Use of Videos in Teaching and Learning: Creating Language Video Resources for British Sign Language (BSL)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter outlines the experiences of the authors when using video technologies in creating resources for teaching British Sign Language (BSL). The authors outline their own experiences of creating resources for teaching and how the increasing availability of video technology and video hosting websites has impacted on their teaching practice. The chapter outlines some practical stages in creating online video resources for the teaching of sign language, and also how to ensure that less computer literate students can engage with this new technology. The authors conclude with some suggestions about future research directions to measure the impact and effectiveness of such resources and technologies and call other teachers of sign languages to explore the potential of these approaches for themselves.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the use of new video technologies in the teaching and learning of British Sign Language (BSL) harnessed within our higher education setting, with predominately hearing students. Before the mass availability of affordable, easy to use technology which made it possible to create, edit and share videos online,
BSL teachers, and indeed teachers of any sign language, were reliant on static 2D images or written descriptions of signs to produce teaching resources for students to use outside the classroom. However, the growing availability of high definition video cameras, cheap storage media and file-sharing websites such as YouTube\textsuperscript{1} has ushered in a revolution in the way in which resources for teachers and students of BSL can be created and shared. This chapter describes how one BSL teaching team at a university in the UK has exploited this new technology to create a virtual library of online resources for students of BSL, ranging from beginners to advanced level students, outlining some of the content of such videos for different learners. We describe the technology used in creating these videos, the practical issues which must be considered when filming. We also discuss some ethical issues with using such videos, including how to ensure privacy for students who submit videos for assessment, and how to ensure that the use of file-sharing websites complies with the institution’s policies on intellectual property rights and copyright. We conclude with some suggestions for future research in order to measure the impact that the use of video technology has on the experience of our learners, both as learning resources to support their classroom learning, and as a means of submitting their work for assessment. It is hoped that this chapter will encourage other teachers of sign languages to explore the possibilities offered by these new technologies and share their experiences and tips for exploiting them to their full potential.

**Background**

British sign language (BSL) is the first or preferred language of 156,000 (British Deaf Association) of deaf people in the UK. It was recognized as a language in its own right by the British government in 2003, with £1 million in funding allocated to support the initiative. More recently, in Scotland BSL has been enshrined by law in the British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill 2015 (2015), which promotes BSL and requires the preparation and publication of a British Sign Language National Plan for Scotland. However at the time of writing this legal recognition has yet to be rolled out throughout the rest of the UK. Action on Hearing Loss (n.d.), one of the largest charities in the UK connected to deaf and hard of hearing people, state that the number of deaf people in the UK rose from 1 in 7 people to 1 in 6 people in 2015, and they predict that this will continue to rise to as many as 1 in 5 people in 2035. Of these between 87,000 to 151,000 use BSL (British Deaf Association) as their first or preferred language. There have been various attempts to collect more accurate statistics regarding the number of deaf people who use BSL as their first or preferred language, for example, surveying patients at GP doctor’s surgeries, and allowing BSL as a language option on the National Census. However, these methods are not without their problems. Healthy deaf people are unlikely to be
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