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<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0504-2707>

DOCUMENTARIES AS AN AUDIOVISUAL AID IN ENGLISH TEACHING AT UNIVERSITY

Podufalova T.V., PhD in Philology (Kharkiv)

The paper deals with possible ways to use documentaries effectively as an audiovisual aid when teaching English as a foreign language to university students. It offers recommendations on how the National Geographic documentary *Megacities: London* can be used when teaching the topic *On the Move* to university students in the course in Oral and Written English.

The documentary is easily broken down into four sections. A set of activities and tasks suggested is based on a three-stage model that involves pre-viewing, while-viewing and post-viewing stages. The pre-viewing activities are mainly of introductory and anticipatory character. They involve questions that introduce the topic and issues the section deals with and make students anticipate what they are going to see, or they can also be based on reading tasks set and done as homework before the video lesson.

The while-viewing activities of each section comprise the first viewing and comprehension activities. The former involve questions designed to check general comprehension of the section whereas the latter are aimed at detailed comprehension of the section. The comprehension tasks further break down the section into a number of successive episodes (clips) and can vary greatly. They involve multiple-choice questions, gap-fillings tasks, sentence completion, true/false statements, finding and correcting mistakes, matching tasks, defining what figures (numbers, symbols) refer to. Vocabulary exercises are usually combined with comprehension tasks. They comprise matching words with their definitions before watching; finding words or expressions in the preceding exercise, using their definitions/explanations or synonyms; reading the definitions of the words that are used in the extract and then noting them down while watching/listening to it; first matching the words to their definitions, then using them to fill in the gaps in the extract before watching it, and finally watching the extract and checking.

The post-viewing, or follow-up, activities involve discussion, in which students share their impressions of and views on what they have heard and seen and compare the different aspects of London's infrastructure and traffic control with those in Kyiv, Kharkiv or other Ukrainian cities. Follow-up activities can also involve writing tasks and projects that should be given as homework as

they are time-consuming and may require elaborate preparation. Projects are to be done within a specified period of time and then presented in Power Point or another presentation form.

Key words: audiovisual aid, documentary, post-viewing (follow-up) activities, pre-viewing activities, while-viewing activities.

Подуфалова Т.В. Документальні фільми як аудіовізуальний засіб у навчанні англійської мови у ВНЗ. У статті розглядаються шляхи ефективного використання документальних фільмів як аудіовізуального засобу у викладанні англійської мови як іноземної студентам філологічних спеціальностей ВНЗ. Пропонуються методичні можливості використання комплексу завдань до фільму «Мегаполіси: Лондон» (“Megacities: London”) під час вивчення теми «Подорож» у рамках курсу практики англійського усного і писемного мовлення за класичною трьохетапною моделлю роботи з відео, що містить переддемонстраційний, демонстраційний та післядемонстраційний етапи.

Ключові слова: аудіовізуальний засіб, демонстраційні завдання, документальний фільм, переддемонстраційні завдання, післядемонстраційні завдання.

Подуфалова Т.В. Документальные фильмы как аудиовизуальное средство в обучении английскому языку в вузе. В статье рассматриваются пути эффективного использования документальных фильмов как аудиовизуального средства в преподавании английского языка как иностранного в вузе. Предлагаются методические возможности использования комплекса заданий к фильму «Мегаполисы: Лондон» (“Megacities: London”) при изучении темы «Путешествие» в рамках курса практики английской устной и письменной речи по классической трёхэтапной модели работы с видео, которая включает преддемонстрационный, демонстрационный и последемонстрационный этапы.

Ключевые слова: аудиовизуальное средство, демонстрационные задания, документальный фильм, последемонстрационные задания, преддемонстрационные задания.

The actuality of the research. There is no denying the fact that video is an effective tool in foreign language teaching. Firstly, it stimulates students' interest in language learning by simultaneously appealing to several senses, sight and hearing in particular. Secondly, it develops students' listening skills and expands their vocabulary. Finally, it provides access to the culture associated with a language students study. Great

teaching potential of audiovisual aids has been pointed out by many foreign language teachers and scholars [1; 2; 3; 5; 6]. Analysis of their papers highlights the topical issues of using video material for teaching and learning purposes: 1) types of video material to be used as audiovisual aids in foreign language teaching; 2) video selection criteria; 3) teaching methods of using video and principles of working out activities, tasks and exercises based on video material to develop students' linguistic, communicative and sociocultural competence.

The degree of scientific research of the issue. T.P. Leontyeva uses the term "video technologies" to refer to the whole complex of teaching and learning methods based on the use of varied video material and making it possible to apply a certain teaching approach [2: 81]. The scholar singles out these kinds of modern video technologies: the use of authentic video material; interactive video; students' designing video projects; holding video conferences, etc. Among authentic video material there can be distinguished entertaining shows, feature films, documentaries, popular scientific films, news, forecasts, commercials, etc. According to scholars, the main criteria for selecting video are as follows: authenticity, information value, topicality, representativity, relevance to the course content and learners' needs and interests, and genre diversity. Video selection criteria are further specified: representation of cultural and language diversity of the country whose language is being studied, presence of opposing views on the same cultural phenomenon to be critically thought, taking into account the emotional impact a certain cultural fact has on the personality [2: 82]. Specific criteria for selecting authentic feature films to develop students' sociocultural competence are defined [5; 6]; they are classed into two groups: 1) criteria taking into account properties of the film as a work of art, 2) criteria to do with the didactic value of the film [5]. T.P. Leontyeva suggests a three-stage model of teaching methods with use of video, which is based on the principle of the priority of active forms of learners' communicative and cognitive activity: 1) students' culture and country studies knowledge activation by creating semantic maps and associograms, completing charts, etc. (pre-viewing stage); 2) exploiting the video for both sound and image separately by playing the video without sound, playing the soundtrack without video, separate viewing at the setting "Watchers and Listeners" (while-viewing stage); 3) students' cognitive activity stimulation by putting problem questions, making students write

linguistic and cultural comments on all the realia contained in the video film (post-viewing stage) [2]. T. O. Yakhnuk offers a complex of exercises aimed at teaching sociocultural English vocabulary by means of feature films fragments, which is based on the main stages of vocabulary teaching: introduction and semantic explanation of the words, vocabulary habits formation at word, word combination and sentence level, vocabulary habits formation at text level, vocabulary skills perfection, and control as the final stage [6].

The value of authentic documentaries as an audiovisual aid lies in visual presentation of various cultural realia and corresponding thematic vocabulary: (new/unfamiliar) words, specific terms in particular, are easier to understand and remember when they are represented by visual images. That is why documentaries, if properly selected and supplemented with activities and tasks, can be successfully used when teaching topical vocabulary at different stages (introduction, practice, and revision).

In this paper we **aim** to show how the National Geographic documentary *Megacities: London* can be used when teaching the topic *On the Move* to university students in the course in Oral and Written English. This video examines London's infrastructure covering different kinds of city traffic (air, road and river). It can be shown at the revision stage when students are already familiar with the vocabulary for traffic and public transport, which can contribute to students' comprehension of the documentary and revision of the vocabulary.

The documentary *Megacities: London* is easily broken down into four sections, each dealing with a certain kind of traffic in London: Section I. Air traffic in London. Section II. Road and Street Traffic in London. Section III. Thames Traffic. Section IV. Terminal 5. We worked out a set of tasks and activities on each section following the classic model of viewing activities that involves pre-viewing, while-viewing and post-viewing tasks [4]. Sections I, III, and IV are of equal length and it takes one 80-minute period to complete each of them. It takes two 80-minute periods to complete Section II.

The **pre-viewing activities** are mainly of introductory and anticipatory character: they introduce the topic and issues the section deals with and make students anticipate what they are going to see. We suggest questions as the main type of pre-viewing activities. The pre-viewing questions in Section I deal both with the documentary as a whole and with air traffic

as the subject of the section. They are as follows:

- *The programme you are going to watch is called “Megacities. London”. What city do you think is qualified as a megacity?*
- *What problems in relation to traffic do you think a megacity like London may face? How do you think these problems are solved? How is traffic controlled in megacities?*
- *What airports are there in the London area? Which is the busiest one? List problems it may experience.*
- *Taking into account the great number of planes crisscrossing the skies at busy airports at the same time, how do you think they keep from colliding?*

The pre-viewing activities can also be based on reading tasks set and done as homework before the video lesson. In Sections II, for instance, we ask students to read the texts “On the road”, “Public transport in towns and cities” in the book *Britain. The Country and Its People* by James O’Driscoll [8] and the text “Greater London” in the book *Britain in Close-up* by David McDowall [7] in order to obtain the background information on the transport system in Britain in general and in London in particular. The task students do at home is to make notes under the following headings: a) British people’s attitude to the car and factors defining it; b) problems caused by traffic; c) communication system in Greater London and its attendant problems; d) the British government’s transport policy.

The *while-viewing activities* of each section comprise first viewing and comprehension activities. The former involve questions designed to check general comprehension of the section whereas the latter are aimed at detailed comprehension of the section. First students read the first viewing questions, then watch the whole section and answer them in pairs or as a class.

The *comprehension tasks* further break down the section into a number of successive episodes (clips). Each episode is usually shown separately twice. First students read the task, then watch the episode at the first show and finally do the task at the second show. Comprehension activities can vary greatly. They involve multiple-choice questions, gap-fillings tasks, sentence completion, true/false statements, finding and correcting mistakes, matching tasks, defining what figures (numbers, symbols) refer to. In gap-fillings tasks you may need to pause after each sentence with missing

words if necessary. Sentence completion tasks that are not intended to reproduce exactly what you hear in the video can give some key words as clues in brackets to help students summarize this information, for instance:

Complete these sentences using the clues in brackets:

1. COMIT has a (to screen, a scanner).

2. The monitor gives us (congestion, warning).

3. COMIT offers a (to see, a megacity).

Matching tasks can involve matching the beginnings of the sentences taken from the episode to their endings and the so-called three-way matching tasks when you should match 3 items with the information relevant to them, for instance:

1. *Decide which sentences describe the traditional sonar (T), which the most advanced, next generation sonar (A) and which both (B):*

It measures depths.

It bounces narrow sound waves of the riverbed back to the ship.

It has a multi-beam swath system. ...

2. *Here are some reasons why Terminal 5 at Heathrow is needed. Watch Section 4 of the programme and then note who said what: Mike Forester (MF), Mike Davies (MD), Adrian Dollen (AD):*

Terminal 5 is going to be a gateway to London.

Terminal 5 is going to be a gateway to the UK.

We have an opportunity to build a new airport effectively in one go. ...

For checking comprehension summarizing tasks can be given as well:

Watch on and summarize what Docket says, using the words and phrases: 11 months of a year, emergency, a couple of seconds, suddenly, to focus, quickly.

Special attention should be paid to the **vocabulary exercises**, which are usually combined with comprehension tasks. They can precede comprehension tasks to contribute to comprehension by introducing words and expressions that the students may not be familiar with. The most common exercise in this case is matching words with their definitions before watching the episode containing them:

1. In the next part of the programme you will hear Mike Davies use the following words which deal with building: rafter, span, beam, tie.

a) Match the words to their definitions:

- a) something used for fastening which restricts freedom of movement, e.g. a beam holding together a structure;
- b) one of the sloping beams of the framework on which the tiles or slates of a roof are supported;
- c) the distance or part between the supports of an arch;
- d) a long horizontal piece of squared timber, or of steel, etc. used to carry the weight of a building.

b) Watch this part and answer these questions:

- 1. What is the scale of the terminal building?
- 2. What is the span of the rafters?
- 3. What can you do in the hole of the beam, according to Mike Davies?
- 4. What is the height of the beams?
- 5. What is the function of the ties?
- 6. What is exciting to do for Mike Davies?

2. The following words have something to do with roads and traffic. Match them to their definitions and say in what context they are used in the programme:

Pavement, network, gridlock, artery, congestion, rush hour, ring road.

- 1) a time when crowds of people are travelling to or from work in a large town;
- 2) a complex system of roads that cross;
- 3) a chief channel in a system of communication and transport;
- 4) a massive automobile traffic jam in which no car can move in any direction;
- 5) a road round, and through the outskirts, of a large town, for the use of traffic passing through;
- 6) a street or road covered with a surface to walk or travel on;
- 7) the state of being overcrowded.

Vocabulary exercises that follow comprehension tasks can involve finding words or expressions in the preceding exercise, using their definitions/explanations or synonyms:

1. a) Fill in the gaps in the following extracts:

*Sharp eyes keep this river flowing ,
but around the next trouble – a long
... .. that can this megacity. To it
will take technology and the boldest of*

*Airlines have a turn for more than they can
. It's called But what happens when an airport beneath
the world's busiest international gets
... .., not with passengers but planes?*

b) find the words and expressions in the full version of the preceding extract which have these meanings:

- a) to appear indistinctly and in a threatening way;*
- b) to damage or weaken seriously;*
- c) never done or known before;*
- d) to attempt too much, try to do something that is far too difficult to manage;*
- e) overcrowded.*

Alternatively, students read the definitions of the words that are used in the extract, and then they try to hear and note them down while watching/listening to it. The teacher can ask the students to guess what words may have the given meanings before showing the episode:

Watch the extract and note down the words and expressions with these meanings:

- 1) to quickly tell a person to be ready to act;*
- 2) to remove (a traffic jam);*
- 3) to prevent (a traffic jam);*
- 4) to make perfect (track of traffic);*
- 5) a large amount (of traffic);*
- 6) the ability (of streets) to contain or accommodate;*
- 7) to reduce, to take away a number (of cars) from another number.*

Another kind of vocabulary exercise is first matching the words to their definitions, then using them to fill in the gaps in the extract before watching it, and finally watching the extract and checking:

Match the words to their definitions. Use the words to fill the blanks in the following extract before watching it. Then watch and check.

- Gash, concrete, litter (v.), vessel, obstruction, lump, wrecks, hazard.*
- 1) a hard or compact mass, usually without a regular shape;*
 - 2) risk, danger;*

- 3) *a ship or large boat (a general name);*
- 4) *a long deep cut;*
- 5) *the ruins of a building, vehicle, vessel, etc. after destruction;*
- 6) *an obstacle;*
- 7) *building material made by mixing cement with sand, gravel, etc.*
- 8) *make untidy with rubbish.*

Shallow water isn't the only The Thames is with hundreds of, from sunken to blocks of

'A high large going along at 10 or 15 knots is very difficult to stop. If it finds this of concrete, it could put a great in the bottom of the ship.'

This is another kind of vocabulary task:

*Watch on and replace the words in bold type with their synonyms used in the programme: 'What is important here is that the evidence can't be **interfered** with. So we have high levels of **indisputable** integrity which is **necessary** if we use the **pictures** for enforcement purposes.'*

Before watching the episode the students can be asked to guess what words these can be. After completing the comprehension or vocabulary task students can compare their answers in pairs or small groups.

The **post-viewing, or follow-up, activities** involve discussion, in which students share their impressions of and views on what they have heard and seen and compare the different aspects of London's infrastructure and traffic control with those in Kyiv, Kharkiv or other Ukrainian cities. Follow-up activities can also involve writing and project work that should be given as homework as they are time-consuming and may require elaborate preparation. For instance, in Section III we offer this writing task as a follow-up activity: *Write an article about the traffic surveillance system in London to appear in a British newspaper using what you have found out from the documentary. Try to impress your reader highlighting the advantages of this system.* Students can also be asked to do projects over a specified period of time and then give a PowerPoint/multimedia/slide/video presentation in class: *Carry out a research into the traffic surveillance system in our city or in Kyiv. Compare it with London's traffic surveillance system (Section III); Terminal 5 was completed in 2008. Find out from media/Internet*

sources whether this solved the air traffic problems in London or not (Section IV).

To sum up, elaborately designed video courses on properly selected authentic documentaries can develop students' linguistic and cultural competence and should be intensively used in foreign language teaching. **Further study** can focus on the teaching potential of other video resources, such as feature films, news programmes and TV shows as audiovisual aids at university.

LITERATURE

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