The use of cinema as a learning tool in foreign language classes

Title: The use of cinema as a learning tool in foreign language classes.

Abstract
The integration of cinema in foreign language classes is a tool that is becoming more and more popular when helping students learn a language different from their mother tongue. It constitutes a motivating approach for students, as cinema is a topic of their interest. In addition to this, this tool assists students to improve their listening skills to a large extend as well as their reading, writing and speaking skills. There are various techniques which incorporate the use of films and that can be employed in the foreign language class, such as sequencing and the CLIL method.
Keywords: cinema, foreign language classes, listening skills, sequencing, CLIL

Título: El uso del cine como herramienta de aprendizaje en clases de lengua extranjera.

Resumen
La incorporación del cine en clases de lengua extranjera es una herramienta que se está haciendo cada vez más popular a la hora de ayudar a los estudiantes a aprender una lengua diferente a la materna. Constituye un enfoque motivador para los estudiantes, puesto que el cine es un tema de su interés. Además, esta herramienta ayuda a los estudiantes a mejorar su comprensión auditiva así como sus capacidades de lectura, escritura y comprensión oral. Hay varias técnicas que incorporan el uso de películas y que pueden ser empleadas en clase, como son la secuenciación y el método CLIL.
Palabras clave: cine, clases de lengua extranjera, comprensión auditiva, secuenciación, CLIL.

INTRODUCCIÓN Y JUSTIFICACIÓN

The role of the English language is gaining influence all over the world. In this way, it is of the utmost importance that we define the contexts where it appears and, especially, the language teaching ones. It is crucial for a teacher of English as a foreign language to be conscious of the context in which he/she is teaching and of its appropriateness regarding the needs of the learning situation as well as the students' interests and motivation. In this context, it has been analysed how the use of cinema benefits students when learning a foreign language. Thus, the aim of this paper is to analyse how cinema can be implemented in foreign language classes as a very innovative approach for students to focus on the subject and to enhance their motivation for learning. In this way, this paper will deal with techniques such as sequencing and CLIL in order to go further into this interesting aspect of teaching.

With regard to cinema as a useful tool to use in foreign language lessons, we must emphasise that it helps students develop some basic skills, but particularly it assist students to improve their oral comprehension skills (listening). However, these are not the only skills that learners can improve, as they can also practice and develop other areas, such as the written comprehension (reading) and written expression (writing) as well as the oral expression (speaking). Moreover, if we go deeper, the integration of films in class can enrich student's linguistic, sociocultural and personal horizons. Thus, te development of these areas makes students more competent.

MARCO TEÓRICO Y CONCEPTUAL

Focusing on the linguistic horizon, students can learn a lot of new vocabulary and expressions from a film. It can be specific vocabulary or fixed expressions related to the topic of the film, or general vocabulary and expressions, which will be very useful for students to use in their everyday life. Students can also listen to and pay attention to the use of different tenses (past, present and future), modal verbs of different types (ability, permission, instructions and requests, suggestions and advice, offers and invitations, obligation and necessity, possibility and probability), idioms and

collocations. Furthermore, with reference to grammatical aspects, students can improve their knowledge about the use of conditionals, the passive voice, reported speech and so on.

If we concentrate on the sociocultural horizon, we should also mention that by means of the implementation of films in class, students' values and views of the world can change. Students can analyse how different cultures across the world are. Films often portray the feelings and emotions of people in very distinct cutures. Students can learn how other people face the same situations as them, but in a different way. Thus, by analysing how people think and behave differently according to their culture and way of seeing the world, they can broaden their mind. All this will make students be more tolerant and will help them to embrace different perspectives of an unique world composed of differnet ways of life. Students will be able to learn moral lessons from films, something that, without any doubt, is a very useful and innovative approach to follow in any class.

Turning to the personal horizon, if the film deals with everyday problems or typical problems among teenagers, students will identify with its characters and they will be able to reflect on what they do as well as how they face and overcome problems or uncomfortable situations. This will help learners integrate what they have learnt from the film in their real lives, so they will put in practice what they learn. Moreover, students' feelings can change after learning something from a movie as they can see things that make them reflect on aspects of their own as well as others' lives. Consequently, we can conclude that films exert considerable influence on student's psychology, as they help them develop their emotional intelligence (EQ) as well as critical thinking.

With reference to sequencing, it has been proved that introducing cinema in class helps to develop the motivation phase, where we aim at gaining students' attention. The reason for this is that it is not very common to use films in class, so it is like a surprise element that attracts student's attention. Then, we see how the input phase can be the film itself and the controlled and semi-controlled phase can be easily done with the implementation of some exercises about the film. Finally, with something as easy as making role-plays, the transfer phase can be realised. Apart from all the above, it has to be stated that classes should always be prepared before hand. The use of films in class should not be just a way to spend time, but a means to learn something. By this I mean that we have to benefit from its use in class. Activities as well as contents need time to arrange and to reflect on.

In terms of CLIL, through cinema, we can explore different aspects such as content, cognition, communication and culture. Personally speaking, I believe that cognition is the most important aspect to develop with students and, consequently, classes should focus on this aspect. Furthermore, the implementation of films which deal with problems is a very useful way to make students reflect on problems and also on solutions for them. In fact, this can strengthen their communicative skills as well as help them to overcome difficult situations and problems that they would not be able to face otherwise. Ultimately, films can even make students become wiser and face life from a broader perspective.

Regarding in/from activities, the implementation of cinema in class is a particularly useful and a recommended resource for developing language skills, including oral and written expression and comprehension (speaking, listening, writing and reading) and also for improving students' use of English (vocabulary, grammar, collocations, fixed expressions, and so on). Apart from this, the use of cinema in class can also serve to raise learners' awareness of the self and the others. Though the implementation of cinema in class, students become conscious of some areas of their lives that they did nto pay attention to before, and some of those areas can also involves others, not just them. In this way, they start thinking about not just themselves, but about the people that are around them.

In conclusion, the use of films in education is an extremely useful resource for foreign language and content teaching and learning. The reason for the previous assertion is that not only does cinema help students grow as people, but it also makes them learn as well as understand new values and ways of thinking. It gives students the opportunity to learn about othe cultures so that they can understand them and accept the fact that there are other perspectives to see the world different from their own views. Thus, students are able to become more tolerant and broad-minded than they would ever become if it was not for their approach to cinema. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that it is not very frequent to find foreign language teachers implementing this wonderful resource in their classes. The reason behind this fact can be the lack of time, as the implementation of the cinema in class is a very time-consuming technique to be exploited efficiently in the time that a class lasts. Consequetly, as it is an extremely valuable resource to implement in foreign language classes, teachers should be encouraged to make an effort and to organise class time in a way that enables them to introduce the use of cinema in an efficacious way that benefits not only students, but the teaching-learning process in general.

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