



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 2

PERCEPTUAL OR COMMUNICATIVE TASKS BASED ON SUBTITLING

OBJECTIVES

Improve English (or other foreign language) pronunciation.

TIME REQUIRED

50 minutes.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE

Individual or in pairs.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Original audio-visual materials subtitled in L2 that can be modified, a freely available subtitle editor such as Aegisub (<http://www.aegisub.org/>) and a tape recorder or a mobile phone to record the learners' oral productions (optional).

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity consists of using original audio-visual material subtitled in the L2 and taking advantage of the textual content of the subtitles to pay attention to the phonetic form of words and develop the skills of segmenting and decoding continuous speech in L2. This can be achieved through perceptual tasks where learners watch videos with subtitles modified by removing words or grammatical morphemes which learners must identify, or through highlighting (e.g., through colour and size) words or grammatical morphemes. It is up to the teacher to modify the subtitles in whatever way he/she considers best to work on specific aspects of pronunciation (the pronunciation of the past tense morpheme -ed in English, for example). Paired or group communicative tasks can also be designed which involve editing subtitles for original audio material, where learners create and edit subtitles for video material in L2.

The procedures are very diverse depending on how you decide to work on the subtitles. The main aim is to work on the orthographic form of the words in the subtitles alongside the auditory form through pronunciation. This is to facilitate

the correction of mispronunciations which develop from the acquisition of vocabulary which has developed exclusively from the orthographic form. In the case of communicative tasks based on editing subtitles (e.g., "we edit a video (in L2) to post on YouTube"), we can use different genres (documentaries, series, etc.) depending on the aspects of speech and pronunciation we want to work on. Another way of working on pronunciation using subtitles is to ask students to play the role of characters in the video who speak in the foreign language by saying what the subtitles say. This can be done having initially imitated the original voices in the video and then without the voices.

SELF-EVALUATION AND REFLECTION GUIDE

After completing a specific task, emphasis should be placed on the relationship and lack of relationship between the orthographic form and the phonological form (pronunciation) of the words that have been worked on, given that it is a task designed to work on the phonetic form of words.

Questions such as the following can be used to reflect on what has been learnt:

- What differences have you found between how you pronounce the subtitles and how the characters in the video pronounce them?
- What aspects of the spelling of the words you have had to pronounce do you think have most influenced the fact that you have developed a mispronunciation?