when they were tired of this activity.

## VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Japanese university students right after high school usually have only one prominent strategy, “translation” to use when they try to understand English either in oral or written discourse since they have been trained with Grammar-Translation method. Since classes with this method are taught in the mother tongue (Prator and Celce-Murcia 1979), students first put English into Japanese, and then read the translated Japanese version either on a sheet of paper or in their mind for comprehension. Therefore it takes time for the students to respond to questions asked by a teacher in English since they have not developed their learning strategies understanding the target language in that language without translation.

In this study, we have looked at metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies (O'Malley and Chamot 1990), and how they relate to students' listening skills judging from the results of the CELT and the questionnaire. As O'Malley and Chamot (1990) states, imagery, advance organization, and advance planning strategies are key factors for students to understand a scene of an authentic video in foreign language. Students can develop these strategies by spending enough time for doing a previewing activity before they view the video. In this experimental class, students had done vocabulary exercises, questions and answers practices in the previewing activities, and also done information gap activities, written a summary of the scene and made its presentation in the silent viewing activities before they started their listening comprehension practice. This study, however, did not show the effectiveness of cooperative strategies. Students were not encouraged to communicate each other in the information gap activities very much. This method has

to be revised to enhance more communication among students in future studies.

Though we cannot generalize these results of this study, we found it very important that Japanese students with only a translation strategy should be trained to develop their learning strategies in foreign language acquisition.

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