

a video word cloud in EFLT

Lela Ivanovska and Isa Spahiu

Lela Ivanovska, *Bitola, North Macedonia*,
lela_bt@yahoo.com

Isa Spahiu, -AAB college-Pristina, Kosovo
Isa.spahiu@universitetiaab.com

Abstract

The use of technology in education in general and in language teaching in particular has lots of opportunities for students and classroom. Such opportunities are word clouds as graphical representations of word frequency, which are shown in different sizes or colors according to their importance. The more frequently a word appears in the text, the larger its size in the visual design. The user can alter the style, colors and layout of the word collage. Usage of word clouds facilitates interactive information sharing, collaboration and learning. These popular forms of data visualization make students more active and creative during the learning process. Recent research in English foreign language teaching has suggested using word clouds in teaching language skills - reading, writing, speaking and listening. In addition, word clouds can help students in creating learning motivation, setting up an interactive classroom activity, to react to topics and produce their own understanding based on that reaction. This study aims to introduce how we can use word clouds in English foreign language classroom to bridge the comprehension gap with authentic videos. It includes suggestions for sources of authentic videos as well as some examples of activities we can create using Skim Thru app to extract word clouds from the video script.

Keywords: word clouds, authentic video, English language classrooms, teaching comprehension Introduction

Introduction

A word cloud is a colorful, often random, collection of words extracted from a book and arranged into a shape. Typically, word clouds are created using some form of text. The higher the size of a word in the graphic design, the more frequently it appears in the text. The user can change the word collage's style, colors, and layout. Word clouds make knowledge exchange, collaboration, and learning more engaging. According to (Miley & Read, 2011), word clouds became popular as a means of disseminating information on social networking sites, where such pictures were originally tagged to photos so that users could readily access them. They grew in popularity as a way to showcase keyword metadata from webpages. This established their importance for highlighting keywords within a text, particularly because of the appealing visualization effects. Because word clouds allow learners to access key input from a vast amount of digital information on internet resources (Godwin-Jones, 2016), they have been used for a variety of purposes, one of which is to use them as educational tools. A word cloud has numerous advantages for students, the classroom, and the community. Word clouds are defined by Barret (2010) as a data visualization tool for representing information in the form of charts, maps, tag clouds, animation, or any graphical means that make content easier to understand. Friendly (2008) stated that data visualization can be used to clearly and effectively communicate information through visual representation. This tool can aid the understanding of complex concepts by providing data in a variety of formats such as visual, textual, animated input, and so on.

The purpose of this research is to show how we can use word clouds in the English foreign language classroom to bridge the comprehension gap with authentic video. It includes suggestions for authentic video sources as well as some activities we can create using the Skim Thru app to extract word clouds from the video script.

Word clouds and English language Teaching

When word clouds were being investigated as effective educational technology tools to aid in teaching and learning, they were also used in teaching of English as a second or foreign language. Word clouds can be very useful for teaching language because they visualize the keywords through highlighted fonts and styles in the word cloud, acting as a digitized whiteboard for students. It can aid in vocabulary retention for visual learners in particular, as well as facilitate integrated skills and entertain multiple learning styles.

Word clouds can aid in second language learning by improving all four, as well as integrated skills for learners (Tafazoli et al., 2014). They can be extremely beneficial for teaching reading and writing as well as summarizing content (McNaught & Lam, 2010), and they can improve recall in preparation for exams or other activities (Miley & Read, 2011). They can also assist students with pre-reading and pre-writing tasks. A text's keywords can be used as prompts for reading comprehension, word-meaning activities, or writing small texts, as well as predictors of a text or lesson to be taught. The activity of creating word clouds not only helps students become acquainted with educational technology tools, but it also aids them in skimming, scanning, and outlining an essay. After students have completed their writing assignments, word clouds can aid in reverse outlining. The generated keywords can also be useful in speaking and listening activities. By focusing on keywords, they can be used in a pre-listening stage. Teachers can then discuss topics with ease because students have already acquired vocabulary and can easily comprehend words spoken by teachers/peers. As a result, they assist students in learning new vocabulary. They can also help with fluent speaking by providing vocabulary input (Tafazoli et al., 2014). Word clouds can also be used to analyze literary characters by identifying key characteristics, as well as to generate prompts for writing short stories. According to (Pichey,2021) word clouds in English foreign language classroom can help students in creating learning motivation, setting up an interactive classroom and bridge the comprehension gap with authentic

video. Table 1 summarizes related literature on word clouds and English language teaching.

Table 1 A Summary of Word Clouds and English Language Teaching

Author(s)	Research Purposes
Dalton & Grisham 2011	This research looks at ten different ways of using technology to teach English vocabulary. Teachers, for example, could use word clouds to spark discussion before or after teaching a reading class. This can assist students in connecting with the reading materials.
deNoyelles & ReyesFoster, 2015	This study looks into the efficacy of inserting word clouds into given passages of online discussions. The 132 university students were assessed on their critical thinking and engagement using word clouds as a discussion prompt and a survey. The findings indicate a positive relationship between the use of word clouds and critical thinking, engagement, and peer interaction.
Bromley, 2013	This paper summarizes how to use word cloud generators and what activities could be used in the classroom to teach EFL/EFL. Teachers, for example, could use word clouds to introduce new vocabulary and gain an overview of reading texts.
Hakuta, 2018	Word cloud generators described by Hakuta (2018), can be used to create an image, identify parts of speech, display a visual word net and thesaurus dictionary, and provide examples where the word occurs. Word cloud could help students explore and learn new vocabulary in English language classes.

Tafazoli, 2013	This work shows how word clouds can be used to teach language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. In reading, for example, teachers can use word clouds to stimulate what students already know about the topic and to provide background information prior to reading the texts.
Tafazoli, Chirimbu, & Dejica-Cartiș, 2014	This paper demonstrates how word clouds can be used to learn and teach four English language skills. Teachers, for example, can use word clouds to brainstorm ideas, introduce vocabulary, and reflect on students' written assignments.
Warner & Jones, 2011	This articles shows how to use word cloud generators for teaching English vocabulary.

As previously stated, word clouds are typically generated from text. Here's an illustration:



As you can see, it generates an appealing visual that can serve as the foundation for a variety of activities both inside and outside the classroom. Some word clouds, such as the one above, analyze the

frequency with which words appear in the text and enlarge them. Others color-code words based on their relationship to themes or word type, so it's important to consider the type of tool you use to create your word cloud as well as the types of activities you want to use it for. To make a word cloud, you'll need:

- a computer or mobile device that can connect to the internet. A word cloud like the one above can be created using a variety of free websites. Many of the websites make use of a 'Java' software plug-in that runs within your web browser. This plug-in is usually free and can be easily installed if it is not already on your computer.
- a digital copy of the text you want to use as the basis for your word cloud.

Word clouds are useful for language teaching because:

- They can be quickly created from any digital text by simply cutting and pasting. This means that you can create these useful teaching aids to supplement your teaching materials from any authentic or web-based text.
- They are simple to print for use in the classroom or to incorporate into web-based materials and word processing documents.
- They are extremely adaptable and can be used in a variety of ways to aid in language development.
- They are very colorful, which stimulates visual learners.
- They can be gathered and used to jog memory and increase cognitive engagement with a text.

Creating word clouds from video by using Skim Thru app in English foreign language classroom could be useful to bridge the comprehension gap with authentic video. There are many reasons for using authentic video in the language classroom such as:

- motivating (students feel a sense of achievement),
- contextualized language (the visual can help convey meaning),
- language and information (both the language content and the information content can be very rich),
- culturally rich (it can help students see and understand elements of the target culture).

Authentic videos can be found on YouTube channel. But there is so much to choose from. Here are some useful resources (Peachey, 2021):

HowCast - How to videos

PBS Ideas - Ideas and popular culture

TKSST- Educational -For Kids

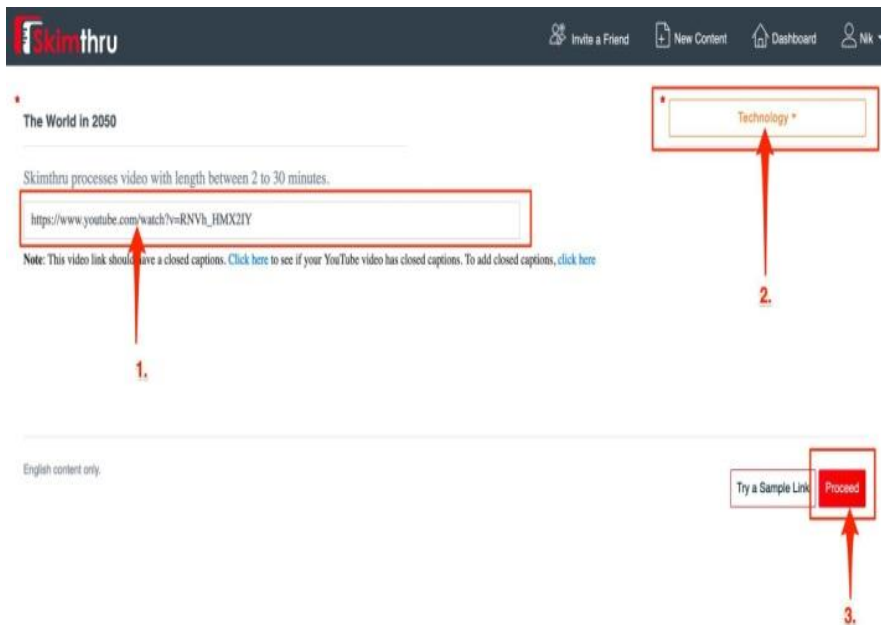
Dust- Sci-fi shorts

School of Life- Philosophy/Psychology

The Gadget Show - New Technology

TED Education - Various concepts and ideas

Using authentic materials with students presents a number of challenges: language level- the lexical and grammatical content can be challenging, speed (authentic materials are usually at a realistic speed), accents (there may be a mixture of unfamiliar accents), background information (students may lack the background or cultural experience to understand the content). The use of a word cloud can help to bridge the comprehension gap and support learner understanding (Peachey, 2021). The steps below demonstrate how to create word clouds from video using Skim Thru app:



- Find the video(s) you want to use.
- Check that they have closed captions
- Copy the URL
- Paste into you SkimThru dashboard
- Select a domain
- Click on 'Proceed'

Nik Peachey suggested the following teaching activities pre, while and post viewing activities:

Prediction Before watching students look at the word cloud and try to predict what the video will be about.

Preperation Before watching Students look at the word cloud and try to make sentences using the vocabulary.

Matching While watching, students match the word clouds to the videos

Vocabulary bingo While watching Students watch and listen and cross out the words they hear.

Revision 1 After watching students look at the word cloud and try to use the words to summarize the content.

Revision 2 Students look at a number of word clouds and use them as prompts to try to remember what each video was about.

Discussion and Conclusion

Word clouds are an effective educational technology tool that can be used for comprehension activities, vocabulary improvement, and teaching language skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking of English. The effectiveness of their use varies according to how they are integrated into various activities and how much time they take up as part of course instruction. They can be of great assistance in language learning environments by using a constructive approach to make learning student-centered by enhancing peer-learning in personal learning environments and task-based language learning. Word clouds can reduce stress in

second language learning process by providing enjoyable multimodality in which students can develop a sense of ownership for their artwork as well as language comprehension and production, achieving autonomy in the language learning process. As a result, word clouds have the potential to be an effective learning tool because they can increase motivation and engagement through their versatility of use and design, acting as a useful supplement to other learning strategies. To best use them for improving integrated skills, however, a sequential instructional design is required in order to increase familiarity with their use and purpose through multiple scaffolding activities, when incorporating word clouds into instructional design.

To summarize, the use of word clouds by using Skim Thru app to bridge the comprehension gap with authentic video and support learner understanding is recommended in this study. It also confirms that using technology such as word cloud generators can help students learn English in a variety of ways, including learning new vocabulary, getting an overview of videos content, understanding the main idea of what they will watch and listen to, and creating interactive classrooms for EFL students or learning contexts where teachers must be reflective.

References

- Barret, T. (2010). *Forty-five Interesting Ways to Use Wordle in the Classroom* [Slideshareslides], Retrieved on September 7, 2013 from <http://www.slideshare.net/boazchoi/fortyfiveinteresting-ways-to-use-wordle-in-the-classroom>.
- Bromley, K. (2013). Using Word Clouds in the Classroom. *The Utah Journal of Literacy*, 16(1), 39-41.
- Dalton, B., & Grisham, D.L. (2011). Evoc Strategies: 10 Ways to Use Technology to Build Vocabulary. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(5), 306-317.
- DeNoyelles, A., & Reyes-Foster, B. (2015). Using Word Clouds in Online Discussions to Support Critical Thinking and Engagement. *Online Learning*, 19(4), 1-12.

- Friendly, M. (2008). A Brief History of Data Visualization. In C-H. Chen, W. K. Härdle, & A. Unwin (Eds.). *Handbook of Computational Statistics: Data Visualization* (pp. 15–56). New York: Springer.
- Godwin-Jones, R. (2010). Literacies and Technologies Revisited. *Language Learning & Technology*, 14(3), 2-9.
- Hakuta, K. (2018). Wordsift: Having Fun with Learning Words. *Teaching English as a Second of Foreign Language*, 22(2), Retrieved from <http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume22/ej86/ej86m1/>
- McNaught, C., & Lam, P. (2010). Using Wordle as a Supplementary Research Tool. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 630–643.
- Miley, F., & Read, A. (2011). Using Word Clouds to Develop Proactive Learners. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 91-110.
- Peachey, N (2021). Using Word Clouds to bridge the comprehension gap with authentic video. Retrieved from <https://view.genial.ly/60b4ccbc786fe70d78c3954d>
- Tafazoli, D. (2013). Wordling: Using Word Clouds in Teaching English Language. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 10(8), 53-58.
- Tafazoli, D., Chirimbu, S. C., & Dejica-Cartiș, A. (2014). Web 2.0 in English Language Teaching: Using Word Clouds. *Professional Communication and Translation Studies*, 7(1), 167-172.
- Warner, W., & Jones, J. (2011). The Wonder of Words: Using Technology to Support Vocabulary Instruction. *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, 83(6), 7-9.