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Using a Television Series to Facilitate Advanced Learners' Vocabulary
Learning
MA Thesis

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Abstract

The present thesis focuses on the method of facilitating advanced learners' vocabulary learning by using clips from the television show *Friends*. The thesis is divided into two main parts: a literature review and the empirical research part.

The literature review consists of two sections: Using Videos in a Language Classroom, and Vocabulary Learning and Teaching. The first section, Using Videos in a Language Classroom, examines the advantages and disadvantages of using videos and visuals to facilitate language learning. The second section, Vocabulary Learning and Teaching, discusses the way in which vocabulary is learned, and processes that help students learn vocabulary. Similarly, methods of how vocabulary should be taught to students, and how low- and high-frequency words should be taught, are examined.

The empirical research chapter of the thesis provides an overview of the research project conducted with ten advanced 11th grade Miina Härma Gymnasium students, as well as discusses the results of the study. In the discussion part, the results of the study are analyzed in the context of the material from the literature review. The conclusion summarizes the main findings of the study and suggests further possible research opportunities.

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Introduction

Owing to the rapid technological developments in the recent years, language learning and -teaching strategies have changed. A great deal of language learning strategies have been developed and used; however, new strategies are constantly being developed, because studies keet suggesting new information about which strategy is the best to use when teaching students a foreign language. Not only have the methods for teaching grammar, speaking, listening, and writing, changed, but the materials with which vocabulary is taught to foreign language learners as well. A large number of schools around the world are now equipped with computers, televisions, access to the Internet, DVD players, and so on. Since then, teachers and researchers have taken interest in using technology in the classroom to teach foreign language learners.

Because teachers were now able to use videos and other technological advancements, among other teaching aids, in the classroom, researchers became interested in the types of materials the students preferred to learn through, and which types of teaching aids were the most beneficial to use in the classroom. In order to gain insight into the matter, researchers decided to take a look at students' learning styles, and how they tend to learn best. Pashler et al. (2008: 106) define in their article learning styles as "the view that different people learn information in different ways." Learning styles are used to categorize people into different groups, based on how they like to learn new information. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test, which became popular in the United States in the 1940s, was said to help people make better career decisions, based on how they were grouped after taking the test. Pashler et al. (2008: 107) claimed that the theory was still popular at the time of writing the article, and added that the idea of people finding out "what type of person they are" has appealed to many people on some deeper level. In

addition to that, they claim that the test "promoted the development of type-based learning-style assessments." Not only is it beneficial for the students to know which types of learning styles suit them best, but it is useful knowledge for the teacher as well, in order for them to make decisions about which teaching aids to possibly use in the classroom. That is not to say that the teacher should only use one type of teaching aid which is suggested to be the best for students, but rather to be informed about which type of teaching aids might be the most beneficial for the students.

The learning styles theory is controversial, and has received criticism from multiple scholars, one of them being Willingham, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, who has criticized said myths in his co-authored article *The Myth of Learning Styles* (2010). While he agrees with learning-styles theorists that students differ from one another, that they have different interests and that they differ in background knowledge, he does not believe in the theory that students' preferences in learning help them to learn anything better. He claims that the theorists have not found enough proof, and disapproves of the theory supporters' claims that a teacher should only teach, for example, a visual learner through visual aids (Riener and Willingham 2010). Tabatabaei and Mashayekhi (2012) similarly concluded that while the participants in their experiment preferred the visual learning style the most, there was no correlation between their leaning styles and foreign language achievement. It is unimaginable that a teacher should only use visual aids on students that happen to like looking at videos, and only dialogues on students who do not like to look at pictures. However, as the following articles explain, using a certain amount of visual aids in a classroom can be beneficial for the students.

The critique on learning styles has not been an obstacle for many researchers, who have conducted experiments to find out which learning styles students prefer, or what they think of the use of visual (or audio) aids in the classroom. Kim and Kim (2014) look at

perceptual learning styles, to find out how Korean EFL students like to learn. They categorized perceptual learning styles as visual (learning through sight and visual aids), auditory (learning through listening and speaking activities), kinaesthetic and tactile (people belonging to both style categories prefer to learn by physically touching objects or moving around the room) (Kim & Kim 2014: 15). Their study was carried out among 2,682 Korean EFL learners from elementary school through high school, and the results revealed that the most preferred learning style was visual, followed by auditory and kinaesthetic styles (Kim & Kim 2014: 18). While visual learning style was preferred, it does not mean that the students who preferred that particular learning style do not benefit from other learning aids. Lessons should be as varied as possible and include different types of activities so that different kinds of learners would be stimulated, and the lesson interesting for the students.

The way in which vocabulary items are taught has changed over the years as well. Griffiths (2004) points out that vocabulary was at first, during the popularity of the Grammar-Translation method, taught to students by giving them a list of words, and their definitions in the students' mother tongue. However, when classrooms began to be equipped with technology, some teachers started to incorporate it into their lessons as well, by using movies, TV series, and videos to teach students vocabulary. Some studies suggest that students enjoy using videos, more than other teaching aids, to learn vocabulary items. For example, Bal-Gezegin (2014) investigated the difference between using audio and video for teaching vocabulary, and focused on the students' opinions of the different aids The author divided 50 students into two groups, who used either video clips or dialogue from tapes to learn the same vocabulary. The findings correspond to Kim and Kim's findings, as the students who had used video to study vocabulary, were more satisfied with the method, while the group who had used dialogues were described as "not as motivated,

willing and enthusiastic about the conversations and related activities" (Bal-Gegezin 2014: 455). Based on these results, it is possible to assume that materials involving videos may appeal to a larger number of learners in a group.

In addition to that, some studies, which will be discussed in a later section, also suggest that the students who learn vocabulary with the help of videos are more successful in learning new words than the students who learn words without videos, and that videos, in the students' opinion, are helpful in retaining and remembering word meanings (Arikan and Taraf 2010, Jung and Lee 2013). When taking into account the aforementioned studies, it can be said that it is overall beneficial for a teacher to use visual aids to teach vocabulary in the classroom. Thus, teaching vocabulary with the use of videos (or more specifically, in this thesis, a TV series) is a matter that is worth further exploration. I have not, thus far, found any studies that examine teaching lower frequency words to advanced-level students by using a video where the words are not directly used, which is the rationale for the present thesis. The present thesis will investigate whether it is possible to teach advanced students lower frequency words by having students create associations between words and situations seen in the video. The literature review will give an overview of using videos in the classroom, as well as how to teach vocabulary using videos. The empirical study will further discuss the rationale for the study, and report and analyze the results.

Literature Review

Using Videos in a Language Classroom

The use of videos in the English language classroom is not a new technique. Books and academic articles that are concerned with using videos, television shows, or movies have been written for many years now. The use of visual materials has become quite popular, especially nowadays, in teaching English as a foreign or a second language, as videos can be used in a creative way that is fun and exciting for the students. Videos can be used to teach a great variety of language skills, such as speaking or writing, for example, as well as such aspects of a foreign language as grammar or vocabulary. According to Watkins and Wilkins (2011), using videos (mostly from YouTube) in a language class can help students improve their pronunciation, as well as listening skills, but they can also be used to start conversations, help the students learn about certain cultures, facilitate vocabulary learning, and introduce them to different varieties of English. Aloquaili (2014) writes that since the environment we live in has become overly visual - presenting people massive numbers of pictures and videos every day - it is vital that language learners "be equipped with visual literacy skills." (2014: 11). Thus, the value of using videos in a language class should not be underestimated.

Visuals are an excellent way to explain many things that could be not understood otherwise. When trying to explain a reaction that happens inside a car engine, for example, it is much easier to have the students look at an illustration of what is happening inside the engine, rather than only using words, which could be confusing to the students. Kellner (n.d) argues that multiple literacies, one of them being visual literacy, for example, are crucial, and should be fostered by educators, in order to ensure that students are able to keep up with the technological world around them, which is in constant transition. Felten (2008: 60) defines visual literacy as "the ability to understand, produce, and use culturally

significant images, objects, and visible actions." Felten also cites Gee (2004) in saying that images and interactions, not only text, are needed when learning. Because images surround us most of the time due to technological advancements (commercials, TV series, movies and so on), visual literacy has now become a necessity in order to navigate the influx of information that comes from these visual sources.

There are many positive sides to using videos in the classroom, and Harmer (2001), for example, lists four reasons why to use video in language learning: Students seeing language-in-use; developing language learners' cross-cultural awareness; learners experiencing the power of creation; increasing and maintaining students' motivation. By seeing the language in use, instead of just hearing it, students comprehend the language they are learning better, suggests Harmer (2001). His idea that the paralinguistic features that students see in videos can help them interpret what they are hearing better, is in accordance with Aloquaili's (2014) claims that the gestures and actions seen in the video could help learners understand the video, and the language better. Furthermore, Wagner (2010) cites an article, in which the author, Raffler-Engel (1980), maintains that kinesic behavior of the speakers in videos, such as facial expressions or stress patterns, is important in order to reinforce what is being said in the video. Harmer (2001) also suggests that cross-cultural awareness of students can be developed by using videos. Movies, for example, help students experience what cultures are like in other countries, see how the people there dress, what they eat and so on. For example, when using a movie such as *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002), it is quite easy for teachers to direct their students' attention to the family dynamic of a "traditional Indian family." Of course, this aspect is completely dependent on the video that is selected for the classroom, for some videos might not portray another culture at all, or portray it in a negative light. Thus a teacher should always choose their video materials carefully.

Experiencing the power of creating refers to the idea that students are able to learn by using video cameras themselves, as it can be something new for them to do in English. Creating videos themselves is also an excellent way to have students use their imaginations, and come up with interesting concepts for study videos that teachers might not have even thought of. When speaking about motivating the students, Harmer (2001) explains that students are more motivated when they can see the language being spoken, as well as hear it. Danan (2004) supports this claim, and cites a study by Baltova (1994), in which it was discovered that visual clues have a positive effect on language learning, meaning that visual clues help facilitate language learning. Kohutova (2011) adds that using videos in the classroom is a good way to motivate the students, as watching videos (specifically television shows) is a natural activity for them. This could mean that by doing an activity that seems natural for the students, they also feel more comfortable in the classroom, improving their motivation to learn.

As mentioned above, there are many positive sides to using visual materials to help facilitate language learning. For example, Yassaei (2012) wrote that, as a teacher, she likes to use videos in her lessons, because they are a good way to provide variety for her students; in addition to that, she claims that using videos in the class "creates enticing visuals and special interactive environment in the EFL/ESL classroom." (2012: 13). Furthermore, she mentions that whenever she uses visual aids to teach, she can notice a difference in the students. Kohutova (2011) agrees that the use of visual aids makes the classroom a more varied and interesting learning place by giving the students authentic material to look at and listen to, which aids with speaking fluency, as well as providing discussion topics for the class.

Ahmad (2012) cited a previous study by Kajder (2003), who revealed that using media in language teaching can provide the students with an authentic learning

environment, which was supported by Bal-Gezegin (2014), who also discussed the positive aspect of the authenticity of using videos. The latter similarly cited a study by Canning-Wilson (2000) and, based on that, Bal-Gezegin (2014) concluded that students enjoyed learning language with the help of videos, which means that videos can be used to motivate students to learn. Since using videos in the English classroom seems to be beneficial for the students, many researchers have conducted experiments of their own to see whether using videos to teach English is, in fact, as advantageous as it is claimed to be.

The experiments that have been conducted, range from using television shows to movies in the classroom in an attempt to teach students either vocabulary or grammar. The following experiments have been done with the goal of teaching students new vocabulary items. For example, Arikan and Taraf (2010) experimented with using cartoons (more specifically, *The Simpsons*) to teach fourth grade pupils grammar and vocabulary. They suggested that younger learners might find cartoons favorable, for they tend to enjoy fantasy. The rationale for using videos in their experiment, rather than pictures, was that videos are colorful, and accompanied by sounds and music. The students were divided into control and experimental groups, and by the end of the experiment, it was found that students, who had used the cartoon to study, performed better at the test they had to take on grammar and vocabulary. In another study, conducted by Jung and Lee (2013), language learners expressed an opinion that using videos to learn vocabulary was motivating, and some of the students even claimed that video context for the words helped them with remembering the meanings of words.

Mousavi and Gholami (2014) conducted an experiment where two groups of students learned vocabulary through flash stories - one group with subtitles and the other without. Danan (2004), who they also cited in their work, claims that subtitles, when watching videos or movies, help students comprehend vocabulary better, as well as helping

them to recognize words better. She cites a study by Markham (1989), whose experiment had shown, that learners' results on a test (based on the vocabulary and syntax of the captions of short videos) were better, which led Gholami (2004) to believe that students had performed better by learning vocabulary through captions (2004: 69). While Mousavi and Gholami did not find significant difference between the control group and experimental group, their findings were in concordance with previous studies that they had pointed out, which concluded that watching flash stories, whether with or without subtitles, is beneficial for learners' vocabulary acquisition.

In addition to pointing out why teachers should use videos in their English classrooms, Harmer (2001) also discusses some problems that could be associated with using videos. These problems include, for example, the feeling that using video is nothing new in the classroom. This can be true, but in order to counteract that, Harmer (2001) suggests that teachers should provide interesting vide activities to the students. Nowadays this should not be difficult for teachers to do, as there are many websites that provide worksheets for video clips that can be found on YouTube (clips from TV shows or movies that have been spliced together), or exercises, that can be done while watching TV shows or movies in the classroom. Harmer is likewise concerned with the poor quality of the videos and the poor viewing conditions in schools, as well as the length of some videos (2001: 283). This is true, as using full-length movies in the classroom can force the teacher to dedicate several lessons to just watching a movie, and if language classes only take place a few times a week, students might forget what the movie was about, or even lose interest in watching it.

Harmer (2001) also brings up that teachers might not be familiar enough with the technology in their classrooms, and therefore might not be able to either play the video clips, or even find them on the computer. Alidmat and Mathew (2013) agree with Harmer

(2001), and discuss that, while visual aids (and audio) can be tremendously advantageous to use in the classroom, the teachers must be thoroughly familiar with the technology they are using as well as the materials they use. Furthermore, teachers should be trained to use the technology in their classrooms effectively, as well as maintain a positive attitude in class. They add that when teachers are unable to use their resources correctly in the classroom, the students might find the aids irrelevant. Similarly to Harmer (2001), the authors go on to say that a practicing teacher should be able to know how much of the aids they use in a class, for when a teacher overuses either video or audio aids, it can result in the students being bored.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using a TV Series in a Language Classroom

Using a TV series or a movie in the classroom has become very popular and much easier in the recent years than ever before. Clips from different TV series that make up a fraction of the length of an episode are available on YouTube, and can be used in the classroom. Programs such as Windows Movie Maker, for example, are also available for download, and quite easy to use. Thus, teachers who cannot find online clips of a series they would like to use, can cut the episodes themselves. Watching those clips does not require an Internet connection either, as they can be stored on memory cards, for example, so they can be viewed even when the Internet happens to be unavailable.

Full episodes of a number of series are also uploaded to YouTube, and sometimes they even come with suitable activities that are linked in the description box. In addition to that, many websites already have worksheets, compiled by teachers throughout the world, which can be downloaded and distributed to the students to accompany the watching of a series. Kohutova (2011) points out that an advantage of using a 20-minute series (which is an average situational comedy episode runtime) in the classroom is that it leaves enough

time for the students to complete various activities based on the episode. Using a 40-minute episode would mean that the students spend most of the lesson on just watching something, and using a movie usually means that several lessons are needed to finish watching the entire movie.

Another advantage that the use of a TV series in the classroom has is that students have access to authentic language. Authentic language input is especially important in language learning environments where students would not have access to realistic language usage (Bal-Gezegin 2014). Textbooks might be accompanied by videos that are made by the material creators, but these videos can contain examples of situations that are, in reality, unlikely to happen, or of language usage that is not used by native speakers. Furthermore, Kohutova (2011) writes that TV series provide examples of idioms and slang, as well as introducing the students to a variety of accents via guest stars. While TV series might not be completely authentic sources of language input, as they are scripted and rehearsed, they still provide a more authentic input than study videos, as TV series are written as realistically as possible, in order to garner a large audience.

A problem that Kohutova (2011) has written about is that activities that are done while watching a series could, eventually, become repetitive and boring for the students. While there are many before-, while-, and after watching activities available on the Internet, they do, at one point, begin repeating themselves. To prevent this, teachers can try to compile their own exercises to accompany the series. It can be time-consuming, and difficult, but it is also possible that the teacher can come up with original ideas that students might enjoy more than typical activities that they are used to doing while watching videos. Alternatively, teachers could reduce the amount of TV series use in the classroom when they notice that the students are not as motivated any more.

Using *Friends* in the Classroom

Friends (1994-2004) is one of the TV series that is widely used by teachers of English (as is evident by the multitude of worksheets available on the Internet for various episodes), and the amount of use could be attributed to the fact that the series is humorous, the episodes are short, and students do not have to be completely familiar with the series in order to watch and understand a single episode. The relationships between the characters could be explained to the students beforehand, to make the viewing easier for them, but the episodes mostly have stand-alone plots. In addition to that, as mentioned, ten-minute clips can be found on YouTube of the same episode that are also suitable to be used in the classroom. Even less knowledge of the series is required when using such clips, making them a good source of short and humorous video materials.

Friends is classified as a sitcom[1], which Merriam-Webster (2016) defines as "a show that is on television regularly and that is about a group of characters who are involved in different funny situations." The humorous element of the show is what makes it a favorite of millions of people around the world. In a classroom, however, humor can also have positive impact on material retention; Morrison (2008) writes that humor has the ability to increase memory storage, as well as aid in information retrieval. Thus, the situations in *Friends* that are presented through humor can be remembered by the students for a long time. It should be noted that students differ in their humor preferences, and *Friends* might not be considered funny by everybody. However, when using a series in the classroom, *Friends* is suitable, as the humor is light-hearted and appropriate (containing no racist or offensive religious jokes, for example).

When using a series such as *Friends,* Kohutova (2011) points out that the nature of the series does not allow for a lot of variety in the lessons. While the plot for each episode

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[1] Situational comedy

might be different, the general idea remains the same. Furthermore, if there are students in the classroom who do not enjoy the series whatsoever, it could have a negative impact on their motivation to study the language. This problem can be somewhat prevented by speaking to the students beforehand, and to learn of their interests and TV series that they enjoy watching. It is unlikely that every student in the class enjoys the same series, and it is even less likely that when they do, the series is appropriate for class use. While finding the perfect series to use in class may be very difficult, speaking with the students and learning about their interests can minimize the risk of using a TV series that most of the students dislike.

Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

Teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary learning is an integral part of any language learning. Ur (2012: 60) defines vocabulary as "lexical items of the language" and points out that students must acquire vocabulary to successfully understand written text; she also explains, that in order to understand a text, one must understand between 95% and 98% of its words. This supports the claim in Washang's (2014: 90) article that "there is a high correlation between knowing words and comprehending text." Barani et al. (2010: 5363) also agree with Penny Ur, and claim that "it is difficult for them [learners] to possess a range of vocabulary that is wide enough to satisfy their needs in communication." Vocabulary allows us to understand and speak (or write) a language we desire, and it is therefore crucial that teachers find effective ways of vocabulary teaching.

Different teachers have different ways to present their students with new vocabulary. Ur (2012) lists a few ways for teachers to present new vocabulary to their students. She suggests that, on lower levels, teachers can use pictures, real life objects or gestures to teach the students, because vocabulary tends to be more concrete at that language level. As Nation (2001) wrote, when learning vocabulary, it is important that students notice the word. How we present vocabulary to students is an integral part of this, for when the context in which we present the word is interesting, the students will be more likely to be motivated and interested in learning the word. The author cites a study by Elley (1989), who used two different stories to teach two groups of students the same vocabulary items. One group scored higher, because their stories were more interesting to the students (contained humor, conflict and so on). Therefore it is important to note that the vocabulary activities which we give students should be engaging and interesting for them.

Association is useful when learning vocabulary, because when one cannot remember a word, it is easier to remember it by thinking about something they associate the word with. Saarso (2000) writes that one of the techniques of creating an association between words is to create weird connections between the words that are being learned. This does not only apply to word-to-word associations, but word-to-picture or word-to-video associations as well. When thinking about a visual representation of a word, it is likely that the word itself will be remembered as well. Carney and Levin (2002) also agree that visuals can help students remember, or even understand the text better.

According to Grady et al. (1998), a characteristic of human memory is that we remember pictures better than words, which is why it is important to not just present students with a word and its translation, or a synonym, but also have them look at something visual and have them make their own connections between the word and a picture, or video. Oxford (2003) claims that memory-related strategies help students link certain types of information together, and lists the use of images as one of those strategies, writing that the link between images and words, or the link between sounds and images (a video) is helpful when retrieving information. This means that when giving learners an opportunity to create an association between the words they learn and some visual imagery, it could be likely that they are more successful in remembering the words later.

Vocabulary Learning

Learning words in a foreign language can be a difficult and time-consuming process for anybody, especially when taking into account the amount of work that needs to be done in order to know a word and be able to use it. Schmitt (2000) discusses the complex nature of vocabulary, and writes that there are "different degrees of knowing a word", which are called receptive and productive knowledge (2000: 4). Nation (2001)

distinguishes between knowing a word from a receptive and a productive aspect as well. From the receptive aspect, knowing a word would, essentially, mean recognizing the word when it is heard or seen written somewhere, knowing the meaning of the word in a particular context, and knowing that the word has been used correctly in a sentence. From a productive aspect, however, it would mean that the learner knows the word's correct spelling and pronunciation, knowing the word's synonyms and antonyms, and being able to use the word in different contexts.

When taking into consideration receptive and productive word knowledge, it is clear that teachers should strive to provide their students with the tools to generate productive word knowledge. However, Webb (2005) writes that most vocabulary teaching in the classroom is likely to be receptive. He says that often when a teacher presents new vocabulary to students, it is the teacher who presents them the new word and works with the word most, while the students often only have to write it down or look up the definition from the dictionary. Nation (2001) agrees that under normal conditions, language learning is receptive in the classrooms. Webb (2005) adds that this might be so, because receptive activities for vocabulary teaching are easier to create and grade: "receptive activities, such as looking up words in a dictionary, matching words with their meanings or definitions, guessing from context and learning from word pairs are more common than productive activities, such as cloze exercises or writing tasks." (2005: 34). When looking at a textbook that is used in English classes in Estonia (for example, the *Upstream* series), it can be seen that writing tasks, for example, are indeed rare. Writing exercises are more likely to be utilized when teaching students how to write a letter, but not when teaching vocabulary.

Nation (2001) outlines three processes that, according to him, might help the learner remember words better. These processes are noticing, retrieval, and creative use. The process of noticing happens when a student is faced with a word in some way - they

might, for example, look it up in the dictionary, or deliberately study it. One of the conditions under which the learner will notice a word is whether it is presented to them in an interesting manner, because when the content in which the word is presented is of little interest to the student, they will be less likely to learn the words. Nation (2001) proposes that the teacher should talk to their students and ask about their interests, so it would then be possible to create exercises that the students would benefit from more. Gains and Redman agree about motivation, and add "there is motivation derived from learning what one wants to learn." (1986: 56). When regular textbooks are not interesting enough for the students, it is of course possible for the teacher to create their own vocabulary activities that the students will find much more interesting and motivating.

The process of retrieval involves the students recalling the words they have encountered before. To strengthen the students' ability to retrieve words, repetition is crucial. There have been other authors who write about the benefits of repeating vocabulary items, and they are in agreement that constant repetition of a word is a key element in remembering it for a long time. Webb (2007), for example, found that when second-year Japanese learners of English (who had previously learned English for several years as well) encountered an unknown word ten times in context, the word was more likely to be learned. Gu's (2003) findings are in correlation with the usefulness of repetition, to which he also adds that students should especially employ repetition strategies when they are initially learning a new word. Not only is repetition considered to be an effective word learning strategy from a theoretical viewpoint, but the Japanese learners of English in Schmitt's (1997) study also listed it as one of their most used and most helpful vocabulary learning strategies. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that while many students in the aforementioned study have listed word repetition as favorite and useful strategy, students differ considerably when learning vocabulary items.

The process of creative (or generative) use involves presenting words that the students have previously learned to the students in different and memorable ways. For example, Nation (2001: 69) cites Stahl and Vancil (1986), according to whom retelling of stories is helpful for students, as it allows for them to use words in a different context. In addition to that, Nation (2001) also proposes providing the students with contextual definitions of words, and if possible, illustrating the words with pictures, books, blackboard drawings, and so on.

Low- and High-Frequency Words

When speaking in general, words can be categorized into high- and low-frequency words. According to Nation (2001), high-frequency words are the words that we encounter in all forms of language: spoken and written, and those are the words that are most frequent in our everyday language. Those words include, but are not limited to, function words (*the, some, because*), and content words. On the other hand, low-frequency words are the ones that are not encountered in language often, yet there is still a very large number of them. Nation (2001) points out that vocabulary items that may be familiar to one learner might be completely new to another. Many learners might have hobbies (e.g. reading) outside of the classroom, that help them to expand their vocabulary, which in turn, allows for them to use vocabulary items that are considered low-frequency more often. The present thesis does not strictly focus on low-frequency words, but lower-frequency words as well. For example, words such as *alleviate* and *assailant* (both of which were used in the activities created for this thesis) might not be considered strictly low-frequency words, however they are still not heard in everyday speech as often as, for example, the words *weather* or *cat*.

When teaching vocabulary, low- and high-frequency words require different approaches. Nation (2001) writes that high-frequency words are very important to teach, and that the teacher should take every measure (such as using dictionaries, guessing from the context, peer teaching, for example) to ensure that students will learn those words. While Nation proposes (2001: 16) that any form of teaching is acceptable for teaching high-frequency words, low-frequency words should be approached differently. It is difficult to predict how the students will feel about learning difficult words, which is why the author proposes that when teaching low-frequency words, the focus should not be on the vocabulary itself, but on the method of how the words are being taught. This means that we should teach the students strategies so they would be able to, in the future, learn those words themselves. It was already mentioned that in order to learn a word, repetition is necessary, and students will not encounter low-frequency words enough in the classroom to learn those words there, but the strategies they do learn in the classroom can help them in another context.

When one starts to learn a language, the kind of words they encounter most often at the beginning are high-frequency words, as they are the most common in most texts. Because low-frequency words are not often used in everyday texts and speech, and they are not vital for simple communication (e.g. students do not have to use the word *exacerbate* in order to be understood in everyday conversation), it could be possible that advanced level students do not actively seek out and study low-frequency vocabulary, unless they need to study it for a specific reason (e.g. a language test). According to the teacher of the students in the present study, the students were considered to be at an advanced (C1) level, which is why the vocabulary chosen for the exercises in the present study was fairly low-frequency. Low-frequency words were chosen, because the learners are advanced, and it was more probable that they were unfamiliar with the words.

Furthermore, the aim of the study was to see how well advanced students are able to remember relatively low-frequency words when they are related to an appealing activity. Before conducting any of the activities, it was important to know which words were familiar to the students, so a pre-test was necessary to have an overview of known and unknown words. It is always possible that the students in a certain class are very varied in their language level, and some students may know quite low-frequency words (e.g. *exacerbate*), while other students might not know words that are considered to be more common (e.g. *alleviate*).

Nevertheless, the students in the present study who were not familiar with most of the words in the activities, did not have any trouble with expressing themselves in our lessons. It is possible that, when having adequate language knowledge to express themselves, students might not have much reason to seek out new vocabulary themselves. In that instance, motivating the students who, in their own opinion, are already fluent enough in a foreign language, can be a challenge for the teacher. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers keep finding motivating ways of teaching them.

Empirical Study

Teaching vocabulary items that are spoken in the video is the common approach when using videos to teach words and expressions, but when working with advanced level students, it is much more difficult to find a suitable TV series that would include vocabulary that is new to them, would be suitable to be used in the classroom, and be fun and motivating for the students as well. The 11th grade students of Miina Härma Gymnasium use the *Upstream C1* textbook and workbook in their lessons, and according to their teacher, most of them are indeed advanced-level students. For this thesis, many TV series were considered to be used in order to teach these students words. One of such was, for example, *Game of Thrones (2011)*, where characters often use words that can be unfamiliar to even native language speakers. This show, however, was not eventually chosen because of its complex plot, and inappropriate content. It would have taken quite a bit of time to explain the characters and the plot of the show to the students, and even then, it would have taken a great deal of editing of an episode to make it classroom-appropriate. In addition to that, not every episode of the show contained enough unfamiliar words that could have been taught to the students. Furthermore, if the episodes were spliced together to remove any inappropriate content, the resulting video would have been very confusing for the students to watch, as many scenes would have to have been cut. This is true for many other TV series as well – either the series do not contain enough challenging vocabulary, or they do, but are unfit to be used in an English classroom.

It was quite evident that there were no suitable TV series to be used in the classroom that would be beneficial (in the sense that complex vocabulary items were used in the series) for advanced-level students. Having experienced a similar difficulty, Schwartz (2014) wrote an article for a website called *Kaplan Test Prep,* a website which

helps students prepare for the GRE[2] test. Schwartz (2014) suggested that in order to learn the vocabulary needed for GRE test (she gives examples of words such as *toilsome, irate, perdurable*), students can watch *Game of Thrones,* and use the vocabulary they have to learn to describe their favorite characters on the show. This seemed to be an excellent idea for learning difficult vocabulary, and gave me the idea to create materials that would be used in the same manner, but inside a classroom, and with a more suitable TV series.

The series *Friends* (1994) was chosen, as it was appropriate to use in the classroom, and the students did not have to be completely familiar with the plot. The students were asked whether they knew of the series, or if they had seen it before, and most of the students had. The two students that had never seen any episodes were briefly introduced to the series and the characters. In order to save time in the classroom, only the clips that were spliced together from a single episode were used. The aforementioned clips contained the most memorable and funniest moments of an episode, and were around 7-10 minutes long, compared to the original length of a 20-minute episode. Three videos of three different episodes were used, and an activity was were created to accompany each video.

Using a TV series to teach vocabulary to foreign language students is a very viable option for language teachers, as it can be seen from the literature review. According to some of the authors that were mentioned before, students are more motivated to learn, as well as have better retention of vocabulary items in the long term when they make associations between words and images. In order to put these claims to the test, a study was carried out among ten advanced 11th grade students of English in Miina Härma Gymnasium. Around fourteen students partook in the activities, however only students who had completed all three activities, as well as the post-test, were included in the study.

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[2] Graduate Record Examinations – an admissions test that can be taken for graduate or business schools, accepted by thousands of universities in the world (Educational Testing Service, 2016).

The vocabulary items that were being taught to the students did not appear in the video (no character in the video said any of the words); instead, words that the students were meant to learn were made to fit in the context of the video through the exercises given to them. It was hypothesized that the students might be more likely to retrieve the meanings of words because of the association they created between the words and the scenes from a TV series.

In addition to the hypothesis, the study aimed to find answers to the following questions:

1.   Can video clips of a TV series be used to teach advanced language learners vocabulary that is not used in the video itself, via association?

2.   Which types of exercises could be more suitable for use in such a method of teaching advanced vocabulary?

Methodology

Three activities in total were created in order to help students make associations between the words they were to learn, and the videos that they had to watch. Choosing the words to be taught to the students was a challenging task, as they had to be quite low-frequency to be unfamiliar to the students. I thought of the words I had learned in university, and used multiple dictionary websites, such as Merriam-Webster, and The Free Dictionary to find suitable words. I also searched for words that I thought of when I watched the video clips, and related words or synonyms to those words. It was important that the chosen words both relate to the videos that we were to watch, as well as be new to C1 level language learners. However, as the language level of the students varies, even in an advanced group, some words were also chosen that might not be considered low-frequency, so even the students that might not have been as advanced as some of the other learners, might have a better chance at remembering more words. The definitions for the words came from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, as well as The Free Dictionary that is available online. Merriam-Webster was primarily used for definitions, however if I found that the definition is not simple enough, The Free Dictionary was used instead. Both websites offer American English style definitions, and were chosen because the TV series we watched is American.

In the first activity that was created (Appendix 1), students had to choose the correct word from the word bank to complete the sentences. The words chosen for this activity, and the corresponding video were *coerce, furtive, fabricate, elated, gluttony, admonish, repugnance, galling, impediment, exacerbate*. The words were chosen, because it was possible to associate them with the video; however, I also considered them to be suitable for C1 language level students. In every exercise it was also indicated whether the

words were nouns, adjectives, verbs or adverbs. Prior to watching the video and handing out the activity to the students, they received a blank piece of paper with the numbers 1-10 on it, as well as a list of the words used in the activity, without any definitions. The students were asked to write down the words that they were definitely familiar with, and it was emphasized that they only write the words they are sure they know the meaning of. After collecting the paper slips, the students were given papers that included the words and the definitions, separately. The students had to match the words to the definitions in order to get acquainted with the words better. After this, we checked their answers together, and I gave the students a sample sentence with the word in it. This was followed by handing the students the activity sheets. Before playing the video, I reminded them to associate the words that we had discussed with the video we were about to watch. Having watched the video, the students filled in the activity sheet, for which they were given about 10 minutes. It was also emphasized that if they were unsure of the answer, that they should leave the gap empty, because it would later allow for me to see whether there was a correlation between the words that the students used correctly in the activity, and in the post-test. After they had finished, we checked the answers together, and I collected the papers.

In the second activity (Appendix 2), students chose the appropriate definition for the words in the exercise. Every word (marked in bold) had two possible definitions on the next page, and the students had to decide which of the definitions was correct. The incorrect definitions were taken from words that were near-synonyms to the words marked in bold – this meant that the definitions were similar to the correct definition, but different enough for the students to mark the correct definition based on the context given to them in the video and the sentences. The words chosen for this exercise were *assailant, inefficacious, tedious, agitated, heedlessly, outlandish, repercussions, flabbergasted, ambiguous, nefarious.* The words were, again, chosen for they were easy to relate to the

video, as well as being, in my opinion, quite unfamiliar to C1 level language learners. Prior to the activity itself, the students were asked to write down the words they were familiar with. After collecting the slips, the students were handed the activity, and reminded to make connections between the words and the video. The video was watched, and the activity of matching definitions was done by the students. We checked their answers together, and I collected the papers.

In the third activity (Appendix 3), students watched the video, and wrote a summary (as well as adding their own thoughts) of what they saw, using the words given. The words chosen for this activity were *candor, decry, oblivious, pinnacle, debacle, noisome, pluck, hapless, alleviate, arduous.* As with the first activity, the students were handed slips of paper where they had to write down the words that they already knew. After that, the students were given the words, and the definitions, which they had to match. We checked this exercise together, and I also gave the students some sample sentences in which the words were used. Before watching the video, the students were handed the papers with the activity, and told to make connections between the words and the video. After watching the video, the students had approximately ten minutes to write their description and thoughts on the video. We did not check their answers together, but instead I checked their answers myself.

Three weeks after our last class, I went back to have the students take the post-test. The exercises were all of the same nature (Appendix 4), and required the students to complete the sentences with the suitable words from the word bank. Definitions for the words were not given, and students were explicitly told that they had to only use the words that they were certain they knew the meaning of. The sentences in the post-test were either directly related to the TV series we had watched (character names and situations were the same as in the video), or very closely related to the video (character names the same as in

the clips, or the situation was similar). The students were given 15 minutes to complete the test. Whoever finished early was asked to provide written feedback on the activities, and what they thought of the method of making associations between words and situations in a TV series.

Results

In order to analyze the results of the activities, and to examine whether the students learned any new words from the activities, the students' pre-tests were looked at, and the words that they had written down on the paper (the words they were sure they knew the meanings of) were excluded from being analyzed in the post-test. The words from the pre-test of each individual student were respectively marked on the post-test papers, in order to be certain that these words would not be taken into account when looking at how many words the students remembered from the activities. Doing this ensured that the results would only reflect the vocabulary items that had not been familiar to the students. Only the words that were inserted into the sentences correctly were taken into account in the analysis.

Table 1 (Appendix 5) shows the number of words the students knew beforehand, and the amount of words that were not taken into account when analyzing the results. Table 2 (Appendix 6) shows the number of words that the students were unfamiliar with, and that were available to be learned by the students, as they had not written down those words in the pre-test (indicating that they had no prior knowledge of those words). Table 3 (Appendix 7) shows the total number of words that were learned by the students, per exercise.

To calculate the total percentage of the words learned by a student, the number of words learned were added together, and the total number of words that could be learned by this particular student in all three exercises, were added together, after which the former was divided by the latter. The resulting number was multiplied by 100, to convert it into percentages. For example, in the case of S1[3], the student had learned 2 words from the definition-matching activity, 5 words from the word bank activity, and 2 words from the

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[3] Student 1

summary writing activity. S1 was not familiar with 5 words in total in the definition
matching activity, 7 words in the word bank activity, and 7 words in the summary writing
activity. When looking at all of the exercises, S1 learned 9 words out of the possible 19. 9
was divided by 19, which resulted in 0.473. This was multiplied by 100, which gave me
the total percentage of words learned by S1, which was 47.3%. This calculation was done
for all the students.

The table below shows the percentage of words learned by students in all the three
activities, as well as showing the number of words learned:

	Total Percentage of Words Used Correctly in the Post-Test (%)	Total Number of Words Used Correctly in the Post-Test (number of words)
S1	47.3	9/19
S2	100	18/18
S3	85.7	18/21
S4	70.3	19/27
S5	72.2	13/18
S6	81.25	13/16
S7	95.2	20/21
S8	29.6	8/27
S9	73.6	14/19
S10	28	7/25

Because there were three different types of activities used in this study, I decided to
examine which post-test activity yielded the most correct answers from the students. The
results of overall words correctly used in the post-test by all of the students can be seen in
Appendix 7. In order to see the average percentage of words that were correctly used in the
post-test exercises, I calculated the percentage of words correctly used by a student. For
example, S1 used 2 words out of the possible 5 correctly in the post-test, thus their
percentage of correctly used words in that exercise was 40%. This calculation was done for
all students, after which I calculated the average percentage of words used correctly by the
students.

From the results it appears that the students were most successful in the definition matching activity (on the average, 82% of the words were used correctly). However, it can also be seen that in the given exercise, many of the students were previously familiar with some of the words as well. For example, in their pre-test of the activity, S5 and S6 had written down 7 words out of 10, indicating that they were only unfamiliar with 3 words, which they also correctly used in the corresponding post-test activity. S2, S3, S5, S6, and S7 did not know between 3-5 words in the definition matching activity. The aforementioned learners also correctly used all of the words in the post-test. Other students also performed well, for example S4 claimed to not know 9 words out of 10, and was correctly able to use 7 words out of 9 in the post-test.

A larger number of words were unknown to the students in the word bank exercise. Students mostly only used about 3 words in the pre-test, which means that they had not known the meanings to the rest of the words. For example, S7 did not write any words down in the pre-test, yet was able to correctly use 9 of the words in the pos-test exercise. Other students, such as S2, S4, S9, were unfamiliar with 7-9 words, and later were able to correctly use 6-7 words. While it seems that this exercise helped more students remember a greater number of words, S8, and S10 both only used 2 words out of 9 correctly in the post-test. However, when looking at those students' results from the other activities as well, it can be seen that overall, they did not perform as well as the other students, and used about 7 and 8 words (out of 25 and 27, respectively) correctly in the post-test.

In the summary writing activity, the amount of words that were unknown to the students was quite high as well, averaging between 7-10 unknown words. S2, S6, and S7 were able to use all of the words correctly in the post-test, while other students the results varied. For example, S10 did not use any of the words correctly, S3 used 7 words correctly, and S1 used 2 words correctly.

When conducting the activities proper, students were asked to leave a gap empty when they were unsure of an answer. The students and I did check the answers to the activities together after they had done them on their own, and the former were asked to make corrections on the side of the paper, rather than crossing out the wrong answer and writing down the correct one in the gap. Doing this allowed for me to examine whether the words that were used correctly in the activities were also used correctly in the post-test exercises. In most cases, it was possible to draw parallels between the correct word usage in the exercises and in the post-test, however there were also some students, who, in the exercises had either not used an unknown word, or used it incorrectly, yet in the post-test, had used the word correctly. Some students also used some words correctly in the activities, but incorrectly, or not at all, in the post-test. It could be possible that checking the answers for the activities helped students remember a word and its definition better, thus making it possible for them to use a previously incorrectly (or not at all) used word correctly in the post-test. On the other hand, some words that were used correctly in the activities, but not in the post-test, could have simply been forgotten. When conducting the post-test, students were asked to only fill the gaps with the words they were convinced they knew the meanings of. While this request was greatly emphasized, it cannot be said with certainty that every student did as was asked of them, and some students might have guessed where some of the words fit in the post-test.

It can be seen from the table (provided above) that using a TV series to help students make connections between unfamiliar words and situations seen in the video was overall quite successful. 7 students out of 10 learned over 50% of the words that they had not previously been familiar with. One student was even able to correctly, in the post-test, use all of the unknown words in the exercises. According to the students' teacher in Miina Härma Gymnasium, S2, who correctly used all of the words in the post-test, is the most

advanced learner in the class as well. However, students 1, 3, and 8, for example, who might not be considered as advanced, according to the opinion of their teacher, also performed quite well in the post-test. For example, as it can be seen from the table, S3 correctly used 18 of the new words in the post-test.

It should also be noted that the post-test was done three weeks after the students learned the last set of words, so even remembering 7 words out of 25 (such as S10) is a very good achievement, considering that the students only came into contact with the words in the classroom, and we did not, unfortunately, have time to conduct a large number of post-watching activities that would have helped the students remember the words even better. However, most students were able to correctly use over 10 new words in the exercises, which is an excellent result. When taking into account the claim that on the average, people remember 7±2 (Miller 1956) words that they learn, then being able to use over 10 words correctly, when three weeks have passed after first coming into contact with the words, is a good outcome.

In addition to that, it should be taken into consideration that the results of this study do not objectively measure how successful the students were in a certain activity, as the students differed in language levels, and some of the words might have been easier for some students to remember. Comparing the results from the activities was done out of personal interest, and while it can be seen that the activities were successful in helping students retain some of the words, nothing certain can be claimed on the basis of these results.

Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to examine whether it is possible to teach advanced learners of English new vocabulary by using a TV series and having the students themselves make associations between the words and the situations that they see in the video that was shown to them. The results of the study, carried out among 10 advanced learners of English from Miina Härma Gymnasium, suggest that it is possible to use short clips of a TV series to help students make associations between vocabulary that is not used in the clips, and the situations that they saw in the videos. In the post-test, all of the students demonstrated that they could remember the meanings of, and use in the correct sentences, at least 7 of the words that they had previously been unfamiliar with, suggesting that making associations aided the students in retrieving the meanings of the words.

A hypothesis of the thesis was that students would be able to retrieve the meanings of words that they had learned by making a connection between a word and a situation seen in the TV series shown to them. Grady et al. (1998) wrote that we tend to remember pictures better than words, and Oxford (2003) suggested that when creating a link between a certain piece of information, and an image (whether it be a picture or a video), it is easier to retrieve it later. Since students did use many of the new words correctly in the post-test, three weeks after the activities were conducted, it can be assumed that it was due to them thinking back on the video that they watched, and retrieving the word meanings that they had associated with the situation seen in the video. The idea that visual clues can help facilitate language learning is also supported by Baltova (1994).

Nation (2001) claimed that when learning new vocabulary items in a foreign language, it is crucial that students notice the word. He defined noticing as presenting new words to students in an interesting context. Although in the present study, the words were not presented to the students directly via the TV series, students were asked to make

associations between the words and scenes from the video themselves, thus helping the students create their own context for the words. For example, the word *coerced* was one of the new vocabulary items used in an activity, and the situation in the video involved Rachel *coercing* Chandler into sharing a cake. When coming across the word again in a different context, the students can think back on the clip, and understand what *coerced* means. Nation (2001) also proposed that students should be provided with contextual definitions of words, and illustrating them, whenever possible. In the case of this study, while the students were provided with definitions of the words on paper, the contextual definitions could also be found in the video that the students watched.

Harmer (2001), Aloquaili (2014) and Raffler-Engel (1980) are all in agreement that paralinguistic features in the video help students interpret what they are seeing and hearing better. So, while students might not exactly remember what was being said in the video at the time, they could still make the connection between the words and the paralinguistic features in the video, thus aiding in the retrieval of the word connected to that situation. Furthermore, Saarso (2000) wrote that when making word-to-video associations, it is more likely that when thinking of an image associated with the word, the word will be remembered. S9, for example, wrote in her feedback that "In my opinion, I remembered more words because of the clips, because I could make connections between the TV-show, the emotions shown in these clips and the new words." This is in agreement with the aforementioned authors' ideas that emotions and paralinguistic features in the video are helpful in remembering new words, and their meanings.

Another factor that could have been helpful for the students in retrieving the meanings of the words is the fact that clips from *Friends,* a humorous TV series, were used. S5 wrote in his feedback on the activities that "[The] best way to use the clips would definitely be with something memorable, so, when thinking of the word, the image would

pop into your head. Something related to comedy definitely works." The idea that humor has a positive effect on vocabulary retention was also claimed by Morrison (2008), who wrote that humor is helpful in information retrieval. When taking this into account, it is possible that students were able to remember the meaning of the words, and use the words correctly in the post-test, because the humorous situations, to which the words were linked, aided the learners in remembering the words. The sentences used in the post-test were also either directly linked to the videos, or contained sentences about situations that were of the same nature as the ones in the videos, which may have helped the students trigger the memory of the scene a word was related to.

Kohutova (2011) claimed that watching a TV series is a natural activity for the students, meaning that this is something that students tend to do outside the classroom quite often, and thus it could be used as a motivational tool in the class. S7 wrote in his feedback that "It was fun to watch *Friends* in school", implying that it was a pleasant surprise to be able to watch a familiar TV series in school. Yassaei (2012) and Kohutova (2011) also mention that using a video in the classroom creates a more interactive and varied learning environment. It is possible that the students felt more relaxed and motivated in the classroom, because they were learning with the help of a "natural activity", which later aided in them being able to retrieve the meanings of the words better.

Many of the words that were used in the activities are considered to be relatively low-frequency (Sesamewords n.d.). Nation (2001) wrote that when teaching low-frequency words, teachers should focus on teaching the students methods on how to learn low-frequency words, instead of teaching the words themselves. All of the exercises created for this study were meant to help students create associations between words and scenes from a TV series. It is claimed that repetition is needed in order for students to remember words (Webb 2007, Gu 2003), and it might be difficult for a teacher to implement a large amount

of repetition of the same words, over a long period of time, into the classroom. When this is the case, a teacher can, instead, encourage the students to use the method of creating associations between words and a TV series. This way, the students can implement the method and learn new words, and repeat the process as many times as they want to. When students use this method on their own, they are also able to choose another TV series that they enjoy. Students might not even have to watch anything else, but they may also think back on a movie or a TV series episode that they have seen, and try to associate the word with a scene from there, if the word can be used to describe something that happened in the movie or series.

As mentioned above, repetition of words is crucial, for previous research has showed that encountering words multiple times makes it easier for students to remember vocabulary items. S8 and S10, who, in comparison to other students, scored lower in the post-test activities, both wrote in their feedback that in their opinion, more repetition would have been beneficial for them. S8 wrote: "This method of learning is interesting and enthralling, however I am afraid that I did not remember the words well. In order to remember them better, we should have had more repetition."[4] S10 wrote: "It is an interesting way to learn new words, but I think we need to revise them more in case we want to remember them for a longer period of time." It is true that unfortunately we were not able to revise the words more, because other topics had to be taught in the class as well, which is why it is understandable that these students might have felt some frustration. However, the method itself was interesting for them, which is why it is a good idea for a teacher to encourage the students to use this method on their own as well.

Using this method of creating association may prove to be useful for the students in other areas outside the classroom as well. For example, some students might want to take a

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[4] Translated from Estonian

language test, for which they would need to learn new words. Creating associations between the words they have to learn with a TV series that they enjoy can prove to be a valuable learning experience. In this case, using a movie might also be a viable option, since learners would not be constrained by a 45-minute classroom time limit. Students might be more motivated to learn the words this way, and might be able to retrieve the meanings of words more easily when they are connected to imagery that they are familiar with, and enjoy seeing in their spare time.

While each activity used in this study yielded different results for different students, it can be said that overall, when looking at the results of the study, every activity was useful for most of the students in remembering words. With the exception of S10, who did not use any words that were used in the writing activity correctly in the post-test, every student remembered the meanings of at least a few words from every one of the activities. Furthermore, while the definition-matching exercise is, according to Nation (2001), a receptive activity, many students did, on the average, use between 3-5 of the words from the exercise in the post-test. According to the results of the study, the definition-matching exercise was also the most successful, with over 82% of the words being used correctly in the post-test. However, it should be noted that most of the students, who correctly used 100% of the words in the definition-matching post-test, were only able to learn a small number of words (around 3-5), for they had indicated, in the pre-test, that they were already familiar with the other words. However, with the other exercises, some of the students were able to correctly use more words.

It should be taken into account that every student is different, and some students might benefit more from one type of exercise, and others might not. Should the students decide to use this association-creating method on their own, it is probably the easiest for them to use the summary writing activity, as it is not difficult to compile, and might be

more beneficial for them, if they use it with a TV series that they enjoy more. However, when looking at the results of the present study, a teacher could, in the classroom, use a definition-matching exercise.

All in all, the students seemed to have enjoyed the activities they had to complete in the classroom, as can be seen from their feedbacks. 8 students in total wrote feedback on the exercises in general, and all of them mentioned that they liked the exercises and the concept of creating associations. For example, S2 wrote that she "really liked the exercises", S6 wrote that "the exercises were interesting", S7 wrote that he "liked the concept a lot", S9 wrote that "really liked the way we learned those words", and S10 wrote that the exercises were "an interesting way to learn new words". While watching the videos in the classroom, it also seemed that the clips were watched with interest, and the students laughed multiple times during the "funniest" scenes.

Overall, it can be said that the initial study was successful, as students managed to use between 7-20 words correctly in the post-test. While students might not have gained perceptive knowledge of the words, they were able to use several words correctly in the post-test sentences, indicating that they had receptive knowledge of the new words (Nation 2001), even after three weeks had passed after initial word contact. In order to help students gain perceptive knowledge of the words, the teacher should definitely incorporate more revision, and additional exercises containing the words into the lessons, however this method of helping students create associations between words and scenes from a TV series is a good starting point to introduce the words to the students, and help them remember the meanings of words for a while.

Conclusions

It is quite difficult for teachers of advanced learners to use a TV series in the classroom to teach students vocabulary, because often there are no suitable TV series that can be used – there might not be enough suitable words used in the series, the series might be inappropriate (containing cursing, nudity, and so on), or an episode might be too long, and cutting it would result in it being unwatchable, due to many scenes being edited out, and the resulting clip being confusing for the students. However, many studies suggest that using a TV series or any kind of video material in the classroom can be beneficial for the students, and when possible, a teacher should try to use videos in the classroom. Fortunately, there are clips of TV series available on the Internet, and they are easy to use, free, and already spliced into suitable scenes that are appropriate to use in class.

One of these TV series is *Friends,* and as mentioned before, in the theoretical part, it is quite easy to cut an episode of *Friends* into a suitable 10-minute video. One of the advantages of using *Friends* is that students do not have to be completely familiar with the characters, and the short scenes that can be shown to them do not often require any additional context from the series. If a teacher owns a DVD-set of the series, they can also, for classroom purposes, splice some of the funnier episodes into smaller videos themselves. Free video editing software is easy to acquire nowadays, and this way the teacher will not have to search around online for suitable clips, but instead they can put them together themselves.

Teaching vocabulary has always been an important part of any foreign language teaching, because without vocabulary, students will not be able to express themselves, or understand other people at all. While high-frequency words are more likely to be learned faster, because students encounter the words often, lower frequency words such as

exacerbate, coerce, or *arduous,* for example, are not heard in everyday speech that frequently. Using a TV series to teach high-frequency words is quite simple, as most TV series that are suitable to be used in the classroom will likely have a large number of high-frequency words used in the dialogues. However, finding a TV series that is entertaining for the students, appropriate to use in the class, and where a large number of lower frequency words are used, is a very difficult task for the teacher. For example, it was mentioned that *Game of Thrones* was one of the TV series that was considered to be used in the study, as characters often use lower frequency words, but it was not chosen, as many of the scenes in the episodes where the words are spoken are inappropriate, and splicing the episodes would render the resulting clip unwatchable, as it would be too confusing.

In order to see whether it would be possible to help students remember lower frequency words while using a TV series where the aforementioned words were not used, I compiled three exercises to be used in the classroom. The students were asked to create associations between the words they were given, and the situations shown to them in the video, so in a sense, the video provided the students with "visual explanations" of the words. The sentences used in two of the exercises also helped reinforce which word was used to describe a particular scene in the clips. The overall results of the study were positive, as in the post-test, all of the students were able to correctly use at least 7 previously unfamiliar words in the gaps.

The results of this study suggest that using the aforementioned method of helping students make associations between lower frequency words and scenes from a TV series is a viable method for helping students become acquainted with lower frequency words, and help students to remember the meaning of words for a longer period of time. Further studies can be conducted on a larger sample of students to get more conclusive results about the effectiveness of this method. Furthermore, a different TV series from another

genre (a drama, for example) could also be used with advanced adult learners, in order to see whether a different TV series could be used with the same method. Studies can also be conducted on learners who use the method at home, and with a TV series of their choice, to examine whether it would increase the learners' capacity to remember more words, as they would associate the words with a TV series that they enjoy most, and are completely familiar with.

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Appendix 1 – Activity 1

Watch the video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TL6FUxccq-U

Choose the words that are suitable to complete each sentence from the word bank.

1. At first, Rachel _____ Chandler for stealing the cheesecake, however she later joined him in his activities.
2. Rachel and Chandler ended up stealing the second cake from Mrs. Braverman, which only _____ their terrible behavior.
3. Rachel tried to be _____, and eat the cheesecake alone, however, Chandler quickly called her bluff when he asked her to whistle while having cheesecake in her mouth.
4. Rachel tried to _____ a reason as to why they should steal the cheesecake the second time, but only did so to feel better about the fact that they were stealing.
5. Joey expressed _____ when Rachel told him that the cake they were eating was tofu cake.
6. Rachel, angry that Chandler wanted to take back the cheesecake, _____ Chandler into splitting the cheesecake.
7. Because Chandler acted in a _____ manner, Rachel retaliated and slapped Chandler's plate, so that the cake fell onto the floor.
8. Chandler was _____ when Rachel dropped her cake, but this quickly changed once Rachel exacted revenge.
9. Having the cake in her mouth was a serious _____ to Rachel when she was asked to whistle.
10. Rachel and Chandler's _____ eventually led them to drop the cheesecake and eat it off the floor.
    coerce, furtive, fabricate, elated, gluttony, admonish, repugnance, galling, impediment, exacerbate

Appendix 2 – Activity 2

Watch the video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXXILWPVfw8

Write the words in bold next to the most suitable definition.

1. Rachel was so confident in herself that she told Ross to pretend to be an **assailant**, and have him test their self-defense skills.

2. Ross's attempts to scare the girls were **inefficacious**.

3. In real life, it would be quite **tedious** to keep trying to scare somebody to prove a point, but Ross was committed to his task.

4. Ross seemed to have **agitated** the instructor when he proposed that they could "attack" the girls together.

5. Ross **heedlessly** "attacked" the two women on the street, because he had mistaken them for Rachel and Phoebe.

6. In order to prove to the girls that they did not have "unagi", Ross came up with an idea that most people would find **outlandish** - he would scare the girls to teach them a lesson.

7. Unfortunately for Ross, our actions have **repercussions**, and because he was fixated on scaring Rachel and Phoebe, he ended up "attacking" the wrong women, who were much more skillful in self-defense than he was.

8. While running from the women, Ross looked into the coffee shop window and was **flabbergasted** when he saw Rachel and Phoebe sitting there.

9. The self-defense instructor misunderstood what Ross was saying, as he was not properly explaining himself, and thus his intentions remained **ambiguous**.

10. Despite Ross's seemingly **nefarious** scheme of constantly "attacking" and scaring the girls, he probably only wanted to make sure that the girls would be safe against an unexpected attack.

1	a)	(n.) a person who attacks
	b)	(n.) a person who violates moral or civil law
2	a)	(adj.) not capable of producing a desired effect or result; ineffective
	b)	(adj.) lacking benefit or advantage
3	a)	(adj.) tiresome by reason of length, slowness, or dullness; boring
	b)	(adj.) requiring great effort, energy, or exertion
4	a)	(v.) to provoke, stir; excite
	b)	(v.) to upset; disturb
5	a)	(adv.) occurring as or resulting from coincidence
	b)	(adv.) taking little or no notice; careless or thoughtless
6	a)	(adj.) immediately noticeable
	b)	(adj.) very unconventional; bizarre
7	a)	(n.) a result that is produced by an action or an event
	b)	(n.) a final product or end result; outcome
8	a)	(v.) very surprised, as if struck dumb with surprise
	b)	(v.) to hesitate as if in fear or doubt
9	a)	(adj.) open to more than one interpretation
	b)	(adj.) not certain or determined; unsettled
10	a)	(adj.) not attractive; not having a flattering or attractive effect
	b)	(adj.) - evil or immoral

Appendix 3 – Activity 3

Watch the video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXhdjNX0Rgg

After watching the video, write a brief description of what happened in the video, and add your own thoughts. Use the vocabulary from the word bank - **use 7 words from the word bank in your writing**.

1. candor (n.) - honesty, frankness
2. decry (v.) - to condemn as wrong or reprehensible/to express open disapproval of
3. oblivious (adj.) - lacking consciousness or awareness of something
4. pinnacle (n.) - topmost point
5. debacle (n.) - a disaster or a fiasco
6. noisome (adj.) - harmful or noxious (especially to health)
7. pluck (n.) - resourceful courage in the face of difficulties/spirit
8. hapless (adj.) - luckless/unfortunate
9. alleviate (v.) - to make (pain, for example) less intense or more bearable
10. arduous (adj.) - demanding great effort or labor/difficult

Appendix 4 – Post-Test

Exercise 1. Fill in the gaps in the sentences with a suitable word from the word bank.

candor (n.), pluck (n.), arduous (adj.), debacle (n.), pinnacle (n.), noisome (adj.), decry (v.), alleviate (v.), hapless (adj.), oblivious (adj.)

1. This whole _____ with the jellyfish sting was hilarious! Can you believe Chandler had to pee on Monica's leg?
2. It was definitely an _____ experience! I can't even begin to imagine how terrible the whole situation must have been!
3. When they were talking about what they had done on the beach, everybody seemed to be _____, until Ross remembered what he had seen on the Discovery Channel.
4. Monica was so _____ in that situation. Imagine if something like that happened to you! What would you do?
5. The _____ of the episode was probably where Monica, Chandler and Joey were explaining what had happened on the beach. It was pretty funny.
6. Joey's _____ when speaking about what had happened on the beach was admirable. Wouldn't you like to have a friend who would pee on you, if you were stung by a jellyfish?
7. The jellyfish sting is _____, and if not treated immediately and properly, it could cause major health complications.
8. Even though Chandler was not proud of what he had to do to Monica, and did not want to admit to his deed, you have to admire his _____.
9. While in the episode it was mentioned that urine can _____ the pain caused by a jellyfish sting, it's actually not true!
10. Ross, Rachel, and Phoebe were quick to _____ the other friends' decisions in the situations, simply because they thought it was gross!

Exercise 2. Fill in the gaps in the sentences with a suitable word from the word bank.

inefficacious (adj.), assailants (n.), nefarious (adj.), ambiguous (adj.), heedlessly (adv.),

tedious (adj.), flabbergasted (v.), repercussions (n.), agitated (v.), outlandish (adj.)

1. My intentions remained _____, because I did not express myself clearly enough.
2. This idea is completely _____! Nobody in their right mind would ever go through with your plan!
3. Your scheme of scaring her is very _____, she will never forgive you for putting her through such an ordeal!
4. I was completely _____ when I saw them sitting in the coffee shop. I thought they had gone on vacation, but apparently they were just ignoring me!
5. My attempt to scare her was _____, but that will not stop me from trying again.
6. I know! It is such _____ work trying to scare them, but I am glad to see that you are not giving up.
7. What a shame that our actions have _____, because he had a restraining order filed against him for constantly trying to scare the girls!
8. I really do not want to go to the party tonight. Ross kept talking to me about some nonsense, and it really _____ me.
9. I was so certain that it was them, so I ran towards them pretty _____. Turns out it wasn't them at all, but a couple of random women.
10. In order to protect myself from any possible _____, I have decided to take self-defense classes!

Exercise 3. Fill in the gaps in the sentences with a suitable word from the word bank.

galling (adj.), elated (adj.), coerced (v.), repugnance (n.), exacerbated (v.), gluttony (n.),

admonished (v.), furtive (adj.), fabricated (v.), impediment (n.)

1. I felt such strong _____ when I realised that the waiter had brought me a tofu cake instead of a cheesecake.
2. He acted in such a _____ manner that I wanted to punch him in the face. I showed restraint and threw his cake on the ground instead.
3. I knew my _____ would eventually be my undoing. I dropped my whole cake, and had to eat it off the floor.
4. Can you believe he did not want us to split the cake? I did not know what else to do, so I _____ him into sharing.
5. I know it was a terrible thing to do, but in my mind I had _____ several reasons as to why I should do it.
6. My attempts at being _____ were pretty bad. He saw me eating the cake anyway.
7. At first I did think that stealing was wrong. I even _____ Chandler for doing so, but I ended up being just like him.
8. I had a chance to win a lot of money. All I had to do was whistle, but I couldn't! My mouth was full of cheesecake at the time, and it was a serious _____.
9. Thinking back on it, stealing the second cake was what really _____ our bad behaviour, but we didn't even care! We kept on stealing and eating.
10. He felt _____ when I dropped my cake, so naturally I had to hit his plate, so his cake would end up on the ground as well.

Appendix 5 – Table 1

Previously Known Words

	Definition Matching (number of words)	Word Bank (number of words)	Summary Writing (number of words)
S1	5	3	3
S2	6	3	3
S3	5	3	1
S4	1	1	1
S5	7	1	4
S6	7	2	5
S7	6	0	3
S8	2	1	0
S9	4	2	5
S10	4	1	0

Appendix 6 – Table 2

Unfamiliar Words

	Defintion Matching (number of words)	Word Bank (number of words)	Summary Writing (number of words)
S1	5	7	7
S2	4	7	7
S3	5	7	9
S4	9	9	9
S5	3	9	6
S6	3	8	5
S7	4	10	7
S8	8	9	10
S9	6	8	5
S10	6	9	10
Total number of unknown words	53	83	75

Appendix 7 – Table 3

Words That Were Correctly Used in the Post-Test

	Definition Matching (number of words)	Word Bank (number of words)	Summary Writing (number of words)
S1	2 (40%)	5 (71%)	2 (28%)
S2	4 (100%)	7 (100%)	7 (100%)
S3	5 (100%)	6 (85%)	7 (77%)
S4	7 (77%)	7 (77%)	5 (55%)
S5	3 (100%)	6 (66%)	4 (66%)
S6	3 (100%)	5 (62%)	5 (100%)
S7	4 (100%)	9 (90%)	7 (100%)
S8	3 (37%)	2 (22%)	3 (30%)
S9	5 (83%)	6 (75%)	3 (60%)
S10	5 (83%)	2 (22%)	0 (0%)
Average percentage of words correctly used in the post-test	82%	67%	61%

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Helena Sallert

Using a Television Series to Facilitate Advanced Learners' Vocabulary Learning. Telesarja kasutamine edasijõudnud õpilaste sõnavara õppimise hõlbustamiseks.

Magistritöö

2016

Lehekülgede arv: 61

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks oli uurida, kas telesarja kasutamine edasijõudnud õpilastele sõnavara õpetamiseks hõlbustab nende jaoks sõnavara meeldejätmist. Telesarjaks, mida kasutati, oli "Sõbrad"*,* ning sõnavara, mida õpilased õppisid, otseselt sarjas ei kasutatud, vaid õpilased pidid sõnavara ja telesarja stseenide vahel ise seoseid looma.

Magistritöö kirjanduse ülevaade koosneb kahest peamisest osast: videote kasutamine klassiruumis ja sõnavara õppimise ja õpetamise käsitlus. Videote kasutamise alapeatüki all tuuakse välja videote kasutamise positiivsed ja negatiivsed küljed ning põhjendatakse, miks just sarja "Sõbrad" peaks klassiruumis kasutama. Sõnavara alapeatüki all tuuakse välja ülevaated, kuidas sõnavara õpitakse ning peaks õpetama, ja käsitletakse ka harva- ja tihtiesinevaid sõnu ning kuidas neid õpetada.

Töö empiiriline peatükk põhjendab magistritöö teema valikut, käsitleb täpsemalt töös kasutatavaid meetodeid ja uurimuse tulemusi ning kirjeldab tulemusi kirjanduse ülevaate materjalist lähtuvalt. Käesolev uurimus viidi läbi 10 Miina Härma Gümnaasiumi edasijõudnud õpilaste hulgas, kes vaatasid 3 videoklippi, ning tegid 3 sõnavaraharjutust, kus kasutati enamasti harvaesinevaid sõnu. Uurimuse tulemusena selgus, et õpilased suutsid ka 3 nädalat hiljem järeltestis meelde tuletada vähemalt 7 sõna tähendused ning need õigetesse lausetesse sobitada. Mõne õpilase tagasiside põhjal võib järeldada, et õpilastele meeldis videoga seoseid luues sõnavara õppida, ja on võimalik, et see aitas neil hiljem sõnade tähendusi meelde tuletada. Töö kokkuvõte annab ülevaate kirjandusest ning uurimuse tulemustest, pakkudes välja ka võimalikke tulevasi uurimisvõimalusi.

Märksõnad: sõnavara õpetamine, edasijõudnud õpilased, telesarja kasutamine.

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

Mina, Helena Sallert,

1. Annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose *Using a Televison Series to Facilitate Advanced Learners' Vocabulary Learning*

mille juhendaja on Natalja Zagura

1.1. reprodutseerimiseks säilitamise ja üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemise eesmärgil, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace-is lisamise eesmärgil kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni;

1.2. üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks Tartu Ülikooli veebikeskkonna kaudu, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi Dspace-i kaudu kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni.

2. olen teadlik, et punktis 1 nimetatud õigused jäävad alles ka autorile.

3. kinnitan, et lihtlitsentsi andmisega ei rikuta teiste isikute intellektuaalomandi ega isikuandmete kaitse seadusest tulenevaid õigusi.

Tartus, 20.05.2016

Helena Sallert