

## **Student Created Digital Video and Language Learning: Voices from Omani Classrooms**

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### **Abstract**

Use of expert generated videos have long been in use in the EFL teaching scenario, however, the use of Student Created Digital Video (SCDV) is relatively a novel practice, especially in the Middle Eastern English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This research study focused on the application and assessment of an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based pedagogical approach that culminated in SCDV commercials. The purpose of adopting this approach was to create an ideal blend of technology with foreign language teaching to improve the students' language skills. In small groups, undergraduate level Omani EFL learners, enrolled in engineering programs, created digital video commercials using English in their interactions. The intervention was carried out over a period of two semesters. The efficacy of the approach was assessed through the perspectives of students, instructors and observers, gathered through the student questionnaires, student focus groups, researcher's reflective journal, second study phase teacher's interview, and external observer comments. The findings indicate that the favorable affective stimuli provided through this practice led to the development of English language skills.

**Keywords:** Information and Communications Technology, Student Created Digital video, English as a Foreign Language

## **Introduction**

The omnipresent nature of Information and Computer Technologies (ICTs) and their ever increasing potential has led to ubiquitous computing environments. This drift has undoubtedly restructured the educational environment in general and language learning and teaching in particular (Smith & Rilling, 2006; Warschauer, 1996; Levy, 1997; Muyskens, 1997; Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

In spite of the above mentioned developments and the resultant calls for the integration of technology into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses, approaches which can lead to an effective blend of digital and traditional, resources are still vague. Student-created digital videos (SCDVs) are an example of the emerging dimensions of ICTs and the practice has proved to be beneficial in enhancing students' learning and motivation (Bull & Kajder, 2004; Yang & Wu, 2012; Kearney, Jones & Robert, 2012). However, more research is required to explore the potential of SCDVs in the EFL field. Therefore, this study aims to examine students' and teachers' perspectives on their involvement in creating digital videos in the Omani EFL classrooms.

## **Student-created digital videos**

Originally emerged as digital story, a SCDV is a practice where students, either individually or in groups create a short digital video. During the process, they are involved in a number of activities such as researching, recording, directing, scripting, rehearsing and performing (if they are the actors) and editing. The digital videos (DVs) can also be shared over the Internet with a wider audience on public video sharing websites like YouTube. These digital compositions inspire students as they enjoy working with the latest technologies. This eventually enhances language learning and develops social skills and creativity (Hafner & Miller, 2011). SCDV projects generate excitement among learners; fosters apt use of technology within the curricular frame; weaves into all kinds of subject areas; and has been proved effective for both visual and auditory learners (Frazel, 2010).

Most importantly, in EFL contexts, the process of video creation enhances all the four language skills among students. First of all, it motivates students and involves them in the writing process which encourages them to word their compositions with a concise point of view (Boase, 2008; Kieler, 2010). Therefore, SCDV is documented as an exceptional learner-centered application in the EFL teaching context (Robin, 2008).

## **Context**

This study was conducted at a private tertiary level institution in Oman. It has been observed that despite the efforts made by the curriculum designers and teachers at school level, a large percentage of Omani students seeking admission in undergraduate courses lack the desired level of English language proficiency. The medium of instruction at tertiary level is English for most of the scientific specializations such as medicine, IT, and engineering (Al- Mahrooqi, 2012). The factors accredited to this low level of English proficiency are: low motivation levels, inadequate exposure to the language, lack of required study skills, and use of traditional methods of teaching (Al Mahrooqi, 2012 ; Al Issa, 2005). Therefore, English courses are offered at Foundation as well as undergraduate level to help the students cope with the requirements of their specialization.

## The Study

This study focused on the application and evaluation of an ICT based teaching approach where undergraduate level Omani EFL students, who opted to study *English for Communication* course, created DV commercials as part of their coursework assessment. The project was evaluated over a period of three semesters: the first phase was the pilot study stage; the second and third phases were the main study phases. During the first two phases, the researcher herself taught the module, while the researcher's colleague, Dr. David (pseudonym used hereafter) taught the module during the third phase. The purpose was to verify the efficacy of the practice from another tutor's viewpoint. A mixed methods design was used to find out the perspectives of students and teachers on the role of SCDV in enhancing language and other sub skills among Omani EFL learners.

The project was an assessed assignment with a 20% weighting. It was designed on the Vygotskian (1978) principles of socio constructivism where students worked in collaboration and created knowledge instead of passively receiving it from their tutor. The main objectives were to orient students to the ethics of advertising, motivate them to learn English, and develop language skills.

In groups of four, students were asked to create DV commercials for a product of their choice. They were given seven weeks to prepare the video and two additional weeks to compile the report. Each group was encouraged to create a *WhatsApp* group called *English for Communication* to facilitate communication outside the class and develop writing skills through chat sessions. The groups were instructed to hold regular meetings and minute their discussion points and decisions. Follow up meetings with the instructor were also conducted with the purpose of monitoring the progress of each group and making students feel responsible towards the tasks allotted to them.

To create DVs, some students used their own cameras and recorded their DVs where the group members themselves acted. Others created videos through pictures using programs such as Moviemaker, Adobe Lightroom, etc. Each group was asked to prepare an audience survey questionnaire to collect feedback on their video. The audience comprised classmates, their English language teacher and observer teachers. The project concluded with a written report and presentation. The report covered the project's objectives, methodology, and an analysis of the audience's responses to the questionnaire. The presentations introduced their products, discussed the methodology adopted to create DVs, and summarized learning experiences and challenges faced. Along with the class tutor, two ELT experts were invited as observers.

### Research questions

The main research questions guiding the study are:

- i. What are the students' perspectives on the role of SCDV in their affective involvement in language learning?
- ii. What are the students' perspectives on the role of SCDV in enhancing their English language skills?
- iii. What are the teachers' perspectives on the integration of SCDV in the *English for Communication* course?

## **Participants**

Undergraduate level, engineering students enrolled in the *English for Communication* course during Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters were the student participants. Regarding teacher participants, during the first phase, the researcher herself was the tutor while Dr. David (pseudonym) taught the students during the second phase of the study. During the first phase of the study, which was carried out during Fall 2013, 31 students (21 females and nine males) registered to study the module. During the second phase of the study, which was carried out during Spring 2014, 22 students (10 males and 12 females) registered.

## **Data Collection methods**

In order to maintain credibility and examine the efficacy of the intervention from different angles, the researcher compared and cross-checked data from the student survey, focus group interviews, reflective journal entries, tutor's interview, and observers' comments.

## **Research instruments**

The questionnaire included three parts: (1) background information; (2) items on students' opinions on the DV project, and (3) open-ended questions which elicited feedback on their experiences with respect to the DV project. This paper is a part of a larger study and this paper addresses only a part of it. Therefore, only a few sections of the questionnaire result analysis are used in the analysis.

### Student focus groups

During the first phase of the study, Fall semester, 2013, a focus group discussion with six participants was held and the discussion lasted for 33 minutes. Similarly, during the Spring 2014, a focus group discussion with seven participants was conducted and the discussion continued for 51 minutes. At least one member from each group was included in the discussion to get insights into the working of each group. Discussions were recorded and transcribed for the sake of data analysis.

### External observers

Two EFL experts from the research site were invited as external observers during the display of DVs oral presentations. These observers were invited with the purpose of obtaining feedback on the students' work from an outsider's point of view and to eliminate the biases that might affect the researcher's description.

### Reflective journal

The researcher maintained a reflective journal with the purpose of recording students' reaction on the project. After each session, she noted her observations on students' responses on various aspects of the project. This practice helped her keep track of students' improvement in various skill areas, reflect upon the students' feedback and improvise upon the practice. Thus she continued maintaining a journal.

### Second tutor's (Dr. David's) interview

During the second phase of the study, Dr. David taught the course. To gather his perspectives on the integration of SCDV project in the EFL curriculum and its role in enhancing the students' motivation and language skills, an interview was conducted. The interview was recorded and transcribed. The interview responses gave useful insights on SCDV integration into the curriculum.

## Data Analysis

Student questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to get descriptive statistics such as percentages. Cross tables were also generated for comparative analysis.

To find out whether there is a significant difference between the results on student perspectives from two different phases of the study, a *z test* for the proportion (percentage) was performed.

Recordings of the focus groups and the second tutor's interview were first transcribed question-wise across all responses in order to identify consistencies and differences. Then the responses were analyzed, and categorized under sub-headings addressing the research questions.

## Results

To address the first two research questions, which are based on the student perspectives on SCDV, findings from data obtained through student questionnaire, focus group discussions, and *z test* results are considered. Results of the *z test* showed that in most of the areas, there was no significant difference between the student responses from two semesters. Therefore, in the data analysis of student survey below, only those areas where the difference on the student perspectives is statistically significant are featured. Third research question is addressed using the first teacher's reflective journal, excerpts from Dr. David's interview, and observers' comments.

### Research question one

The first research question explored the students' perspectives on the role of SCDV project in their affective involvement in language learning. First, responses from the questionnaire and focus groups are analyzed and then synthesized to respond to this question.

#### Role of SCDV in enhancing English learning motivation

Table 1 features student responses with respect to the role of SCDV project in enhancing learning motivation due to its non-traditional approach.

When enquired whether the project had the real purpose of encouraging authentic language use, 63.7% of the students from Fall semester and 54.6% from Spring semester either agreed or strongly agreed. Conversely, a small percentage from both the semesters (Fall= 6.5% and Spring =9.1%) disagreed with the statement. Considering the overall average, 60% agreed and 32% were neutral, while 7.5% disagreed. The focus group responses quoted below further authenticate their agreement:

Yes everything is depending on if the project is interesting or not everything comes to you if it's interesting or not. Kids are smart enough .If it has a purpose, they do it.

It was interesting that's what excited. This project is interesting...if something is interesting to students, they work hard. When something is extremely boring it is not fine it's not educating but it's more of an analogue not useful.

Likewise, 70% students from Fall and 72.8% from Spring either strongly agreed or agreed that it was active learning because they were learning while being engaged in various activities instead of being passive recipients of knowledge.

Noticing the positive response on the previous question on active learning through the SCDV project, it is not surprising that most of the students from Fall (74.2%) reported that they had found learning through DV project better and more engaging than the traditional English

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instruction, 22.6% were neutral and only 3.2% disagreed. However, from the Spring cohort, only 54.5% either strongly agreed or agreed, 36.4% were neutral and 9.1% disagreed with this point.

Item	Option	Fall 13	Spring 14
I was motivated to do this project because it had a real purpose, leading to meaningful language use.	Disagree	2	2
		6.5%	9.1%
	Neutral	9	8
		29.0%	36.4%
	Agree	12	10
		38.7%	45.5%
	Strongly Agree	8	2
		25.8%	9.1%
I was actively engaged in learning because it was learning by doing, instead of passively receiving knowledge from the teacher.	Disagree	2	1
		6.7%	4.5%
	Neutral	7	5
		23.3%	22.7%
	Agree	13	10
		43.3%	45.5%
	Strongly Agree	8	6
		26.7%	27.3%
I believe that I learn better through this digi-video project as compared to traditional English instruction.	Disagree	1	2
		3.2%	9.1%
	Neutral	7	8
		22.6%	36.4%
	Agree	12	7
		38.7%	31.8%
	Strongly Agree	11	5
		35.5%	22.7%

Table 1: Learning motivation through SCDV

Enjoyment during the SCDV project due to its non-traditional approach

Discussing the fun students had during the project, as shown in Table 2, the overwhelming agreement (90.9%) shown from the Spring cohort indicates that the students thoroughly enjoyed the project because of its non-traditional teaching approach. Though a significant percentage (71%) from Fall also either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, the percentage of agreement is not as high as the Spring cohort response. The results of *z test* also show a significant difference of 10% between Fall and Spring on the agree option.

Item	Option	Fall 13	Spring 14	Total	P	Z value	p value	Significance
I enjoyed working on this project because it was not the typical grammar exercises or oral drills.	Disagree	1	0	1	0.18868	0.850485	0.395055	
		3.2%	0.0%	1.9%				
	Neutral	8	2	10	0.188679	1.532556	0.125385	
		25.8%	9.1%	18.9%				
	Agree	11	13	24	0.45283	1.701246	0.088897	10%
		35.5%	59.1%	45.3%				
Strongly Agree	11	7	18	0.339623	0.277661	0.781272		
	35.5%	31.8%	34.0%					

Table 2: Enjoyment in project since it did not have typical grammar exercises and oral drills

### Sharing of videos on public platforms

SCDV projects allow students to showcase their creativity on public platforms since the student videos can be shared on social media websites. This encourages students to do their best. Therefore, a considerable percentage (77.3%) of students from Spring (67.7% from Fall and 77.3% from Spring) agreed that they tried to do their best because the videos were going to be shared with public audience. However, the agreement from Fall was lower (67.7%) as compared to Spring. Focus group responses from Fall verify this point further. Most of the focus group participants were apprehensive of sharing their commercials on YouTube though they agreed for the institutional website. When the teacher asked them to put it on YouTube, some expressions were, “oh come on” and “is it necessary”. On the other hand, the Spring cohort students were excited about this idea and shared their commercials on YouTube. They even enthusiastically compared the number of likes and comments each commercial received from the public audience.

The results of *z test* support this variation of opinion. There is a statistically significant difference of 10% between the Fall and Spring cohort responses for the disagree option. As shown in Table 3 below, 12.9% students from Fall and no one from Spring disagreed with the idea that public sharing of videos motivated them.

Item	Option	Fall 13	Spring 14	Total	P	Z value	p value	Significance
I did my best because the video would be shown to public audiences.	Disagree	4	0	4	0.075472	1.752267	0.079728	at 10%
		12.9%	0.0%	7.5%				
	Neutral	6	5	11	0.207547	0.2983	0.765475	
		19.4%	22.7%	20.8%				
	Agree	12	6	18	0.339623	0.866304	0.386324	
		38.7%	27.3%	34.0%				
Strongly Agree	9	11	20	0.377358	1.551707	0.120732		
	29.0%	50.0%	37.7%					

Table 3: Motivation due to public sharing of video commercial

### Fun element

Overall, the students found the project work fun since 93.5% from Fall and 91.6% from Spring either strongly agreed or agreed with this point. Their passion about the project was also reflected during focus group discussions. In response to the open ended question where the

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students were asked to compare DV creation with previous learning experience, a student reported, “It is different and funny (fun filled) than previous”.

Item	Option	Fall 13	Spring 14	Total
This project was enjoyable.	Neutral	2	2	4
		6.5%	9.1%	7.5%
	Agree	12	7	19
		38.7%	31.8%	35.8%
	Strongly Agree	17	13	30
		54.8%	59.1%	56.6%

Table 4: Enjoyment through SCDV project

The following quotes from the focus group discussions further verify that the students enjoyed the project thoroughly:

I enjoyed it. First time ever I enjoyed the project-not kidding-usually I’m thinking about the project and keep it to the last moment –to the last week. This was the first time it was fun.

I agree with this video commercial because it is new in assignments and I like to see such new things.

It does because it is interesting-they ask us to do something new. Not just research and writing- boring that we get in other assignments.

The reflective journal also shows similar comments from students when the project was introduced during the second study phase. In the first week entry she had recorded,

For some time, they just listened to me trying hard to understand what exactly I want. All the students were excited- especially after seeing the samples. They immediately started getting into groups and started discussing the products.

She had also observed that though most of them seemed to be positive, some had negative expressions as well, like the previous semester students. Some of the students’ expressions are quoted below:

Oh my God. We are not good in marketing.

It’s a lot of hard work.

Yes, I’m excited. We’ll learn something new.

It’ll be fun. It’s something new.

However, once the samples from the previous students were displayed, all the students seemed to be excited.

**Research question two**

The second research question examined the students’ perspectives on the role of SCDV in enhancing their language skills.

*What are the students’ perspectives on the role of SCDV in enhancing their English language skills?*



Language skills

As shown in Table 5, a significant percentage of students from Fall (64.6%) as well as Spring (68.2%) agreed that the project enhanced their involvement in language learning.

Item	Option	Fall 13	Spring 14	Total
I have become more involved in my English learning.	Strongly disagree	1	0	1
		3.2%	0.0%	1.9%
	Disagree	4	1	5
		12.9%	4.5%	9.4%
	Neutral	6	6	12
		19.4%	27.3%	22.6%
Agree	10	8	18	
	32.3%	36.4%	34.0%	
Strongly Agree	10	7	17	
	32.3%	31.8%	32.1%	

**Table 5:** Involvement in language learning

The SCDV project involved students in a range of speaking activities including discussions during meetings, rehearsals for acting or presentation, and oral presentations, it is quite surprising to note that the response rate to the question on the role of project in developing confidence in speaking is not very high. Only 54.8% students from Fall and 61.9% from Spring agreed with it. However, a very small percentage (16.1%) from Fall and no one from Spring disagreed with this point.

Item	Option	Fall 13	Spring 14	Total	P	Z value	p value	significance
I feel I have become more confident in speaking English as a result of completing this project.	Strongly Disagree	2	1	3	0.057692	0.256416	0.797630	
		6.5%	4.8%	5.8%				
	Disagree	5	0	5	0.096154	1.935827	0.052889	at 10%
		16.1%	0.0%	9.6%				
	Neutral	7	7	14	0.269231	0.857736	0.391039	
		22.6%	33.3%	26.9%				
Agree	13	8	21	0.403846	0.276924	0.781838		
	41.9%	38.1%	40.4%					
Strongly Agree	4	5	9	0.173077	1.020033	0.307713		
	12.9%	23.8%	17.3%					

**Table 6:** Student speaking skills improvement responses

As compared to speaking skills response, a moderately higher percentage of students from both Fall (67.8%) and Spring (59.1%) semesters agreed upon the role of project in developing writing skills.

For reading, students from both the phases, Fall (67.7%) and Spring (72.7%) were positive about the role of project in developing their reading skills. On the other hand, some students (9.7% from Fall and 9% from Spring) disagreed with this point.

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Item	Option	Fall 13	Spring 14
This project also reinforced my writing skills while working on the video script, detailing product and writing report.	Disagree	3	1
		9.6%	4.5%
	Neutral	7	8
		22.6%	36.4%
	Agree	21	13
		67.8%	59.1%
This project reinforced my reading skills while collecting information on the commercial product	Disagree	3	2
		9.7%	9%
	Neutral	7	4
		22.6%	18.2%
	Agree	21	16
		67.7%	72.7%

Table 7: Writing and Reading skills development

The following excerpts from the focus group discussions regarding the language skills development show positive responses:

First, we first do our research about what is the meaning of the commercial. That's how we improved our reading because we want to make the best way to make commercial to make our commercial better. In the first video, we have to first speak in English in the library because we were shooting there and we used the English language to speak with them.

Ya about reading skills about video editing I learn about video editing program and so much more and how to make effects also I listened to the videos in Youtube about video editing program and how to create a commercial that's all.

For writing also we improved our skills in writing the report because it should be formal and all the grammar is correct and all the spelling is correct.

Regarding the question whether the language skills acquired through this project can be applied in real-life situations, as shown in Table 8, a very high percentage (86.3%) from Spring and a significant percentage (71%) from Fall either agreed or strongly agreed. Since all the reading, writing, listening and speaking activities geared towards the video creation task and final report, they encouraged authentic language use. The following quote from focus group is an example of how some activities made use of target language inevitable.

Sometimes we need someone to help us to take video-we need to talk in English-at souq (shop) Maha we meet an Indian man and we want him to take video for us and we asked him(in English).

Item	Option	Fall 13	Spring 14	Total
The language skills acquired through this project can be applied in real-life situations.	Disagree	1	1	2
		3.2%	4.5%	3.8%
	Neutral	8	2	10
		25.8%	9.1%	18.9%
	Agree	11	10	21
		35.5%	45.5%	39.6%
	Strongly Agree	11	9	20
		35.5%	40.9%	37.7%

Table 8: Application of language skills acquired through the project in real life

Lastly, regarding vocabulary enrichment, in addition to the preparation of the commercial, final presentation and report, the focus group participants reported that they discussed many words and phrases before finalizing the slogan, picture captions and dialogues for their commercials.

### **Research question three**

The third research question reflects the teachers' perspectives on the integration of SCDV in the English for Communication course.

#### Integration of SCDV project in the *English for Communication* course

As far as the integration of DV project into the curriculum is concerned, Dr. David was very positive about it. He informed that the students enjoyed it thoroughly. He said:

According to our students, it is one the most memorable if not the best assessment for this course because they could express themselves freely. The course gave them an opportunity for self-expression. They had the freedom to take decisions and be as creative as possible. There was enough room for them to develop themselves.

The external observers from both the study phases were highly impressed with the students' creations. After the completion of video display session, one external observer stated, "It was a rare spectacle. I have never seen such confidence among students". Some of the observers later integrated SCDV into their own courses.

The weekly notes from the teacher researcher's journal revealed that though initially she was a bit apprehensive about the success of the course, she was very pleased as the project matured and reached culmination. The journal entry from week six noted, "Looks like my project is going in the right direction. Student learning is happening in varied ways". At a later stage she noted, "I've never seen such enthusiasm towards any project among my students".

When Dr. David was asked to compare this project with his previous teaching experience, he mentioned:

I saw a different energy, a different passion...students had a sense of belongingness.... They felt that they were in a new world – a world that they owned!

### **Pedagogical implications and recommendations**

Having used the proposed model for a period of three semesters (two main study phases and one pilot study), the researcher concludes that SCDV projects encompass a number of advantages for students as well as tutors and therefore posit significant pedagogical implications for the EFL academia.

First of all, as asserted by Kearney & Schuck (2004), SCDV can "support, extend, or change pedagogy and curriculum outcomes" (p. 1). After the discussion of findings, it can be safely assumed that the project achieved its objective. At the same time, it supported and extended the pedagogy. Second, in compliance with the Vygotskian (1978) view, it is vital to ensure that the students' skills are nurtured by providing them ample opportunities to stretch beyond their limits. Findings of the study revealed that the students found DV creation tasks challenging yet manageable. There was a greater use of enquiry learning strategies which was noted by Henderson, M., Auld, G., Holkner, B., Russell, G., Wee Tiong Seah, Fernando, A. & Romeo, G. (2010) as well.

In addition, research has proved that SCDV increases learning motivation and enjoyment (Burn, A., Brindley, S., Durran, J., Kelsall, C., & Sweetlove, J., 2001) among learners and keeps them engaged, including students with challenging behavior (Burn & Reed, 1999). This was

observed by both the teacher participants of this study. According to them, the students spent many hours working together on DV tasks.

Besides this, during the project, the students collaborated on a variety of activities, where they employed real-life skills and engaged in authentic discussions. This made the entire learning process more meaningful.

Overall, the SCDV project enhanced learning motivation among students as they enjoyed the DV creation process. The task gave them a sense of achievement and pride at the end. In this study, the teachers also reported of being enthusiastic about the project and felt that it was rewarding for them as well. Therefore, EFL educators and course designers should consider the possibility of integrating SCDV projects into their courses which aim at engaging students in constructive tasks that promote critical thinking and creativity rather than a mere acquisition of facts.

This study examined the initial stages of the implementation of an ICT integrated approach in the foreign language curriculum at the research site and hence contained a number of limitations. First, the findings were derived from a small population sample of Omani students and it might be difficult to generalize the findings to other courses or other contextual settings. Secondly, since the DV tasks are time consuming and the course comprised other components apart from the SCDV project, there was a crunch of time for both, the students as well as their teachers. Though the students enjoyed the project and were ready to devote out of class time to plan and create videos, there were scheduling conflicts as the students belonged to different specializations and thus had different time tables. Though, after the pilot stage, the teacher realized the requirement for a session on DV creation by a media expert and arranged it as well, due to differing schedules, all the students were not able to take advantage of this session. Lastly, since the students met only once a week in class and only 30 minutes of the class time was devoted to the discussion of DV related tasks and issues; it was difficult for the teacher to keep a track of the roles of different group members.

For ICT use specific limitations, apart from the technical glitches, it has been observed that a considerable percentage of EFL teachers are reluctant to introduce technology in their classrooms. The potential of ICTs can only be fully exploited if there is an enthusiastic participation from teachers. There is still a gap between the innovation objectives and the level of ICT use by teachers (Naqvi, Khan & Al Mahrooqi, 2015).

In response to the limitations mentioned above, to establish a model for integrating DVs into English language curriculum, further improvements are required. Repeat sessions by a media expert on technical support for video design can be arranged so that all the students get an opportunity to get training on how to create a video before starting their work. To keep a track of the students' progress, e-portfolio can be used as an assessment tool. To avoid issues related to the time factor, it is believed that a higher weighting could be given to the SCDV project so that it has more assessed components and thus more time could be devoted to the DV activities inside the classroom. In addition, forming groups with members possessing different talents might also be a good idea. Also, some form of instruction on the importance of team work and time management might be beneficial before forming the work groups. Identifying the role of each group member and writing this down in the form of a contract might help make each member accountable and more responsible for achieving the goals of the project. Finally, more reflective writing exercises could prove beneficial in enhancing learners' writing skills.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the SCDV project, which was based on Vygotsky's (1978) socio-constructivist principles, encouraged learners to construct new knowledge as they worked together and collaboratively searched for answers to the problems posed at them. The objective of integrating SCDV project into the *English for Communication* was reasonably accomplished. The results show that the students as well as their teachers enjoyed working on the project and considered it both educational and entertaining. The findings conform to the results of previous studies which reported that DV integration in the curriculum can help develop a range of language as well as other social learning skills, including communication, negotiation, decision making and problem-solving (Reid, Burn & Parker, 2002). The project enhanced motivation and enjoyment (Burn et al., 2001) and supported pedagogy and learning outcomes (Kearney and Schuck, 2004). Most of the aspects considered in the questionnaire, focus groups and the interview received a positive response. These responses suggest that a pedagogical initiative involving the use of SCDVs could be a motivating learning activity that can engage learners and lead to improved learning outcomes. Students developed a range of English language and other skills as the project matured.

An added strength of this approach is that it can be tailored to the needs of students from varied proficiency levels, specializations and educational milieus. Although DV is no longer a novel practice, it has not received the attention it deserves in the Arab region, and to be precise, Oman.

This was the first time such a project was introduced in an Omani EFL context which emphasized the integration of all the four language skills. At the same time it provided students with an opportunity to interact with an international audience when they posted their videos on public sharing websites. It was a meaningful, communicative and an entertaining student-centered activity where the teacher was merely a facilitator. Lastly, it adopted a non-traditional approach where all the principles of creative language learning were practically implemented. Therefore, most students perceived the project positively and learned considerably throughout its various stages.

Hence the findings convince the researcher to conclude that the SCDVs have a huge untapped potential for helping learners to acquire language skills. To conclude, the language instructors should consider the incorporation of SCDV projects into their courses.

## References

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