

## STUDY OF AUTHENTIC VIDEOS AS STRESS-LIMITING AIDS IN ESP AND EFL LESSONS

### ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ АВТЕНТИЧНИХ ВІДЕО ЯК ЗАСОБІВ, ЩО ОБМЕЖУЮТЬ СТРЕС НА ЗАНЯТТЯХ З АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ТЕХНІЧНОГО СПРЯМУВАННЯ Й АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ

*Use of authentic videos is a modern way of teaching English. Thus, their stress-limiting character in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons is studied in the article. The concept of stress and the causes of its appearance among university students are clarified. The meaning of "authentic videos", their examples, features, and difference from adapted ones are presented as well. In addition to that, the fundamental functions of authentic video clips in English that ensure stress reduction during foreign languages studying, and the ways of limiting students' stress using authentic videos in ESP lessons at technical universities are specified. The procedure and the results of the experimental verification of the studied issue are also provided.*

**Key words:** authentic, video, film, movie, programme, aids, stress, stress reduction, technical, students, *ESP*, English for Specific Purposes, *EFL*, English as a Foreign Language, lesson, university.

Використання англомовних відеозаписів є сучасним способом викладання англійської мови. Тому у статті вивчаються автентичні відеозаписи як засоби, що обмежують стрес на заняттях з англійської мови технічного спрямування (*ESP*) й англійської мови як іноземної (*EFL*). Уточнено поняття стресу і причини його появи серед студентів вищих навчальних закладів. У роботі представлено пояснення словосполучення «автентичні відео», зазначено їх особливості, включаючи відмінності від адаптованих відеозаписей. Крім того, уточнюються основні функції автентичних англомовних відео, які забезпечують зниження стресу під час вивчення іноземних мов, а також способи зниження стресу студентів за допомогою

автентичних відеозаписів на заняттях *ESP* у технічних університетах. Наведено процедуру та результати експериментальної перевірки досліджуваного питання.

**Ключові слова:** автентичний, відео, фільм, кіно, програма, засіб, стрес, зниження стресу, технічний, студенти, англійська мова технічного спрямування, англійська мова як іноземна, заняття, університет.

Использование англоязычных видеозаписей является современным способом преподавания английского языка. Поэтому в статье изучаются аутентичные видео как средства, которые ограничивают стресс студентов на занятиях по английскому языку технического направления (*ESP*) и английскому языку как иностранному (*EFL*). Уточнено понятие стресса и причины его появления среди студентов высших учебных заведений. В работе представлено объяснение словосочетания «аутентичные видео» и указаны их особенности, включая отличие от адаптированных видеозаписей. Кроме того, уточняются основные функции аутентичных англоязычных видео, которые обеспечивают снижение стресса при изучении иностранных языков, а также способы снижения стресса студентов с помощью аутентичных видео на занятиях *ESP* в технических университетах. Приведены процедура и результаты экспериментальной проверки изучаемого вопроса.

**Ключевые слова:** аутентичный, видео, фильм, кино, программа, средство, стресс, снижение стресса, технический, студенты, английский язык технического направления, английский язык как иностранный, занятие, университет.

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**Introduction.** At present, technical university students study large amounts of information about the world's innovative technologies and devices in a short period of time due to the constantly-evolving technological sphere. Technical students of non-English-speaking countries must study not only subjects they major in but also non-specialty ones, like English, that are equally essential for their future professions. Furthermore, undergraduates need to study for their exams and do coursework, meeting the requirements of the curriculum. Students' desire to complete all the tasks in-time and achieve high results in all lessons can often cause the so-called academic stress, which can lead to a deterioration of the academic performance and physical and mental health. Thus, the use of stress-limiting teaching aids in *ESP* and *EFL* lessons at technical universities is of crucial importance both for English lecturers and their students.

**Literature review.** The issue of stress and its influence on students' academic performance have been examined by scholars worldwide.

Ahmad Izadi [6] studied the correlation between listening test results and foreign language anxiety of the *EFL* learners with the focus on the influence of *EFL* teacher on the educational process. The investigation results showed that students with lower anxiety received higher scores in the listening test, while those who were stressed got lower scores, as had been predicted prior to the experiment.

Álvarez-Silva et al. [1] investigated academic stress influence on higher technology students. It was mentioned that 97% of the stated students confirmed the presence of stress in their educational process, especially in the classroom. Among the predominant stress-factors, the students named the teacher's evaluations, not understanding the topics addressed in the lesson and the limited time to perform the task.

The objective of Habibah Elias et al.'s [3] study was to analyse the influence of stress on the academic achievement of undergraduate students of diverse specialties. In the researchers' article, the relation between the year of study and the stress level of the students was determined. It was concluded that the third and the fifth years were the most stressful [3, p. 650] due to the upsurge of the course's difficulty level.

These scientific works have created prerequisites for the further research and a quest for teaching aids and methods that efficiently limit academic stress of students, specifically 3rd-year ones (who succumb to stress most often), and simultaneously boost the studying process.

**Unresolved issues.** Researchers from various countries of the world have studied the issue of stress, including academic stress, among university students, as well as its causes. Nevertheless, the technical students' stress lessening with the help of authentic video records in ESP and EFL lessons has the potential for more in-depth research and verification of practicality.

**Aim.** The purpose of the current research is to study the features and stress-limiting character of authentic videos as modern teaching aids in ESP and EFL lessons, including their influence on technical students' work in class, educational material memorization and the subsequent recall.

**Study of authentic videos as stress-limiting aids in ESP and EFL lessons.** Stress is defined as a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances [9, p. 1749]. Due to the challenging nature of academic studying throughout the "university life", a term "academic stress" appeared.

In order to avoid redundant academic stress at least in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) lessons, which are a part of a broader category – English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons, university students need to be provided with suitable stress-reducing educational aids. Among such are motion pictures (films) and TV series, their fragments, as well as programmes in English. Depending on students' levels of English knowledge, they may be presented with or without English subtitles. One of the main advantages of videos in the studying process is the possibility of the dual-channel (visual and acoustic) presentation of information, and thus facilitation of students' easier perception and comprehension through the activation of their two senses simultaneously – vision and hearing. The fore mentioned multimedia products (movies, series, and programmes) are the main representatives of authentic English aids, i.e. created by and for people, for whom English is the native language.

Authentic videos differ significantly and noticeably from the ones that are artificially created (adapted) for foreign language teaching purposes: 1) their topics and presentation are more diverse, mirroring various social

aspects, whereas educational videos adhere to the ones corresponding to the educational sphere; 2) the speech rate heard on them is often faster than on the video records adapted for teaching; 3) the speech may be in various accents, whereas on adapted videos the English speakers with a clear and sensible British or American accent can be found; 4) their lexis is usually more varied and may include many colloquial words and phrases, such as idioms and neologisms, that cannot be found in coursebooks or on artificially-created teaching videos; 5) their grammar, in its turn, can be simplified, using elliptical sentences or shortenings, like it is done in "real" life, while adapted materials in most cases present information in the form of unabridged grammatical structures, by the book.

Many researchers from all parts of the world [4; 5; 7; 8; 10] have proved numerous positive aspects of authentic videos use in teaching English as a Foreign Language (to which ESP belongs) and English as a Second Language: in students' vocabulary expansion, study motivation, advancement of listening and speaking skills and the overall knowledge of English, even improvement of reading skills. Thus, authentic English videos act as boosters in all aspects of the students' foreign language studying.

In terms of stress-limiting, visual art aids, in particular films and series, and such types of videos as programmes, can be easily interpreted by students, leave a mark in their cultural consciousness, stimulate creativity, and cause individual language reactions. The fundamental functions of authentic videos that ensure stress reduction during foreign languages studying are [2]:

- physiological (facilitation of recollection);
- psychohygienic (promotion of relaxation);
- emotional (causing feelings);
- socio-psychological (strengthening the dynamics in the group);
- cognitive (aiding mental processes);
- the function of the unconscious study (complex language structures are remembered at the unconscious level);
- communicative (making communication and team-work easier);
- motivational (prompting students' positive attitude to study the foreign language and desire to actually use it).

While studying with authentic English videos, students see real ("authentic") examples of the use of the target language and understand the practicality of terminology and phrases related to their specialty. Moreover, being taught in such a way, students get to work more with their group-mates instead of the constant work directly with the lecturer, and so feel calmer. Multiple opportunities to provide their own (evaluative) opinions on the information or issue seen on the provided video clip creates a relaxed and non-aggravating nature of speaking exercises since there

are no correct answers as in the exercises to printed texts. Consequently, technical students become less stressed in ESP lessons and more motivated to practice English vocabulary, further developing and advancing their foreign language skills and the knowledge of English, both general and for specific purposes, proving the importance of authentic videos presence in ESP lessons for stress-less mastering of the English language and communication in it.

Therefore, the positive effect of such studying will be clearly seen both in students' academic life and in their future professional situations and interaction.

**Experimental verification and results.** In order to test in practice whether authentic videos indeed have a stress-reducing and thus study-improving nature in ESP and EFL lessons of technical students, an experiment was conducted at the Institute of Energy Saving and Energy Management of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" in March and April 2019. The participants were thirty 3rd-year Ukrainian students of engineering specialties, who study English for Specific Purposes, i.e. English used in the context of engineering in energy saving and energy management fields. The mentioned students were randomly divided into 2 groups (15 students in each) – an experimental (G1) and a control (G2) ones. At first, two groups were given printed texts with tasks after them to assess the understanding of texts as a whole, new vocabulary, and grammar. Then, the students were to do communicative exercises (using new lexis and grammar) aimed at discussion of the lesson's topic. After that, everyone was provided with a pre-experimental test, which included tasks to check the students' recall and understanding of the new educational material (the lesson's subject, terminology, and grammar). Finally, the students received questionnaires to fill in order to determine the students' attitude to the educational process, their interest during the lesson, motivation to continue studying the topic, and desire to practice the studied vocabulary further outside the class. G1's pre-experimental test results showed an average of 46% of correct answers, i.e. 23 out of 50 tasks. G2's outcomes were analogous – 44%, 22 out of 50. As for the questionnaire answers, 80% of 30 students (G1 + G2) considered the studying with texts "pretty stressful" and could not identify such ESP lessons as highly-motivating or interesting, and so they would prefer different way of educational materials study; only 10% of the students were in favour of the provided studying procedure, and the other 10% remained undecided. The comparable results of both groups allowed further experiment as they proved that the basic level of the students' comprehension was akin. The similarity of the obtained results of the pre-experimental test allowed conduction of a further comparative analysis of the two groups and ensured the right ratio of to-be-collected data.

The experiment lasted five weeks. G1 was taught in ESP lessons using authentic videos, mainly clips from Hollywood films corresponding to the students-engineers' specialty, whereas G2 continued to study the foreign language with texts on the same topics, including the typescripts of videos watched by G1, in order to provide the students of both groups with identical vocabulary in all lessons. The experimental and control groups did various exercises to develop their four language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing, – with the major focus on communication in English, and studied the same topics, lexis, and grammar.

Following the experiment, G1 and G2 were to write a post-experimental test, structurally similar to the pre-experimental one, in which the comprehension and recall of the studied lexical and grammar materials, as well as the topics as a whole were checked. The results of G1, who studied with authentic videos, showed the visible improvement: the students gave correct answers to 82% questions (41 out of 50). G2, in their turn, gave correct answers in 58% times (29 out of 50). The answers in the questionnaire provided to all the students post-experimentally, containing the same inquiries about students' interest in the ESP lessons, motivation, and wish to continue studying outside the class, indicated the following: 90% of G1 considered the lessons with videos engaging, efficient, stress-reducing, and stimulating for further practice of the learnt English vocabulary via watching the proposed films in full length in English after the lessons, and the rest 10% noted that the lessons were attention-grabbing and less stressful than with texts, but they did not plan to continue their studies beyond the classroom; whereas only 50% of G2 students regarded ESP lessons based on texts (on the same topics as G1's videos) as attention-seizing, sufficient, as well as inspiring, and other 50% had the opposite thoughts.

The results obtained after the experiment conducted with both groups indicated the following. The amount of G1's right answers changed from 46% (23 out of 50) to 82% (41 out of 50). Thus, after the five-week experiment, the improvement coefficient was 1.8. Hence, the efficiency of study and subsequent recall improved by almost 2 times. G2's ratio of correct answers before and after the experiment was 44% (22 out of 50) to 58% (29 out of 50) with the improvement coefficient of 1.3, demonstrating only slightly-improved result – by 0.3 times.

An important addition to the analysis of the post-experimental results are final questionnaire's answers: 100% the students-engineers of the experimental group (G1) considered the lessons with authentic videos as educational aids significantly less stressful, interesting and productive, even though not all 100% but 90% of them expressed the desire to practice English outside the classroom. Compared to

10% of students who expressed the same thoughts answering the questions of the pre-experimental questionnaire, the improvement is significant. Worth mentioning that G2's answers in the post-experimental questionnaire slightly improved as well – 50% of students (instead of 10%) considered ESP lessons with texts on the same topics as G1's videos less stressful and sufficient, although another half of them did not share their group-mates' point of view.

Taking into account that the employment of authentic videos in teaching students-engineers English for Specific Purposes enhances the studying process and its outcomes by almost 2 times during a short-term experiment, there is a potential for further examination of the issue in question and a long-term experiment conduction to prove the even-bigger benefit of authentic video records for ESP and EFL lessons in the long run.

### Conclusions.

1. Stress is defined as a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. The term "academic stress" appeared to depict the potential deterioration of the students' academic performance and physical and mental health due to extensive influence of the challenging nature of academic studying throughout the "university life" of students.

2. The main representatives of authentic English videos (created by and for the native speakers of English and not for educational purposes) are films and TV series, their fragments, and programmes in English. These aids are the most favourable academic-stress-reducing educational aids in ESP and EFL lessons of students of technical specialties in terms of vocabulary expansion, study motivation, advancement of listening and speaking skills, and the overall knowledge of English. This is due to authentic videos' dual-channel presentation of information, and thus facilitation of students' easier perception and comprehension simultaneously through vision and hearing.

3. The fundamental functions of authentic videos that ensure stress reduction during ESP and EFL studying are: physiological (facilitation of recollection); psychohygienic (promotion of relaxation); emotional (causing feelings); socio-psychological (strengthening the dynamics in the group); cognitive (aiding mental processes); the function of the unconscious study (complex language structures are remembered at the unconscious level); communicative (making communication and team-work easier); motivational (prompting students' positive attitude to studying the foreign language and desire to actually use it).

4. Being taught with authentic English videos, technical students see "authentic" examples of the target language use and so, the practicality of terminology and phrases related to their specialty. Furthermore, students get to work more in teams with their

group-mates (instead of the lecturer-student cooperation), and so feel calmer. Presence of authentic English videos creates a relaxed and non-aggravating nature of speaking exercises since there are no correct answers as in the coursebook exercises to texts and thus, students have multiple opportunities to provide their own (evaluative) opinions on the information or issue seen on the provided video clip without fear of being wrong, making a mistake. Consequently, technical students become less stressed in ESP lessons and more motivated to practice English vocabulary, advancing their foreign language skills. This proves the significance of authentic videos implementation in ESP and EFL lessons for stressless mastering of the English language and communication in it.

5. The experimental verification of the stress-limiting character of authentic videos in ESP and EFL lessons and their influence on students' work, educational material memorization and its subsequent recollection was conducted with thirty 3rd-year Ukrainian students of engineering specialties, who study English in the context of engineering in energy saving and energy management fields, i.e. English for Specific Purposes. Mainly, clips from Hollywood films corresponding to the students' specialties were used as teaching aids in the experimental group (G1), while only printed materials, i.e. texts and transcripts of the G1's videos, were employed in the control group's (G2) lessons. The post-experimental test results showed that the efficiency of the G1's study and their subsequent recall of vocabulary, grammar, and topics had advanced by almost 2 times: the improvement coefficient was 1.8; whereas the G2's outcomes remained practically unchanged, demonstrating the improvement coefficient of 1.3, bettering by 0.3 times. Moreover, 100% of the experimental group's students-engineers noted in the post-experimental questionnaires that their lessons with authentic videos were significantly less stressful than the usual text-based lessons, as well as much more productive and stimulating, while only 50% of the control group could express the same point of view.

The aforementioned data confirm the practical value and appropriateness of further study of the article's issue and the potential even-bigger benefit of authentic videos for ESP and EFL lessons in the long run.

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