Authentic Video Materials and Potentially Controversial Content in an ESL Context:
Teachers' Perceptions and Practices

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Abstract

Seven ESL instructors at a Canadian continuing education center were interviewed in this study to explore their perceptions of and practices for incorporating authentic videos in class. More specifically, teachers were asked to discuss what criteria they use for video selection, how they address potentially controversial content in these videos, and how they respond to negative student reactions due to the videos' content. The data collected from the semi-structured interviews revealed that most participants utilized the same evaluation process (i.e., choosing videos based on whether they matched students' language proficiency, needs/interests, backgrounds, and the class dynamic). However, there were varying responses concerning what "appropriateness" of content meant. Based on the two main findings above, this study presents best practices and a checklist to guide teachers through the video selection process; several other implications for both the classroom and future research are also made.

Résumé

Pour cette étude, sept enseignants d'anglais langue seconde (ALS) provenant d'un centre de formation continue ont été interviewés avec le but d'explorer leurs perceptions envers leurs pratiques dans l'incorporation de vidéos authentiques dans leurs classes. Plus précisément, les enseignants ont été invités à discuter des critères qu'ils utilisent pour la sélection de vidéos, comment ils abordent des vidéos avec du contenu controversé et de quelles manières ils répondent à des réactions négatives que leurs élèves peuvent avoir. Les données, provenant d'interviews semi-structurés, démontrent que la majorité des enseignants utilisent les mêmes méthodes d'évaluation (c.-à-d., le choix de vidéos faites en considérant les élèves et leurs habilités linguistiques, leurs besoins, leurs intérêts, leurs expériences antérieures et la dynamique en classe). Cependant, les enseignants avaient des opinions divergentes sur quel contenu était « approprié » pour leurs élèves. Basé sur les résultats susmentionnés, cette étude présente une liste des meilleures pratiques ainsi qu'une liste pour guider les enseignants dans leur sélection de vidéos. D'autres implications pour la classe et recherches futures sont également présentées.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the second half of the 20th century, the approach to teaching second languages

shifted from a focus on individual language development to the development of

communicative competence (Gilmore, 2007). Communicative competence refers to learners'

ability to use their linguistic knowledge in different communicative scenarios (Hymes, 1972).

More specifically, Habermas (2008) defines this term to mean "the mastery of an ideal speech

situation" (p. 367), where students are able to use the appropriate language for any given real-

life interaction. This shift occurred when scholars understood that communicative language

learning requires students to do more than simply mastering the codes and structures of a

language; it requires an understanding the culture of the target language and how the language

is used in the 'real world.'

The use of authentic materials has become essential in the pursuit of intercultural

communicative competence in English as a Second Language[1] (ESL) and English as a

Foreign Language[2] (EFL) contexts as they present the target language as it is used in the real

world, unlike other materials that are designed specifically for language classes.

Authentic video materials are "recognized as a valuable resource for intensive language

study" as they provide a "total communicative situation" (Stempleski, 1992, p.7). It has been

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[1] In this paper, ESL contexts refer to classrooms located in areas where English is an official
language. For example, an English language classroom in Canada would be considered an ESL
context because English is an official language. Learners in ESL contexts can also access
authentic English input, as the target language is used both inside and outside of the classroom.

[2] EFL contexts in this paper refers to English language classrooms in areas where English is not
recognized as the nation's official language. These contexts usually offer learners less access to
authentic input as the target language is not used extensively outside of the classroom.

argued that using authentic video materials is an effective way of contextualizing the target language as learners incorporate many aspects of the real-world in a second language learning context. It has also been argued that authentic video use can also help improve language comprehension and retention (Ruane, 1989). Additionally, it has been found that learners find these materials fun and motivating (Sherman, 2003). However, in multicultural classes where students do not share the same backgrounds, language teaching through real-life materials may lead to 'cultural clash.' Therefore, the use of authentic videos may also entail certain challenges; in particular, they might contain content that could be perceived as offensive or controversial by some students, which might then create tension in the classroom (Gareis, 1997; Miller, Donner, & Fraser, 2004).

However, avoiding potentially controversial content altogether seems difficult. More specifically, it is a challenging task for teachers to find authentic videos to use in their multicultural language classes that represents the 'real-world' culture of the target language, but which do not contain any content that could potentially be considered controversial to some part of a diverse student population. Moreover, avoiding the incorporation of potentially controversial content may not even be desirable as we restrict students' exposure to the target culture and language (Gareis, 1997). Furthermore, the purpose of education is to broaden students' views and promote critical thinking. The exclusion of difficult material would thus contradict this goal. Instead, the objective of education would be better supported by providing learners with exposure to a variety of views, including those that are potentially controversial.

Scholars like Brown (1997) and Gareis (1997) have suggested strategies to help teachers incorporate authentic materials (and by extension potentially controversial content) into their

classrooms. These guidelines and criteria exist for the selection process and for the use of authentic video materials as an instructional tool in the language class. However, there is a lack of empirical research exploring teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the selection and use of videos in multicultural ESL classes as well as how they incorporate controversial content and handle negative students' reaction.

Therefore, the current study aims to examine these issues and to provide empirical evidence of teachers' current practices. Specifically, the purpose of this exploratory qualitative study is to examine the selection and use of authentic video materials in an intercultural, communicatively-oriented ESL context. This includes unveiling teachers' approaches to selecting authentic video materials, the guidelines they use for selecting videos, and how ESL teachers deal with the challenge of managing authentic video materials, in particular when it comes to presenting content that is controversial for some part of the student body. Finally, this study also explores how teachers react to instances of cultural clash or discomfort in the classroom, which may arise from the viewing of authentic video materials.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions addressed in the present study are:

1. How do ESL teachers approach selecting authentic video materials for adult multicultural classrooms? (What criteria do they use in selection?)

2. How do ESL teachers approach and deal with potentially controversial content featured in authentic video materials that they select for adult multicultural classrooms?

3. How do ESL teachers respond when authentic video materials create discomfort for

students?

1.3 Personal Motivations

In my home country, Libya, I worked as an EFL teacher in a high school (Grades 11 and 12) for about three years. The curriculum emphasized the importance of teaching the culture of the target language. We subsequently focused on aspects of British culture, as well as including some information on cultural elements of other English-speaking countries such as the USA, Canada, and Australia. In all cases, the cultural norms we taught were quite different from those shared by myself and my students. My classes contained students who shared the same cultural, religious, and ethnic background. As an EFL teacher, I found it challenging to introduce the norms and the values of the target cultures, especially when they seemed to conflict with the cultural or religious values of my students. I often noticed that my students felt uncomfortable and were offended when they were exposed to certain cultural subjects. For example, students would express their discomfort when talking about the topic of parties in the English-speaking world, as it might involve consuming alcohol, which is forbidden in the teachings of their faith.

Ultimately, as an EFL teacher, it was my responsibility to expose students to aspects of the culture of the target language; however, I was not equipped to manage the emotion that would arise at the presentation of sensitive content in the lessons. My lack of experience and skills for managing this challenge made me avoid cultural topics that may be controversial to my students.

In 2014, I travelled to Canada to pursue my graduate study. Upon my arrival, I enrolled in multicultural ESL classes in preparation for my Masters' degree. In these culturally diverse classes, I gained exposure to authentic materials that were used to help

newly arrived students gain communicative competence in the language. However, these materials often contained content that I considered too sensitive and in some cases, they were culturally unacceptable to me. Other students, especially those who came from backgrounds where topics like violence and sex are taboo, reacted similarly to myself. This phenomenon interested me as an EFL teacher and reminded me of my own experiences, both as a teacher and as a learner; I started wondering how ESL teachers selected authentic materials. I found that the problem I had encountered as a teacher in EFL classes was not just a personal struggle; other ESL and EFL teachers encounter similar challenges.

This realization led to many questions concerning the guidelines for selecting materials and the rationale behind the inclusion or exclusion of sensitive and controversial content in culturally diverse language classes. Why do some teachers present sensitive content while others avoid it? What are the best practices for handling the discomfort in students or the tension that might arise as a result of exposing students to sensitive topics or content that might conflict with their values and beliefs?

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will hopefully shed light on ESL teachers' practices regarding selection and use of videos, dealing with controversial content and cultural clash, and how teachers manage the challenges associated with using these materials. It will also improve our understanding of the factors influencing these practices, which can then inform the best practices for using authentic video materials and how to address potentially controversial content. Ultimately, this study will contribute to the scholarly conversation in the field, providing the empirical evidence to guide teachers and teacher training programs

through this emotionally and intellectually challenging issue.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

  This thesis consists of five chapters. This first chapter is an introduction, which includes the statement of the problem, purpose of the current study, research questions, and my personal motivation in conducting this study. Chapter Two reviews the literature and research on authentic material use in general and authentic video materials in relation to relevant second language learning theories as well as the guidelines for using authentic video materials and incorporating controversial issues in multicultural language classes. Chapter Three describes the methods and procedures for conducting the research and includes a description of the participants, study context, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter Four reports the results from this study. Chapter Five discusses the results of the study, while Chapter Six concludes the thesis with a summary of the findings and the study's limitations. Implications and recommendations for class practices and future research are also given in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on the use of authentic materials as an instructional tool in second language education, with an emphasis on utilizing authentic videos. This chapter is divided into five main sections. The first gives an overview of the concept of authenticity in language education, including a brief historical background of authenticity in second and foreign language teaching and learning, definitions of authenticity and authentic materials, types of authenticity, and sources of authentic materials. The following section reviews the theories of second language learning that support the effectiveness of using authentic video materials in language classes. The third section examines the benefits and the challenges associated with using authentic video materials. Guidelines and recommendations for effectively selecting and using videos are discussed in the fourth section. Finally, the fifth section sheds some light on gaps in the existing literature concerning the usage of authentic video materials as a pedagogical tool, such as the lack of empirical studies on how best to choose and use authentic videos.

2.1 Authenticity in Second Language Education

2.1.1 Historical background

The use of authentic pedagogical materials has a long history in second language teaching and learning. In fact, there is evidence that authenticity was considered important in language learning dating back to the 19th century. In 1899, leading philologist Henry Sweet criticized the usage of artificial materials for teaching foreign/second languages as they "tend to cause incessant repetition of certain grammatical constructions, certain elements of the vocabulary, certain combinations of words to the almost total exclusion of others which are

equally, or perhaps even more, essential" (Sweet, 1899, p. 177, as cited in Gilmore, 2007). Sweet went on to argue that authentic materials, on the other hand, do justice to all components of the language.

In the late 20th century, the call for authenticity in language teaching grew, especially by scholars such as Hymes (1972) as well as Canale and Swain (1980), who noted the importance of communicative competence in language learning. This conceptualization of language learning gained ground in the 1970s, as scholars understood that communicative competence encompasses more than just the knowledge of the linguistic elements (i.e., the form) of a language. At this point, contextualized communication, such as that seen in authentic materials, began to be prioritized over form. However, despite calls for more authenticity in second/foreign language learning that dated back decades (O'Neill & Scott, 1974; Crystal & Davy, 1975; Schmidt & Richards, 1980; Morrow, 1981), movements to achieve this goal have been slow as teaching strategies have not always kept pace with the theory (Gilmore, 2007).

2.1.2 Definition

The concept of authenticity in language teaching has created a lot of discussion over the past three decades as scholars have interpreted the term "authenticity" in various ways. This range of definitions has persisted to this day, such that there is no single understanding available for this term. However, most scholars generally agree that there are two main conceptualizations of authenticity in language learning (Gilmore, 2007; Mishan, 2005; Wilson, 1997). The first concerns the *content* of the material and whether it reflects how real speakers communicate in the target language (i.e., was not designed for the classroom). The second conceptualization focuses on how the material is *used*, such that teachers and learners

must be able to see how the material fulfills a "real-life communicative purpose" (Wilson, 1997, p. 3). Gilmore (2007) argued that the term "authenticity" has a "considerable range of meanings" (p. 98) in the field. Some of these definitions and conceptualizations are provided below.

Many publications have defined written and audio-visual authentic materials as those originally produced for native speaker consumption and/or those that reflect natural language use. Some have argued that authentic materials are those produced in a natural communicative context and not specifically designed for pedagogical or language teaching purposes (Nunan, 1989; Jordan, 1997; Harmer, 1991; Lee, 1995). Nunan (1989) states that "[a] rule of thumb for authentic material is any material which has not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching" (p. 54). Similarly, Wilkins (1976) understands authentic materials as materials that were "originally directed at a native-speaking audience" (p.79), while Morrow (1977) believes that authentic materials are those produced by a native speaker of the target language in order to convey a "real message" addressed to a real audience.

Other scholars have maintained that authenticity refers to the use of the materials, such as the participants, social and cultural context, or purpose of the materials. Authenticity, according to Rilling and Dantas-Whitney (2010), "should be framed in broader terms to include learner cognition, engagement, collaboration, problem solving, critical analysis, and the development of language for specific and often localized communication purposes" (p. 1). This definition highlights the importance of the participants' interactions with the materials.

Furthermore, Rogers and Medley (1988) believe that "the criteria that authenticate language should focus more on the quality, appropriateness and 'naturalness' of the language

itself rather than upon the source and purpose of the sample" (p. 467), referring to the social and cultural context. They continued by stating that authentic written and spoken materials are "samples that reflect a naturalness of form and an appropriateness of cultural and in situational contexts that would be found in the language as used by native speakers" (p. 468).

Others have interpreted authenticity in terms of its pedagogical function in the classroom. Sreehari (2012) pointed out the main goal of using authentic material in language classes "is to familiarize the learners with the language needed in real life" (p. 89). Furthermore, authenticity in language learning involves more than using real-life materials and simulating activities students may encounter outside of the classroom. Instead, it is essential to "address the needs and interests of students, engaging them in authentic, real-life tasks, allowing them ownership of the curriculum" (Felix, 2005, p. 88).

Finally, Mishan (2005) went further and elaborated on the criteria for defining authenticity in language learning materials, that combined both authenticity of the text and its use in the classroom. She argued that authenticity "is a factor of the (1) provenance and authorship of the text; (2) original communicative and socio-cultural purpose of the text; (3) original context (e.g. its source, socio-cultural context) of the text; (4) learning activity engendered by the text; and (5) learners' perceptions of and attitudes to the text and the activity pertaining to it" (p.18).

In addition to the definitions above, there are many types of authenticity to consider when discussing real-world language learning materials. According to MacDonald, Badger, and Dasli (2006), the literature of applied linguistics introduces four different types of authenticity. First, there is the authenticity of the text (Guariento & Morley, 2001). This type includes the authenticity of the language and the materials.

Second, there is the development of competence authenticity, which is where learners gain a realistic understanding of the target language through the materials (MacDonald, Badger, & Dasli, 2006). As such, the materials should increase students' grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence[3] (Canale & Swain, 1980). The third type is learner authenticity, a concept that was first suggested by Widdowson (1979). Widdowson explained that the teaching of "real English as it functions in contextually appropriate ways, needs to refer to [...] how people who have the language as an L1 actually put it to communicative use" (1996, p. 67). Similarly, Lee (1995) defines learner authenticity as the "learner's interaction authenticity with [authentic materials], in terms of appropriate responses and positive psychological reaction" (p. 323). Finally, there is the authenticity of the classroom, which was proposed by Breen (1985) and Taylor (1994). According to Breen (1985), this refers to "the provision of those conditions in which the participants can publicly share the problems, achievements and overall process of learning a language together as a socially motivated and socially situated activity" (p. 68).

Breen (1985) went on to propose a different classification of authenticity. For him, authenticity in language learning refers to the authenticity of text, the authenticity of learners' interpretations of the texts, the authenticity of the tasks being assigned to language learners, and finally, the authenticity of the actual social situation/context provided in the class. When referring to the authenticity of text, Mishan (2005) introduces the concept of the 3Cs, which refers to culture, currency, and challenge. Specifically, she argued that authentic materials

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[3] In their seminal work, Canale and Swain (1980) defined grammatical competence as learners' understanding of the mechanics of the target language (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, morphology, semantics, and phonology). Sociolinguistic competence was defined as students understanding of sociocultural rules (i.e., whether they could use appropriate registers and styles) and discourse rules (i.e., learners' ability to create a cohesive and coherent text). Finally, for strategic competence, the authors defined this as students' awareness of strategies they can use to compensate for communication breakdowns.

present 1) the culture of the target language, 2) how the language is currently used, and finally, 3) a greater challenge compared to contrived materials.

Through the above discussion, it is clear that the literature offers a considerable range of definitions and classifications associated with the term authenticity. This paper adopts the definition of authenticity proposed by Morrow (1977), which describes an authentic text as one "produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (p. 13). The rationale for this choice is to limit the definition to more or less "objectifiable criteria" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 98).

Gilmore (2007) notes that based on this definition, "it is possible to say whether a text is authentic or not […] by referring to the source of the discourse and the context of its production" (p. 98). This definition is especially valuable because it allows educators to select authentic materials using concrete criteria to evaluate their authenticity.

2.1.3 Sources of authentic materials

There are many different categories of authentic language learning materials, depending on the modality of communication used. Authentic materials that are used for distributing real messages in real contexts can fall under the following categories, namely visual, audio-visual, printed, and real objects (Oguz & Bahar, 2008; Gebhard, 1996). Furthermore, the Internet is arguably the most useful source for retrieving authentic materials, as it provides easy access to a variety of authentic media (Berardo, 2006; Blake, 2001). The Internet also ensures learners are interacting with the material, as websites are designed to be lively and user-friendly (Abdelhafez & Abdullah, 2015; Vaiciuniene & Uzpaliene, 2010). Furthermore, it gives teachers a more economic way of distributing authentic materials in the classroom to increase learners' vocabulary and cultural knowledge (Erbaggio, Gopalakrishnan, Hobbs, & Liu, 2011;

Vaiciuniene & Uzpaliene, 2012).

2.2 Authentic Videos and Language Learning Theory

Recent research suggests that videos might be one of the best media for second language learning (Silverman & Hines, 2009). Authentic videos present language in a contextualized form, and can engage the learner's attention in addition to increasing their motivation (Ruane, 1989). In fact, these factors are what make the use of authentic video materials superior to other types of authentic materials. The following sections discuss authentic video materials in light of relevant theories of second language acquisition (i.e., Krashen's input hypothesis, Dual-Coding Theory, and generative theory of learning) to illustrate their immense value to second language teaching and learning.

2.2.1 Authentic video materials and comprehensible input.

Despite the criticism of how Krashens' theory poorly operationalized comprehensible input, i+1, and his proposed acquisition order (e.g., Gregg, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987; Swain, 2000), Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis is still valuable in that it emphasizes the importance of the input students receive during the learning process (White, 1987). According to the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1981), for second language acquisition to take place, it is necessary for the learner to be exposed to a sufficient amount of comprehensible input. This input should be slightly beyond their current proficiency. Once learners have this exposure, they naturally gain competency in the target language and become more fluent users. Krashen further explained that students would understand unfamiliar concepts and structures based on contextual cues conveyed in the message or even from "extralingustic cues" (Shrum & Glisan, 2000).

Krashen (1982) identified the characteristics of the instructional materials that are considered valuable resources for exposing learners to comprehensible input. The best resources must be (1) interesting to students; (2) not grammatically sequenced; (3) close to

students' levels; (4) not much beyond their actual knowledge, and most importantly,

(5) able to provide contextual support to enhance comprehension (Ruane, 1989).

Authentic video materials that provide naturalistic language input therefore fulfill these

criteria, provided that they are at the appropriate level for the students. In fact, authentic

videos can be seen as one of the best resources for appropriate language input because they

allow learners to be exposed to conversational input at their level; their understanding is also

scaffolded by contextually supportive visuals (Ruane, 1989).

According to Ruane (1989), language learners might be able to acquire a second

language through "subconscious processes" which are triggered when they use "the

faculties that enabled them to learn their mother tongue in the first place" (p. 30). She

explained that "such subconscious processes are likely to be best activated […] by

arranging that learning takes place in language-rich, natural environments and by

providing the right kind of materials" (Ruane, 1989, p.30). Furthermore, the

comprehension of the input provided in authentic video material is enhanced by

characteristics of the oral language such as "pausing, repeating, rephrasing", as well as the

use of clauses instead of sentences (Thanajaro, 2000, p. 36).

In sum, the Input Hypothesis supports the judicious use of authentic video materials

in the second language-learning classroom, provided that the materials are appropriate to

learners' level of mastery in the target language. The following section discusses authentic

video materials in light of dual-coding theory and the generative theory for learning.

2.2.2 Video materials, dual-coding theory, and generative theory for learning

Dual-coding theory presents an explanation for how information (input) is processed in

the brain. Paivio (1991, 2006) maintains that cognition is constructed through two main

subsystems: 1) a verbal system, which is specialized for dealing directly with verbal information (e.g., linguistic elements), and 2) a non-verbal system, which processes nonverbal information (e.g., non-linguistic elements such as objects and events). According to the dual-coding theory, these two systems work together to facilitate language acquisition (Paivio, 1971). More specifically, the combination of "pictures, mental imagery, and verbal elaboration could be an effective method in promoting understanding and learning from text by students ranging from grade school to university level" (Paivio, 1991, p.163). The theory also highlights how the verbal system relies on the non-verbal system, in that language requires individuals to draw on "the rich knowledge base [of] the non-verbal system" (Paivio, 2006, p. 3). Dual-coding theory is also consistent with the generative theory of learning proposed by Wittrock (1974, 1990) and assumes that "meaningful learning is enhanced when a learner can construct and coordinate visual and verbal representations of the same material" (Al-Seghayer, 2001, p. 229).

Authentic videos materials by their nature provide visual and audio cues for the language inputs they provide. According to Silverman (2013), exposing students to video materials that have both audio and visual cues supports second language learning because it allows learners to develop more conceptualizations for lexical items and concepts. As an instructional tool, video materials allow sounds, visuals, and actions to work together to provide verbal and non-verbal support for language learning, thus bringing stories and meaning alive. Compared to uni-modal pedagogical materials (i.e., books, audio recordings), these videos provide vastly richer non-verbal support to improve learners' understanding and conceptualizations of words (Kamil, Intrator & Kim, 2000).

2.3 The Values of Using Authentic Video Materials

In his book, Richards (2001) listed several advantages proposed by researchers over the decades for using authentic materials in language teaching (Philips & Shettlesworth, 1978; Clarke, 1989; Peacock, 1997). The advantages of authentic material use are that they can (a) be very motivating for learners; (b) be a great source of culturally-relevant content; (c) expose learners to real language; (d) meet learners' needs; and (e) promote a creative teaching approach. Though these advantages are general and are meant to apply to all types of authentic resources, their salience in the case of video materials is clear. Researchers have proposed a number of advantages that are specific to authentic video materials. These advantages are discussed in detail in the following subsections.

2.3.1 Authentic video materials and target language culture instruction

The importance of teaching the target culture in second and foreign language classrooms has attracted a lot of attention in the field of second/foreign language education. Herron, Corrie, Cole and Dubreil (1999) have noted that most scholars agree on the importance of integrating cultural aspects of the target language to maximize effective language learning. Fantini (1995), for example, described the relationship between language and culture as inseparable and interdependent: each affects and reflects the other.

There are several examples that can illustrate this important connection between language use and culture. For example, Elmes (2013) noted in his literature review that the Seminole Indians in Florida and Oklahoma do not distinguish between "uncles" and "fathers," as culturally they are seen to both fulfill the role of the "father". Another example can be found in Leveridge (2008), where she observed how Mandarin speakers greeted each other by asking whether they have eaten. She explained that this was because "in ancient

Chinese culture … there was a long history of famine. It was [therefore] culturally (and possibly morally) significant to ask someone if they had eaten upon meeting."

Consequently, when a second language is taught in isolation from its cultural context, then both students' acquisition and understanding of the language may not apply to real-world situations (Dweik, 2015). Martinez-Gibson (1998) argued the "language classroom is where students can begin to acquire some awareness of people who not only speak differently but also act, react, and live differently" (p. 115). He pointed out the importance of incorporating the target culture and fostering students' cultural knowledge as it "leads to a more tolerable acceptance of the world's variation" (p. 115).

It is thus clear that the process of effective language learning involves acquiring contextualized, sociocultural knowledge of the language (Saniei, 2012). The development of some degree of cultural competence must accompany the learning of syntactical knowledge to achieve effective second language learning. Scarino and Liddicoat (2015) explained that the main goal of language usage is to communicate and interact with others. Therefore, it is important for language learners to acquire the technical aspects of the language, such as the proper way of using the lexical items of that language and the grammatical rules, in addition to mastering how the language operates in its social context. Without understanding the latter, it is impossible to master any language and effectively communicate with the speakers of that language.

Authentic materials are considered to be a valuable source of cultural information. These resources give language learners direct access to cultural content and promote the authentic use of language, so that new speakers can communicate meaning in meaningful situations (Rogers & Medley, 1988; Sherman, 2003). Furthermore, unlike contrived materials,

real-world materials enhance student language learning and interest by presenting the culture

of the target language in a natural way (Thanajaro, 2000). Herron et al. (1999) examined

whether students acquired the target language's culture through authentic video materials. In

their study, the 38 students learning French were exposed to 10 videos throughout a semester.

They were given a pre-test and post-test of multiple choice questions measuring cultural

information about France, including little "c" cultural information, such as cultural practices,

and big "C" cultural information focused more on factual knowledge. For example, a little "c"

question asked about how French children spend their time after school, providing four

choices for answers ("participating in clubs", "playing sports", "doing homework", or "surfing

the internet on personal computers"). A big "C" question asked, for example, about what the

Conseil d'Etat in France is ("a headquarters of the French Consulate", "an administrative court

of Justice", the central office of the Department of Education", "the national Treasury").

Based on the results, the findings supported the assumption that videos are a meaningful tool

for fostering students' cultural learning, as there was a significant development of students'

big "C" and little "c" competence after viewing narrative videos.

Furthermore, another exploratory study done by Martinez-Gibson (1998) reported the

results of a writing assignment designed to assess 43 foreign language students' ability to

observe cultural differences between their native culture and the target culture as introduced

by a television commercial. Students were asked to write a composition.

The participants were divided into two groups; one group was assigned the writing task

without the pre- and post-viewing activity for cultural discussion, whereas the other group

was asked to do the same writing task with both the pre- and post-cultural discussion activity.

The findings revealed that the discussion activity helped students observe and recognize the

cultural information presented in the television commercial and that the visual cues featured in the foreign language television commercial enhanced students' awareness of the cultural actions and practices of the people shown in the commercial.

Similarly, a pilot study conducted by Kitajima and Lyman-Hager (2013) examined the effect of visual cues in silent a short video clip on the students' cultural awareness. A total of 8 students in a Japanese language course were individually shown a short video clip about roads in Japan. A think-aloud protocol was used to assess the quantity of cultural information that students noticed in the video clip. A post-test examined students' retention of details of the culture presented in the clip and revealed that students answered around 50 % of the questions in the test correctly. The researcher indicated the use of silent videos has a positive effect on learning the target culture as they help improve students' cultural awareness.

According to a review by Cakir (2006), video materials allow learners to focus on the visual cues inherent in communication, which contribute to their understanding of the other culture and to their ability to understand the message being conveyed, not only the words. In fact, many scholars believe that the use of authentic videos is beneficial as it exposes learners to the sociolinguistic aspects of the target language in an authentic way (Shrum & Gilsan, 2000). Overall, the value of authentic video materials can be seen in their combination of modalities (i.e., sound, images, and subtitles where applicable) as well as their ability to show social-cultural elements of the target culture (e.g., habits, traditions, etc.).

2.3.2 Authentic materials and Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching and Learning (CLT) is an approach that has been developed to maximize learners' communicative competence. As mentioned previously, scholars realized that learning a language involves more than mastering the structure and

lexicon of the language: it requires learners to develop communicative competence so that they put the language in use in the real world. The term "communicative competence" was first coined by Hymes (1972) and was defined as the "competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages to negotiate meanings interpersonally within a specific context" (p. 246). Brown (2000) explained the concept by stating that communicative competence reflects the underlying goal of language, which allows for meaningful and authentic communication. Note that authentic communication here is defined as the ability to interact with L1 and L2 speakers of English, as per English's current status as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2009). Widdowson (1990) defined the communicative approach as "getting learners to do things with language, to express concepts and to carry out communicative acts of various kinds" (p. 159). He further emphasized that the "content of a language course is now defined not in terms of forms, words and sentence patterns, but in terms of concepts, or notions, which such forms are used to express, and the communicative functions which they are used to perform" (p. 159). This definition has since been updated in works like Richards and Rogers (2001), such that CLT is based on the understanding that language is for communication and that students therefore need to develop their communicative competence.

Ultimately, CLT "is based on a view of language as communication, that is, language is seen as a social tool which speakers use to make meaning; speakers communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing" (Berns, 1990, p. 104). Nunan (1991) described the characteristics and features of this approach as follows:

a) [An] emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language. b) The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation. c) The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on languages but also on the

learning process itself. d) An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning. e) An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom (p. 279).

The main aim of CLT is to expose students to 'real language' that they can put into use. One of the best ways of achieving this goal is to present students with authentic materials produced in the target language and culture. According to Gilmore (2007), the development of CLT lead to the reintroduction of authentic texts as a tool for second and foreign language teaching as these texts are not only valued for the linguistic elements they include, but also for the ideas that they communicate, which reflect the culture of the writer. Furthermore, the main role of language instructors in communicative-oriented contexts is to enhance language learning in meaningful ways. That goal can only be achieved in communicative classrooms by making use of authentic materials. This is in line with Khaniya's (2006) argument that authentic materials must be used in CLT classrooms as artificial texts do not tell instructors whether students can use the language in the real world.

The usage of authentic materials leads to the creation of an authentic context that allows learners to develop their communicative competence (Sreehari, 2012). More specifically, Herron et al. (1995) explained that "the use of video to create real-life communicative contexts in the FL classroom to teach language could create a rich learning context similar to when a child receives authentic input from adult speakers" (p. 282). Furthermore, Weyers (1999) examined the effects of the exposure to authentic videos on students' listening comprehension and communicative competence. Students from two intact university-level Spanish classes were split into a control and an experimental group, where the latter were requested to spend additional time watching 13 episodes from a Spanish drama.

The findings from the listening and oral pre-/post-tests revealed that there was an improvement in students' performance in both listening comprehension and communicative competence.

Additional evidence on the effectiveness of videos in fostering the communicative competence for language learners is found in a study done by Lee (2007). This study examined the effectiveness of using constructivist interaction desktop videoconferencing in improving 18 university students' oral production skills using video-recording samples, reflections, and oral interviews to report on the participants' experiences and to explore the potential of videoconferences. The findings revealed an improvement in students' oral skills and that "desktop videoconferences have great potential for the acquisition of L2 oral skills because it engages the audio and visual aspects of human communication" (p. 645). Similarly, Hung (2009) examined "the usage of videos as learning mediation equipment for second or foreign 'language production tasks'" (p. 171) from a constructivist perspective. The findings, which were based on data collected through classroom observation of 26 university EFL students, their reflective journals, and subsequent interviews, showed that exposing participants to videos as meditational tool enhanced their language development and that the use of videos enabled "affective engagement in the learning process, and thus contributes to learners' language development" (p. 186)

The findings of these studies lead us to conclude that authentic video materials are superior at supporting the goals of CLT in comparison with other types of authentic materials. The use of videos inside the classroom is beneficial in its ability to provide exposure to real-world issues, real communication, and real problems. Authentic video is by nature a valuable resource that allows teachers to present authentic communication by real speakers of the target

language, in addition to helpful nonverbal cues as they are embedded in the visual portion of the video.

2.3.3 Authentic video materials and contextualized teaching and learning

Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a "conception of teaching and learning that helps teachers relate subject matter content to real-world situations" (Berns & Erickson, 2001, p. 2). This is a constructivist approach that allows students to connect the content they learn in the classroom to the real-world situations where this content can be used (Huang, Tindall & Nisbet, 2011). It is a constructivist teaching approach that is based on the idea that "students construct their own knowledge by testing ideas based on prior knowledge and experience, applying these ideas to a new situation, and integrating the new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs" (Berns & Erickson, 2001, p. 2). CTL avoids focusing on teaching skills and knowledge that are not directly applicable to real-life situations, as teachers utilizing this method aim to help learners transfer information from the classroom into real-life situations (Dirkx & Prenger, 1997). Instead, the CTL instructional approach promotes more effective and more rapid learning by integrating the classroom content with real-life situations in appropriate contexts (Dirkx & Prenger, 1997). This approach makes students more likely to apply their knowledge to real-life situations (Berns & Erickson, 2001). As such, it seems reasonable to argue that the integration of authentic materials is crucial to achieving the aims of this teaching and learning paradigm, as these materials introduce various aspects of the language in the real world to learners and help contextualize the learning process (Abdelhafez & Abdullah, 2015; Gebhard, 1996).

Authentic materials assist learners in bridging the gap between the language presented in the classroom and the language that is used by real speakers in real contexts (Gebhard,

1996). Herron et al. (1995) explained the benefits of using authentic video materials in second language classes by stating that "[videos are] lauded for contextualizing language (i.e., linking language form to meaning) and depicting the foreign culture more effectively than other instructional materials. Videotapes permit students to hear native speakers interacting in everyday conversational situations and to practice important linguistic structures" (Herron et al., 1995, p. 775). As such, though all forms of authentic materials improve CTL, authentic video materials are the most effective supports to this approach to teaching and learning because they provide a full authentic exposure to language components in their natural context, using the dual-presentation (visual and oral) of the content in addition to non-verbal cues. Therefore, the pedagogical benefits of authentic video materials are considerable from a CTL perspective.

2.3.4 Authentic video materials comprehension and retention

There is research to suggest that authentic video materials yield better learning outcomes among students in comparison with other types of authentic materials. Herron and Hanley (1992) demonstrated that the use of authentic video materials promote the learning of second/foreign languages in terms of comprehension and retention of information, and that is because the content is made more meaningful to learners.

Secules, Herron & Tomasello (1992) supported this position by arguing that using videos for second/foreign language teaching purposes can significantly improve students' overall listening comprehension. Lindstrom's (1994) study demonstrated that learners' ability to retain class content significantly improved when they viewed and interacted with authentic videos during instruction time. Ambard and Ambard (2012) argue that videos successfully shift the traditional teaching methodology that is focused on memorization to a more flexible

strategy that is aimed at facilitating the organization, retention, and application of the target language content. Therefore, these materials can contribute to an increase in learners' listening comprehension (Herron & Seay, 1991).

Furthermore, another study conducted by Huberman and Medish (1975) was conducted to examine the effectiveness of using videotapes to facilitate second language learning. They compared 20 selected students who were taught an equivalent of one year of Spanish elementary I and II in one semester of multi-channel instruction to the students enrolled in the regular one-year course. At the end of the semester, the selected group was given the same final test as students in the regular course took after the second semester of the Spanish course. The findings revealed that the experimental group performed better than the control group in different learning areas including "listening comprehension, recollection, and proper usage of both grammatical and lexical forms in speaking and writing."

When students work with multimedia materials, such as authentic video materials, they can gain valuable practice in making sense of the spoken language without necessarily needing to understand all lexical items used. The ability to improve students' linguistic competence is one of the strongest arguments in favor of using authentic video materials in the classroom.

2.3.5 Authentic video materials and student motivation

The literature suggests another important advantage that authentic video materials have over other pedagogical tools: they are interesting to students (e.g., Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Huberman & Medish, 1975; Sherman, 2003). Providing interesting materials to students may make them more engaged and motivated to learn. Motivating learners is a fundamental challenge language instructors must face as learners are capable of understanding and gaining

more knowledge when they are engaged.

It is believed that students pay more attention to language learning when the learning process is interesting (Kaur, Yong, Zin, & DeWitt, 2014). To that end, research has demonstrated that students appreciate viewing authentic materials and that they find videos very engaging and motivating. For example, a survey carried out by Harlow and Muyskens (1994) explored the "priority goals and objectives" of instructions for intermediate students and instructors. The findings revealed that students believed that videos are one of the most preferred resources for second language learning, both inside and outside of the classroom setting. Another survey was conducted by Bacon and Finnemann (1990) on about 100 university Spanish students investigating "the association of self-reported strategies, motives, and attitudes with anticipated reaction to authentic input" (p. 468). The findings showed that students believe that authentic materials have a positive effect on comprehension and that they are motivating and engaging if they are prepared for such materials (e.g., by increasing their exposure to authentic videos, using comprehension checks). Herron et al. (1995) explained that "[unlike] audiocassettes, video's visual dimension is thought to reduce ambiguities present in native speaker voices and to motivate students to want to learn the foreign language" (p. 775).

In their study, Huberman and Medish (1975) evaluated the impact of using videotapes on students' motivation. Two types of motivation were assessed. Type A motivation was based on students' interest in the course and expectancy. Type B motivation referred to students' sense of competency and confidence as a result of experiencing success and development in their learning. The findings demonstrated that the Type A motivation lasted longer in the experimental group than in the control group, and the Type B motivation started earlier in the experimental group. The findings of extensive testing demonstrated that

motivation persisted at a much higher level for students in the experimental course, compared to students in the control course. This therefore shows how videos can accelerate students' learning by increasing their motivation and engagement.

2.3.6 Challenges of using videos

Given the advantages detailed above, it seems clear that authentic video materials are worthy of being widely used as a pedagogical tool in the language classroom (Ambard & Ambard, 2012). However, there are also some important challenges to using authentic video materials in the language classroom. To begin, selecting videos is time- consuming, as instructors need to preview and select relevant videos that meet their instructional objectives and prepare related tasks and activities ahead of time.

Additionally, there can be issues related to copyright and the legality of using certain videos in class (Stempleski, 1992). Moreover, though exposure to different accents might be beneficial, the variety of language used might prove problematic, as some accents might be too difficult for some groups of learners to understand (Stempleski, 1992).

This last challenge may be particularly true for beginner learners. In fact, a major limitation associated to the usage of authentic videos in language learning classrooms is that authentic materials in general and audio-visual materials in particular often cannot be used in lower levels. Authentic content has long been considered to be very challenging for beginner learners to understand as it might contain difficult structures and lexical items that learners have not been exposed to before (Ciccone, 1995; Lund, 1990). Though this is arguably an advantage for intermediate or advanced learners, it can represent an insurmountable challenge for beginners. Wing (1986) asserts that some of the characteristics of the oral language like "reduced and ungrammatical forms" could negatively affect learners' understanding.

Similarly, Khaniya (2006) argues that authentic materials could also be demotivating to students as they might find it too hard to understand the content, especially if the content is delivered at rapid speed (Joiner et al., 1989; Burt, 1999). Therefore, some suggest that such videos should be altogether avoided in beginner language classes (Burt, 1999). Nevertheless, others believe that the level of difficulty is controlled by the activities that are created based on the material (Cook, 1996; Mishan, 2005). Mishan (2005) states that language instructors should adapt the task or the activity that is created around the materials in order to meet student's linguistic level and competence instead of attempting to simplify the materials being used.

Gilman and Moody (1984) suggest that language teachers should use authentic audio-visual materials at all levels in order to enhance learners' listening-comprehension skills. Moreover, this advice is consistent with findings from Chavez's (1998) survey on 190 adult learners of German from a range of proficiency levels. These learners expressed a positive perception of the inclusion of the authentic materials as they present "the real world", and they also "view authentic materials as essential to language learning and enjoyable" (p. 277). Moreover, these students did not report feeling that authentic materials are innately difficult, especially for visually supported audio materials (Chavez, 1998). Therefore, research suggests that language instructors should integrate more authentic materials in their language classes at all levels, from beginners to advanced (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992), arguing that students will not respond negatively due to the level (Herron & Seay, 1991).

Another important challenge that instructors face when using authentic video materials is ensuring that the video is appropriate in terms of the content presented. Authentic videos often contain controversial themes or content that could be considered

inappropriate by some viewers (Burt, 1999). Content involving profanity, political material or sexuality can be emotionally disturbing to some viewers, who may avoid such materials at home. The challenge of finding authentic videos with engaging content that will not potentially offend any part of the student body may be exacerbated in a multicultural setting where students come from different backgrounds. The sections below will discuss this challenge in more depth, and present guidelines for selecting and using authentic video materials from the second language education literature.

2.4. The Use of Authentic Video Materials in Language Classrooms

Though the benefits of using authentic video materials in the second language classroom are significant, teachers are not always sure what criteria to use for selection to maximize the benefits of video materials while minimizing the potential for problems that hinder learning. The literature reviewed below presents some guidelines for how to deal with these challenges.

2.4.1 Criteria for selection and use

Arcario (1992) listed two sets of criteria for the selection of authentic video materials as guidelines for teachers in the language classroom. He categorized these criteria into those affecting the comprehensibility of the video and those affecting the students' engagement with it, and referred teachers to one set of criteria or the other depending on the pedagogical purposes of the video. The first set of criteria, the "Factors Affecting Comprehensibility" (Arcario, 1992, p. 113), ensures that the video uses language that is appropriate to the level of the learners. These criteria include: (1) The "degree to which the visual element aids in the comprehensibility of the verbal message"; (2) The clarity of the picture and sound; (3) The density of language, referring to "the amount of language spoken over the course of a

particular scene"; (4) Speech delivery, including the clarity and rate of speech, as well as the clarity of the accent; (5) The content of the language used should reflect linguistic elements that were taught in class; (6) The level of the language used in the video (Arcario, 1992, p. 113). However, this set of criteria becomes less important in selection if the purpose of using the video in class is to introduce or elicit the target language.

Arcario (1992) elaborated another set of criteria more applicable to situations where the video is used to introduce and to elicit use of the second language, which have to do with students' engagement. These include:

(1) The degree of interest the video will elicit in students;

(2) The length of sequence (between 5 to 10 short excerpts are more effective than longer videos);

(3) The independence of the sequence (the content can stand alone without the need for extra information);

(4) The availability of related materials that can be combined with the video such as printed materials; and

(5) The appropriateness of the content of the video materials (p. 113).

He explained the importance of this set of criteria by noting how the tastes and the interests of students affect their degree of interest in the materials, and therefore their engagement with the videos and the activities based on them. The rhetorical structure of authentic videos should meet learners' needs and the purposes of the learning process (Oguz & Bahar, 2008; Sreehari, 2012; Widdowson, 1979). Therefore, it is crucial for second language instructors to choose authentic materials that are of interest to their students and to prepare the learners to interact with these materials in an effective and meaningful way (Wing, 1986).

The last criterion in the set, the appropriateness of content, is arguably the most difficult to define. Indeed, what is appropriate for one person may not be the same for another. Moreover, in the multicultural context, the question of appropriateness becomes even more complex. In fact, we know that different cultures may have different perspectives on what is considered appropriate, and the students as well as the teacher bring their own personal and cultural expectations into the language classroom. The following section explores this question in more detail.

2.4.2 Appropriateness and potentially controversial content

Gareis (1997) was interested in providing further guidelines for teachers to help them establish which videos are appropriate for which groups of students in a multicultural setting. She argues that when selecting videos, teachers should consider several aspects of the student group (Gareis, 1997). To begin with, she suggests teachers evaluate students' maturity level. In fact, certain material should be saved for groups of students that show the age and maturity to handle the content. She further suggests that teachers consider the cultural significance of the subject matter. According to Gareis (1997), teachers should avoid videos which present aspects of culture that are irrelevant to students or hard for them to understand as a result of historical and geographical distance. She also suggests that ESL teachers consider the cultural and religious backgrounds of their students when selecting materials (Gareis, 1997). In fact, she argues that being aware of the cultural and religious backgrounds of her students is fundamental to making video selections. Gnida's (1991) literature review noted that "if there is no sensitivity on the part of the teacher toward the cultural differences of his or her students, the literature suggests that there will be no communication between them, and therefore no teaching or learning will occur in the class" (p.10). This suggestion is in line with the

philosophy of inclusive learning, where teachers present aspects of the culture of the entire

class and not just that of the dominant culture. ESL teachers, for their part, must "learn about,

develop a respect for, and interact with the culture of their students" (Davenport, 1982, p.16).

Simply ignoring their cultural backgrounds will not promote successful learning, as "if a

teacher does not interact with students' cultural backgrounds, the potential for education

within that classroom will continue to shrink" (Davenport, 1982, p.15). In fact, the teacher

may seem "insensitive, ignorant, or foreign" to the students, creating a division between him

or herself and the classroom (Davenport, 1982, p. 15)

However, even with these guidelines, it can be very difficult for teachers to predict

what topics or subject matters will be considered controversial or offensive to students in a

multicultural context where students do not share the same cultures and ethnic or religious

backgrounds. In other words, topics that create the most controversy among students might

vary depending on the topic itself, the context and learners' culture.

Gareis (1997) listed the topics that she believes to create the most controversy and

these topics are "homosexuality, abortion, substance abuse, and animal rights" (p. 23), as well

as sex and nudity, violence, and stereotypes. Brown (1997) also sheds some light on what he

called "hot topics" or themes that could potentially be considered controversial. These topics

include environmental issues, women's rights and gender issues, political issues, human rights,

religious issues, prejudices and stereotypes, and racial and ethnic discrimination.

Therefore, the list of potentially controversial topics remains somewhat broad. Gareis

(1997) wondered whether it was even possible to use authentic video materials that represent

the real-world culture of the target language that would not have any potentially controversial

content given the diversity of the student population (Gareis, 1997). Materials that do not

include any potentially controversial content are limited to old movies from the early days of cinema or some TV programs that might not be engaging enough for students as they might be neither relevant nor interesting for them (Gareis, 1997). Therefore, avoiding controversial content altogether limits learners' exposure to the target language and culture (Gareis, 1997). However, if a teacher makes the decision to show a video that includes potentially controversial content, there is a risk of offending some students and the related challenge of managing potential negative reactions.

Gareis (1997) concludes by suggesting that if controversial topics are treated with sensitivity, their use can improve the learning process as these topics push students to talk and express their opinions. Instructors should also preview the entire sequence of video before showing it to students so that they can note any potentially controversial content (Stempleski, 1990; Gareis, 1997) and attempt to find the proper way to present the topic to their students. Teachers also should introduce the main themes and the subject matter of the video, explain the activity for students before showing the video, and be prepared to handle any potential reactions from their students (Stempleski, 1990; Gareis, 1997).

Furthermore, engaging with these topics promotes critical thinking (Gareis, 1997), and one of the central roles of the educational process is to promote critical literacy in classrooms and to help students develop critical thinking (e.g., Osanloo, 2009; Pennycook, 1994; Praven, 2007). Pennycook (1994) states that "the crucial issue here is to turn classrooms into places where the accepted canons of knowledge can be challenged and questioned" (p. 298). Additionally, Brown (1997) draws teachers' attention to the importance of exposing students to different points of views regarding the subject matter under discussion and suggests they should not intentionally avoid any topic/theme or issue that could enhance the progress of

students. Given the ever-changing context of global affairs and international politics, the ability to critically engage with information has become more important than ever, as students need to learn to make connections between how these controversial issues impact their lives and the lives of others (Freire, 1988).

There is some existing literature arguing for the inclusion of controversial material in the classroom, particularly in textbooks. For example, Ndura (2004) argued that as classrooms offer the ideal conditions to raise students' cultural awareness, teachers need to ensure that their materials should reflect "the diversity of cultures and life experiences that students deal with everyday at school and in their communities" (p. 144). Additionally, biases and omissions of current issues can skew students' worldview and understanding of the society around them (Ndura, 2004), as well as preventing them from appreciating the subtleties and complexities surrounding world events (Sadker & Sadker, 2001).

2.4.3 Strategies for addressing potentially controversial content

Scholars in the field have proposed some recommendations to teachers to help them manage the challenges of including potentially controversial content in their courses. These recommendations take the form of principles for dealing with "hot topics" (Brown, 1997). Brown (1997) states that it is important for teachers to create an environment where students are encouraged to express their points of views freely and openly. He draws teachers' attention to the idea that students have the right to express themselves freely without being threatened. He states that "learners of the English language must be free to be themselves, to think for themselves, to behave intellectually without coercion from a powerful elite, to cherish their beliefs and traditions and cultures without the threat of forced change" (Brown, 1997). Therefore, teachers must try to remain open and respectful to students' views, even when they are different from the

teacher's own opinions and ideas. Teachers must be careful to avoid trying to impose their opinions on students or to attempt to change their students' beliefs or point of view. At the same time, teachers should encourage students to consider all of the different possible sides of the subject matter. This way, students gain exposure to varied points of view and ways of viewing the topic, and are encouraged to engage in critical thinking.

Successfully navigating these requirements requires that teachers be very aware of the classrooms and implications of different forms of potentially controversial content. Gareis (1997) proposes some practical guidelines and activities for teachers for showing videos with potentially controversial content to diverse ESL/EFL classes in a safe manner. These are presented in the following paragraphs.

Sex and nudity: Presenting videos that contain sexual content or nudity could be offensive and embarrassing to students who come from backgrounds where such content is highly taboo. Gareis (1997) suggested that in multicultural language classes, teachers are free to use pedagogically relevant videos in the classroom but should skip scenes containing sexual content or nudity. That being said, some sexual content and nudity may be considered acceptable as a part of the cultural norms of some societies. Therefore, if addressed carefully, such content can be a topic of discussion and allow students to learn about the norms of the target culture and to draw comparisons between the behaviors and habits of the target culture and their own (Gareis, 1997). For example, students can discuss rating issues for movies and TV programs and discuss the benefits of the "age- specific ratings" (i.e., G, PG, PG-13, etc.) as well as the labels associated to the amount and types of the problematic content (Gareis, 1997, p. 21). Students can also discuss the validity of the rating system and how applicable it is to their cultural norms.

Violence: As students' reaction towards violence can vary, teachers should approach the presentation of violence with sensitivity (Gareis, 1997). For example, students could discuss issues related to violence and discuss the causes and/or consequences of violence on society. Crime and punishment may be a good topic for generating discussion among students. According to Gareis (1997), dealing with such content is potentially a good opportunity for students to express their feelings and engage in critical thinking and problem solving.

Profanity and slang: Gareis (1997) mentioned that profanity, slang, and language learning are directly related. She further explained that profane and slang language can be introduced to students without directly delving into the terms themselves. That could be done through engaging students in activities that deal with slang and profane concepts in a way that does not offend them. For example, instructors can ask students to classify the profane words in the video according to whether they find them offensive.

Stereotypes: Language classes can be a good place to discuss the issue of stereotypes. Students can create lists of positive and negative stereotypes related to a particular ethnicity, religion, or culture. Then they can critically discuss the reasons underlying the creation of these stereotypes, in order to promote careful thinking about the stereotypes they are exposed to (Gareis, 1997).

Controversial issues in general: Gareis (1997) explained that if teachers and students are willing to engage with potentially controversial content, these topics have the potential of creating very interesting activities and enriching classroom experiences. She provides suggestions for dealing with controversial content in order to try to maximize these benefits. For example, students can examine legal issues and discuss themes and values related to the subject matter. Another engaging activity that could be used to present controversial

issues is a "role reversal" in which learners defend the opposite opinion from their own, and discuss the issue from an opposite perspective.

2.5. Gaps in the Literature

To the current researcher's knowledge, there is no prior research examining teachers' practices in selecting videos, as well as whether and how the criteria proposed in the literature are implemented by teachers; even Gareis' (1997) guidelines do not appear to be based on empirical evidence, despite being the only available resource of its kind. Therefore, we do not know how applicable these guidelines and criteria are in reality.

Furthermore, Gareis (1997) acknowledges that students are not always willing to watch videos that contain subject matter that conflicts with their values and opinions; therefore, knowing "how to handle potential student opposition is complex and should be made carefully" (Gareis, 1997, 23). However, there is also a lack of literature providing any practical guidelines and recommendations for teachers on how to effectively deal with the tension that might arise in the class as a result of students being opposed to or offended by video content. To the researcher's knowledge, there are limited empirical studies (e.g., Walkty, 2010) that address ESL teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and approaches to the inclusion of sensitive topics and potentially controversial content in their classes. For example, Walkty (2010) is one of the few studies that address some of these issues, as she discusses how teachers perceive sensitive content (e.g., life stories of Holocaust survivors) as well as what guidelines should be used to help teachers incorporate such content into classrooms. The limitation with this study is that it is based on personal reflective narrative analysis, which means that her recommendations may not be generalizable to other teachers and contexts. The current study fills in this gap in the literature by providing a detailed

analysis of teachers' interviews.

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of authentic materials is supported by scholars and educators due to their value in fostering second language learning. Authentic videos are perceived as a rich instructional resource for language, as they expose students to natural authentic language produced by real speakers in a real context. In addition, authentic videos provide insight into the target culture, which makes this type of materials highly engaging and motivating for learners.

Many guidelines have been proposed to help teachers select the best kinds of authentic video materials. The appropriateness of the content is considered to be one of the most important factors that should be taken into consideration when selecting authentic video materials. Indeed, this factor is of special importance when selecting authentic videos for multicultural language classes, where students do not share the same cultural and ethnic background. It can be challenging for teachers to find authentic videos that reflect the 'real-world' culture of the language and do not contain any sensitive or problematic content for some part of a diverse student body. Despite the potential for controversy, many scholars suggest that teachers should not avoid the inclusion of sensitive issues as they foster learners' critical thinking and allow them to consider different sides of an issue.

However, despite the guidelines reviewed above aimed at supporting teachers' use of authentic video materials, many questions remain unanswered. Most importantly, the guidelines provided in the literature are rarely supported by empirical research. Furthermore, the available literature does not offer teachers guidelines for dealing with negative student reactions when they occur. The study described below aims to explore

teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the selection and the use of authentic video

materials as well as managing the problematic and controversial content that might be

featured in this language instructional tool.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This present study is exploratory in nature and aims to understand ESL teachers' beliefs and practices in the selection and use of authentic video materials, particularly in terms of including potentially controversial content in a multicultural class. Given the purpose and context of this research, semi-structured interviews were used. A qualitative research design was selected as it is the most appropriate research approach for achieving the goal and answering the research questions. Bums (2000) elucidates that "qualitative methodologies provide avenues that can lead to the discovery of the deeper levels of meaning" and that the main job of qualitative researchers is "to capture what people say and do as a product of how they interpret the complexity of their world, to understand events from the viewpoints of the participants" (p. 11). According to Creswell (2014):

> Qualitative research is especially useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine. This type of approach is needed because the topic is new, the subject has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people and existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study (p. 20).

Therefore, a qualitative research design was implemented, using in-depth semi-structured interviews to answer the following research questions.

1. How do ESL teachers approach selecting authentic video materials for adult multicultural classrooms? (What criteria do they use in selection?)
2. How do ESL teachers approach and deal with potentially controversial content

featured in authentic video materials that they select for adult multicultural classrooms?

3. How do ESL teachers respond to situations where authentic video materials create discomfort for students?

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Participants and context

The participants were recruited from the Intensive English Language Program (IELP). This program was part of a private language school for adults, which was overseen by the affiliated Canadian university's Continuing Education department. In terms of the program itself, the IELP courses primarily attract international students who wish to attend the host university or want to immigrate to Canada. In other words, by receiving their language certificates from the IELP, learners can then apply to study at the adjoining university or for Canadian residency. The program costs approximately $2000 CAD per six-week session for international students, and no financial aid (e.g., scholarships, bursaries) are offered.

For confidentiality reasons, their real names were not included in this study; they instead received pseudonyms to ensure the protection of their identity.

Of the seven in-service participants recruited (four males and three females), Mathieu and Nancy possessed a Bachelor's degree in addition to a Certificate in Education, while Steven, Mellisa, and Patrick have obtained a Master's degree. One participant, Rita, only received a TESL certificate. Furthermore, one participant (i.e., James) never responded to the present researcher's request for educational background; as such, no information is available. The participants had between 11 to 40 years of experience teaching in a multicultural context, which ensures that they all had significant

experience in these classrooms. These instructors were actively teaching at various levels

in the ESL school and had experience teaching at different levels. A summary of the

participants' information is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Summary

Participant pseudonyms	Gender	Degrees Attained	Experience teaching in multicultural ESL context (years)
Steven	M	M.A.	21 - 25
Nancy	F	B.A. and B.F.A Certificate in Education	16 - 20
Rita	F	TESL certificate	36 - 40
Mathieu	M	B.A. Certificate in Education	36 - 40
Mellissa	F	M.A. TESL certificate	11 - 15
James	M	Not provided	Not provided
Patrick	M	M.A. TESL certificate	21 - 25

The classes themselves are team-taught by two teachers, who create a joint

lesson plan for each class. Each teacher leads half of each class, making it a very

collaborative environment. The target school employs the intercultural communicative

approach, which "emphasizes the interdependence of language and culture and the

importance of intercultural understanding as a goal of language education" (Ho, 2009, p. 63). This approach aims to "develop learners' ability to negotiate meanings across languages and cultures and prepare them for living in a multicultural world" (Ho, 2009, p. 63). As such, the courses are designed to increase learners' ability to use English in a context-appropriate manner (e.g., responding adequately to cultural cues, social issues, etc.).

The target school incorporates technology into their classrooms and aims to help students acquire the linguistic, communicative and socio-cultural skills needed to function comfortably in English in relation to their professional, academic and social goals. They offer a Certificate in Proficiency in English – Language and Culture to students who complete the advanced levels. Additionally, most students use this certificate to enter the affiliated Canadian university.

3.2.2 Instruments

In order to answer the study's research questions, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the seven participants. Hatch (2002) defines qualitative interviews as "conversations or speech events" that are implemented by researchers in order to "explore and understand the experiences and interpretations of the individuals" (p. 91). He further explains the purpose of using qualitative interviews, which is to allow researchers "to uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds" (p. 91). Furthermore, "[these] meaning structures are often hidden from direct observation and taken for granted by participants, and qualitative interview techniques offer tools for bringing these meanings to the surface" (p. 91). A semi-structured interview design – or formal interviews as referred to by Hatch – is used to collect data when researchers are

aiming to investigate broader and structural issues as opposed to specific, individual issues (Hatch, 2002). In semi- structured interviews, researchers prepare questions based on the focus of study and the research questions guide the interview and ensure that all the interviews cover the same store of information; however, researchers have the flexibility to ask other questions when other issues arise during the interview, meaning that some participants will be asked different questions depending on their responses (Lynch, 1996). Furthermore, in- depth interviews allow the researcher to dig deep in order to gain a better understanding of the information gathered about the issue or the phenomena under study (Hatch, 2002).

In this study, in accordance with the guidelines for in-depth semi-structured interviews, a number of guided, open-ended questions were prepared based on the research questions. The interview questions were created in such a way as to avoid leading or manipulating the answers of the participants. These questions were given to the participants to review briefly before proceeding with the interviews. Participants were prompted with follow-up questions when other information arose during the interview or to clarify responses. The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission.
The length of the interviews varied and lasted between 35 to 65 minutes.

The interview questions focused on the criteria used and considerations taken into account when teachers selected authentic video materials for their multicultural language classrooms, with specific questions on appropriateness of content. The prepared questions also focused on participants' perceptions of the frequency of inclusion of controversial issues and sensitive content. Teachers were also asked about their approach to dealing with this content and their experience of negative student reactions to sensitive and controversial content.

Participants were asked to describe a specific experience where they had to deal with tension or discomfort in students from viewing potentially controversial content (See Appendix A: Guided interview protocol).

3.2.3 Procedure

All recruitment and data collection processes began upon receiving ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board at McGill University. Participants were contacted through the school's administration. The recruitment email was sent to the coordinator of the program, who then shared the message with all IELP instructors (see Appendix B: Email to teacher participants). The study was clearly explained to teachers in this letter, and it was made clear for them that participation was voluntary and that the identity of those who agreed to participate would be kept confidential. After this email was sent, the researcher informally introduced herself to the instructors at the school in order to answer any further questions about the study. The interviews were scheduled based on participants' availability and in a place of their choice. Also, participants were given a paper copy of the cover letter and consent form to read and gain a better understanding of the study and of their rights as research participants. All informed consent forms were collected before proceeding to the interviews (see Appendix C: Cover letter and informed consent form).

The interviews were conducted in November and December 2016. As proposed by participants, most of the interviews took place in empty classrooms in the school building. The interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed, using pseudonyms to protect the teachers' confidentiality. The interviews were coded, and teachers were only identified by the codes on the transcripts and audio files in order to ensure their complete confidentiality during data collection and analysis. These codes were linked to the participants' identities in a separate

file and preserved on a password-protected computer. For data management procedure and the confidentiality of participants (see Appendix C: Cover letter and informed consent form).

3.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed using a grounded theory approach. Thematic analysis is a bottom-up approach that enables the researcher to generate a theory based on the collected data. This approach was developed by researchers and scholars in the social sciences in order to increase both the "validity and reliability of qualitative analysis" (Friedman, 2011, p. 191). Creswell (2014) further pointed out that a grounded theory approach allows researchers to "derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the view of the participants" (p. 14).

The data were analyzed manually using Microsoft Office (VBA macro). No data analysis software was used. The data analysis process went through three main stages, as described in Friedman (2011):

1. *Initial coding* (or *open coding*), in which the researcher goes through a subset of the data line by line and assigns labels or codes that designate actions, events, or topics;

2. *Axial coding*, which involves finding patterns in the data by comparing coding categories within and across cases (e.g., different accounts of the same incident by different participants, different points in time for a single participant), relating larger categories to subcategories, and establishing connections between categories;

3. *Selective coding* (or *focused coding*), in which selected codes from the initial coding (e.g., the most frequent) are applied to the rest of the dataset and are further developed or refined. (p. 191-192)

This process is not linear as the researcher constantly checks the coding categories against the

new information to determine their appropriateness. Friedman (2011) furthers this discussion by stating how researchers need to assess the coding categories based on "(a) how well they fit the data, (b) whether they provide an explanation for the phenomenon being studied, (c) relevance to the real-world issues or problems that are the focus of the research, and (d) how easily the categories may be modified as further data are collected" (p. 192).

In this study, the procedures used followed the guidelines described as follows. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher went through and read each interview transcript several times to gain a general sense of the data. First, in order to maintain reliability and to avoid subjectivity, the researcher created initial/open codes, by going through the transcripts line-by-line and assigning codes and labels to each small batch of information provided by the participant. This process generated small meaningful segments of coding. Second, the researcher performed axial coding. In this stage, the open coded segments were compared to each other in order to identify patterns and similar codes to create larger categories of meaning, which allowed the researcher to develop coding categories. Third, selective coding was performed. In this stage, the main themes present in the participants' responses were clarified, as guided by the study aims and research questions.

This chapter has described the methodological procedure including a description of the participants, the context, and the instrument utilized in the study as well as the data analysis procedures employed. The results of the data analysis are presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

Results

This chapter presents the results from the interviews with the seven ESL teachers described in the Methodology chapter. The themes that emerged from the data are presented below and are organized in function of the research questions they best address. Section 1, which focuses on the criteria for video selection, addresses Research Question 1 (How do ESL teachers approach selecting authentic video materials for adult multicultural classrooms?). Sections 2 and 3 address Research Question 2 (How do ESL teachers approach and deal with potentially controversial content featured in authentic video materials that they select for adult multicultural classrooms?), and sections 4 to 9 address Research Question 3 (How do ESL teachers respond to situations where authentic video materials create discomfort for students?) All results are supported by excerpts from the interview data.

4.1 Teachers' Approach to Selecting Authentic Video Materials

In order to determine how teachers selected authentic video materials, the researcher asked them to describe the criteria they take into account when selecting videos to use in their multicultural classes. The analysis of the transcripts revealed six main criteria that teachers take into consideration, with some criteria being generalized to all teachers and others being restricted to fewer teachers. Teachers cited paying particular attention to the level of language used, the level of interest of the video, and whether the video was suited to the purposes of the lesson. Teachers also said they considered the appropriateness of the video's content and the class makeup when selecting videos. Finally, some teachers noted taking other factors into account, such as students' goals(needs) and video characteristics (quality and length of videos). The following sections describe each of these criteria in more depth.

4.1.1 The level of language in the video

Six out of seven participants reported that the level of the language in the video is one of the first considerations they addressed when selecting a video to show in class. They explained that in order for language learning/development to take place, the level of the language used in the video should be appropriate to the proficiency level of the students as it should be comprehensible.

> **Steven**: One primary consideration is just the …level of proficiency of the students are of paramount importance ... something that is appropriate for that level in terms of difficulty.

> **Mellissa:** First of all, I always take into consideration the level of students; especially when you are working with authentic materials. So I mean always 'What's the level of students linguistically?' is one criteria.

> **Mathieu:** The second thing I think of is: 'Is it the appropriate level of difficulty of course' – whether it is controversial or not. 'Is it too easy? Is it too hard?

> **James:** Of course the level of language… has to be at a level that is appropriate for the class […] if it is too difficult they won't get anything out of it, and if it is too easy […] then there is no…there is little bit less of a challenge, less of a learning opportunity there.

> **Rita**: We need to be careful […] (about) language content. If the topic is a little too difficult, students will not comprehend so we need to – it is a kind of waking on a tight rope.

For one teacher, Nancy, the level of the language in the video also included its comprehensibility in terms of the accent of the speaker.

> **Nancy:** I am looking for still somebody who speaks English without an accent, without a really difficult – I mean maybe a British accent – but, you know, it has to be somebody who speaks English fairly well [so] students can understand.

4.1.2 Appropriateness of the content

One of the questions specifically asked about appropriateness. Most of the participants pointed out that the appropriateness of the content is a factor of paramount importance. However, even though most of the participants take the appropriateness of the

content of the authentic videos into account, there was variation in terms of how

appropriateness was interpreted. For some, the level of appropriateness depended on the

topic itself. Some of the interviewed teachers focused more on the perceived appropriateness

of the material's content, such that if the resource deals with more sensitive topics, they

would consider it inappropriate. For others, they would look at students' needs and dynamic.

> **Mellissa**: It would depend on the students and [...] on the students' dynamic... I think there may be some group dynamics where I would go 'You know what? Let's do this.' [because] this particular group is, like, really open and really perceptive ... Whereas there might be another group where [...] they seem immature ... What I always do is a needs analysis at the beginning of the course to make sure [that I] know what those particular students want and need from the course.

> **Rita**: I am very conscious of [Muslim] culture ... [so I choose drier content] like the news or something happening in the world versus, let's say, a movie where a video clip of a movie there maybe would be certain topics that would be considered taboo.

> **Nancy:** One of the things you are looking at would be the content ... [topics like religion and politics] you don't discuss in any place, never mind in the classroom.

> **Steven:** I do take that [the appropriateness of the content] into consideration ... [but] I have to make a judgment call and if I feel that it is possible to introduce it in a way that doesn't offend people through careful preparation [then] I'll do it.

One of the participants explained that he does not think much about the appropriateness of

the content when selecting videos, as this is an intuitive process for him. However, another

interviewee felt that appropriateness relates to whether the material can be used to help

students reach a specific learning target. As such, he looked more closely at the pedagogical

potential of a resource more than the actual content.

> **James:** I can't think consciously of a time where I said "Oh! That's not really appropriate" ... I think it is more of a case of "I know where the line is", I think, unconsciously ... I know there is some material that I am going to use that's maybe going to challenge people, expose them to ideas either they are not familiar with or ideas that are taboo in their country [but] this is a part of our culture here and I think, at the very least, the students deserve some sort of [exposure] ... If I look at the whole thing, and say, thematically, the discussions and activities I can get coming out of it [are good], then I do not have a problem with it and I think my students don't [either].

Patrick: I will sometimes show something that is – I consider – perhaps not good but it's to illustrate how they could use critical thinking. So, for example, I might show something where the speaker – in my view – he is biased or prejudiced to display certain prejudices and/or is effectively untruthful on what's been said and use that as an example of how the students can be proactive, so they're not simply passively listening and understand what's being said, but actually engage with the materials.

4.1.3 Make-up of the class

One question also specifically asked about taking student characteristics into account. Five of the interviewees reported that their approach to the selection of authentic videos depends on the make-up of the class they are teaching (students' characteristics).

Patrick: But in general, yes, I would be generally sensitive to a particular class and each class is a little different.

Mellissa: It would depend on the students and on the composition of the class. That's a, kind of, decision that I would make on a case-by-case kind of basis.

The participants identified different student characteristics when discussing the make-up of their classes: cultural background, age, and maturity level, class dynamics, as well as the education and openness of the students in the class.

4.1.3.1 Students' cultural backgrounds

Some of the interviewees remarked that they are aware of the cultural diversity in their classes and that they take this factor specifically into account when selecting videos.

Rita: Yes, yes, I do for sure [consider the cultural make-up of the class] … we need to be careful …I mean it is not that easy because … we might have in a class 12 students, we might have 12 different cultures.

Two teacher participants explained that the cultural make-up of their classes does not affect their choices because the composition of the classes changes each session. They argued that as long as the video meets their pedagogical plan and other criteria, they will use it.

James: I'm not really necessarily thinking about that too much. Like in terms of which particular students I have in my class [because] it changes every session.

Steven: In terms of taking into account the cultural factor, maybe it's sort of a unique approach or maybe it's a non-approach: I don't tailor or I don't slam my choices based on the cultural makeup of the class … So I can't say if I have students from cultural background X, I am gonna avoid that topic, or cultural background Y, I think we should do this topic. I think whatever the cultural makeup of the class is, we're going to do a variety of topics and I think that is an excellent opportunity for us to learn from each other, and I include myself in that.

However, these two participants were aware of the overall composition of the student body at their institutions and the nature of the overall student body factored into their selection decisions.

James: You always tend to have somewhat, not completely dissimilar, you know, class compositions.

Steven: I think that regardless of what the cultural makeup of the class is – I think that just because it's such a multicultural setting – because it's so diverse cultural background – that whatever topic we look at, we're going to have a range of views based on peoples' cultural backgrounds … I always screen things carefully and taking into account we are dealing with a multicultural, multi-faith, very diverse human body.

4.1.3.2 Students' age and maturity level

Another criterion that some of the interviewed teachers consider when selecting videos is students' age and maturity level. Their decision whether to select a video depends on whether the content is appropriate to the students' age and their maturity level.

Mathieu: [Students in intensive program] tend to be younger and less mature ... So that makes a difference in the kind of materials I would choose – even if they were Canadians.

Mellissa: There might be a group [that drives me crazy] because, you know, they act quite immature … You are just worried that conversation, that topic would not fly for different – that could be for different reasons.

Steven: One primary consideration is […] the age group of the students. I know it is not relating to cultural background, but age and level of proficiency of the students are of paramount importance.

4.1.3.3 Class dynamics

One participant brought up group dynamics in the classroom as a factor affecting their

decisions about what videos to select.

> **Mellissa:** I think for me it would really depend on the particular group dynamic and the students that I am dealing with […] Because in my experience every group of students is different, […] both as individuals and as a group and that […] dynamic is something that you – will change every time you teach the course even if it's the same course […] there may be some group dynamics where I would go 'You know what? Let's do this. This particular group is, like, really open and really perceptive. We have really great conversations, just, like, the combination and somehow the personalities in the classroom feels like that would work.'

4.1.3.4 Students' social and educational backgrounds

Two of the participants mentioned that the social and educational background of the

students also affects their decisions about selection.

> **Nancy:** Some students, say, come from more open backgrounds – that anything goes. Other students don't [...] so you wanna be very, very careful.

> **Mellissa:** [I consider students'] educational background. So a group of students, a homogenous group of students from "Mexico Tec de Monterrey University" which is a high level of – sort of – elite kind of university in Mexico – those students are gonna have very different linguistic needs than a totally diverse [group]! [Some groups are] mainly immigrants in Canada. They have a much wider range of educational backgrounds and cultural backgrounds.

4.1.3.5 The make-up of the class and the appropriateness of the content

Many of the interviewed teachers discussed how their decisions concerning

appropriateness were influenced by the makeup of the class and students' backgrounds,

suggesting that the two factors are interrelated. An excerpt from Rita exemplifies this.

> **Rita:** There was some material that, you know, is acceptable here in North America – let's say even in a news clip [but] I know the make-up of my class. I won't discuss it, and I won't definitely show it.

4.1.4 Students' potential interest in the video and needs

The level of interest of the video to the students is another main factor that emerged

from the data as a criterion for selecting authentic videos to use in class. Four teachers

mentioned that they selected videos that were likely to engage students' interest.

> **Mathieu**: [I ask myself whether the topic] is of general interest to my students ... In other words, I would never pick a video about hockey. Because they wouldn't know it and wouldn't be interested in it. But I would pick one about soccer. Because everyone knows it and most of them would be interested in it.

> **Patrick**: [Videos are selected if] I think it will keep their interest or that will get their interest.

> **Steven:** Something that is of interest to students of that age.

> **Mellissa**: Interests, of course, also for the students … [their] interests, that is important.

Moreover, two of the participants stated that they take their students' goals and needs into

consideration. According to them, their selection for the videos is subject to change based on

their students' needs; their choices change as the needs of their students change.

> **Mellissa:** I also always have to take into account students' needs … What I always do is a needs analysis at the beginning of the course to make sure, beyond what the curriculum states, I also know what those particular students want and need from the course.

> **Mathieu:** The first thing I think about is: Who are the students? You have different kinds of students. For example, I have two different groups. The intensive students who most of them are foreign students, which means that they're going back to their countries after…. because they are not being integrated into Canadian society. They won't have to deal with these issues in their lives, because they are going back to their own cultures.

4.1.5 Suitability of the video to the lesson

Five of the interviewees stressed that another of their main criteria was how well-

suited the video is to the purpose of the class and the goals of the curriculum. They noted that

the content of the videos should reflect themes and topics that are to be covered in class.

Patrick: The goals of what I am trying to teach are: so whatever materials fits in with what I am trying to teach students that is the main thing.

Nancy: How closely it fits to what I am teaching.

Mellissa: What are the particular outcome of the class I am teaching?' is another factor to consider in terms of what materials we're looking at for what purpose, right! So 'What's the purpose?'

James: One is the theme because, you know, I won't show a movie or a film, or anything, just to show it. It has got to be connected in some way to other stuff we are doing, so, thematic

Steven: If it is […] dealing with a topic that is a part of our course and it is relating to a chapter we are doing in the textbook or something like that

4.1.6 Video characteristics

Two of the interviewed teachers also referred to the characteristics of the video as a factor that influences their decision of whether to use the video. Specifically, factors like length and the production quality were mentioned.

Mathieu: The last criterion is time. Can't be too long and can't be too short.

Patrick: If it is a well-done production

4.2 Teachers' Interpretations of Potentially Controversial Content

Before discussing teachers' approach for dealing with potentially controversial content, the researcher asked about teachers' definitions of potentially controversial content in order to examine their interpretations of the term. The interviewees were asked what kind of materials they consider controversial. All of the responses centered on the idea that content is controversial when it conflicts with students' beliefs, values, and worldviews. This includes religious content, sexual content, and homosexuality, as well as political issues and social class.

Steven: I would say something that in some way is in opposition to peoples' religious values or potentially in opposition to peoples' religious values is

something – is very controversial. Something that is in opposition to people coming from – as a class – you know, wealthy people

Nancy: Religion and politics. These two – you don't discuss in any place, never mind in the classroom […] Religion, sex, – what did we say – politics…

Mellissa: I think [the] types of materials that could be seen as controversial by other students or teachers are anything that deals with sexual orientation ... Anything that deals with religion tends to be controversial ... There are certainly other things that can be controversial, especially, like, political content

Rita: Of course the sex angle, maybe homosexuality also. Maybe too much violence. Any kind of thing with guns or killing or things like that … I would never show horror ... And political issues, and maybe some religious issues, because you know we don't just have – not only do we have – we also have religious issues, but we also have people who have no religion.

James: You know, it's the three things not to talk about, religion, sex, politics.

Patrick: I guess one would be religion – would certainly be one. Another would be sexuality, and then politics and … ethnicity.

4.2.1 Controversial but less sensitive

Some participants also noted that some issues were less provoking. These topics include: medically assisted suicide, abortion, race, climate change, feminism, stereotyping, capital punishment, drugs, and cohabitation.

> **Mellissa:** [Safer controversial topics include] the ethical debates around the end of life, you know: assisted suicide, you know, abortion, those kind of topics are sort of common controversial topics and I would say they are less risky and less sensitive and I think more teachers will be more willing to engage in these kinds of conversations than in religion and sexual orientation.

> **Steven:** The things that go into climate change, for example fossil-fuel, the production of CO_2 and methane. You could have things like feminism if people come from cultural backgrounds maybe where there is a dichotomy between men's roles and women's roles – like sexism, stereotyping of any sort, of course like abortion and again ties often to religious values.

> **Mathieu:** Medically assisted suicide, which is controversial in Canada [but may not be elsewhere] … capital punishment … Drugs, like marijuana and the talk of legalizing marijuana – again, controversial in Canada and probably quite controversial for a lot of foreign students. Cohabitation … which is very common in Canada, and not very

controversial at all here, but probably quite controversial in other countries. In most other countries, it is just not done or not even legal.

4.2.2 Uncertainty of what could be controversial to students

The interviewees also pointed out that it can sometimes be quite hard to predict what will be controversial and/or offensive for students.

James: I'm not sure … what sort of thing is going to make someone feel uncomfortable, too, you're never quite sure, you know? You're never quite sure.

Patrick: It's surprising sometimes that what students might consider sensitive … so I try to be aware of that. But sometimes what I think will be an interesting subject for them, the students – one or two students depending on their cultural background – might react in a way that surprises me.

Mathieu: I think there's something I would maybe consider [not being] controversial to anybody – because really I don't know what is happening in all these other countries. And let's say I found a video on a Canadian couple discussing daycare, and for some person from some country 'Oh my God! This is so controversial to put your children in daycare!' Whereas in Canada it is not. And maybe I wouldn't even think that it would be controversial, and then the student gets all upset.

Steven: I realized that was some controversial subject matter, and I might have been a little bit surprised that it surfaced in the way that it surfaced [but] I would say I wasn't completely surprised.

4.3 Teachers' Approach to Incorporating Potential Controversial Content in Multicultural Classes

When asked to describe their own approach to selecting videos that contain potentially controversial content, the participants' responses were split between those who try to avoid this material (3 teachers) and those who purposefully include it (4 teachers). Reasons for including or avoiding the material included considerations like their beliefs and opinions about the role and the goal of language classes as well as the effect of potentially controversial content on language learning.

4.3.1 Avoidance

Three participants stated that they avoid presenting controversial content.

> **Mathieu:** I've rarely shown anything in the least bit controversial … Political material, religious materials, I have never shown any religious material … I didn't have anything about controversial historical events.

> **Rita:** I stay away from any kind of these topics that you are saying here: the violence, the sex, the profanity. It is not easy.

Even though Nancy avoids videos with this potentially controversial content, she uses

pictures to engage the class with explicitly controversial material in order to stimulate

conversation.

> **Nancy:** I do it in [a specific] class ... We do it as part of their listening about creating controversy to generate publicity ... The subject is Benetton, and [how] they are very famous for running very controversial advertising ... the images really stimulate conversation.

One reason for avoiding that was mentioned was that this sort of material distracts from

learning.

> **Mathieu:** A problem with most of these themes is that they end up disturbing and distracting the student from the point of the video, which is to improve their English!
> … They get all focused on this other aspect and get excited or emotional or angry or upset or whatever and then you lose what you're trying to do, which is improve their listening and speaking and note-taking ... I don't want that to happen.

Some participants also mentioned the negative effect this sort of material can have on

student engagement and class dynamic.

> **Mathieu**: You may have another negative aspect [of presenting controversial content], like they don't trust the teacher anymore and they want drop out of the course; they don't want to participate anymore … There is no point in that.

> **Nancy:** You lose credibility with those students [because] they see you as insensitive, so you lose those students – that's the worst thing. And in a class when you have 20 students, that's different from when you have a class of 60 students or 100 students. If one student doesn't like you or disagrees with your materials or stuff like that, it's hardly anything, but in a class of 20 if you have one or two students [and] they don't like you, this affects the other students … Once a student is blocking [you out] and you know – the shields – they don't like you. They won't learn anything from you.

The interviewees also suggested that this material should be avoided as the purpose of the

language class is to teach language skills and not to challenge people's worldviews, unlike

what can be done in other university courses.

> **Mathieu:** I think the teacher has to always to remember what you're there for … this isn't a social studies class ... And you are not there to present them with, you know, controversial aspects of your culture. You're there to help them to improve their English and that has to be your primary focus in choosing all your materials. 'Is this going to help them or would it in some ways, you know, cause problems with them learning English?'

> **Nancy:** The purpose of a higher education is [to critically think about] your own assumptions and other people's assumptions. But languages – the purpose is to get people to talk – to feel like a part of a community, …. I said that already – the stuff you can prevent, you've got to prevent that. And sometimes students will have a clash, you know. You can't prevent that either.

> **Rita:** I am not there, you know, to enforce these negative concepts, right? I am here to teach the positive angle of what is out there, right? So, yes. You don't wanna [cause] discomfort in any way.

One teacher participant also noted that she could get in trouble with the administration if

students got too upset from the presentation of controversial material.

> **Nancy**: Well, besides the fact that you might get in trouble with the administration, and that students would be so upset that they will go to the office and complain.

Interviewees were also concerned about the possibility of appearing insensitive or

unprofessional.

> **Nancy:** We are expected to be aware of these things. We are second language teachers! Such a diverse population! We are expected to be sensitive! So first of all you would be identified as someone who is insensitive, right! Maybe by a student or students who feel insulted or there is that you lose credibility with those students.

Depending on the language-learning environment and the purpose of the course, the

participants noted they might avoid material more in some contexts than in others, and that

controversial material is arguably more relevant to the purpose of some courses.

> **Mathieu:** If they are going back home – if I have a student from China and he is here for a year or maybe he is going to study in English university and then he is going to go back and live his life in China – these international students who are not immigrants – I am less willing to present them with controversial materials.

Finally, one participant suggested that a reason to avoid this kind of material is that the job is hard enough without the risk of creating tension in the classroom.

> **Nancy:** I think [most teachers] would feel avoiding controversial topics or avoiding hurting people's feelings or making people feel uncomfortable, that's kind of easy to do … So the things you can control easily you should, which is the content which is not offending anybody … If all that kinds of that stuff that you have to deal with, so why would you make your life even [more] difficult.

> **Rita:** Like I said, I stay away from any kind of these topics that you are saying here: the violence, the sex, the profanity. It is not easy.

4.3.2 Inclusion

The other participants maintained that they purposefully include controversial topics.

> **Steven**: I think if the video or whatever material that you bring in into the classroom, the use of the controversial topic in a respectful manner is something that I am comfortable doing … if I feel that it is possible to introduce it in a way that doesn't offend people through careful preparation, careful delivery, careful follow up, if I feel people can still be respected and not be offended by it, I'll do it.

> **Mellissa:** Yes, sensitive content. Yeah, I say – most of the time I say – bring it on.

> **Patrick:** I think it's to present it.

> **James:** I have shown some fairly controversial or challenging stuff.

However, the decision to include controversial material often depended on how extreme the content is. Though James reported that he intends to present potentially controversial content, he explained that he would avoid incorporating content or topics that he would consider too controversial.

> **James:** I would not even consider [using] something that I would … consider too controversial.

Teachers who included sensitive material noted that these materials could benefit

learning, engagement, and critical thinking, contrary to the teachers who avoid it.

> **Steven:** [I include it because] it gets people talking. When people have a strong point of view that they want to express, they feel passionate about it and engages them and the language just comes. The fluency often improves at that point because people have strong feelings and they want to express.

> **Patrick:** These topics can lead us to a deeper use of the language … I will sometimes show something that is – I consider – perhaps not good but it's to illustrate how they could use critical thinking. So for example, I might show something where the speaker [is] biased or prejudiced to display certain prejudices and/or is effectively untruthful on what's been said and use that as an example of how the students can be proactive, so they're not simply passively listening and understand what's being said, but actually engage with the materials. Let's say 'ok here this person is being a racist' for example or this is a misogynist that this is not simply true, the person is avoiding some, uh, question or using false information, and things like that.

> **James:** I think when you talk about using controversial material, some of that stuff can help provoke discussions and different ways of thinking.

These teachers also believe that the purpose of the language class is to encourage students to

engage with the points of views of different cultural groups and to introduce to students the

different sides of the issues that exist in this world.

> **Steven:** Our goal is to create understanding between people with different points of view, different backgrounds, political worldviews – let's see what we have in common instead of what we have apart. We try to find a middle ground.

> **James:** Education is not a process of making people feel uncomfortable, education is a process of exposing them to new ideas … I think a lot of people have this idea [that] students need to be protected, and I don't agree with that, and I don't think they need to be protected, they need to be prepared … There are a lot of things about the world that are not very nice, [but] I don't think we gain anything by avoiding these topics. I think the best way to deal with them is to face the topics head on, face your fears head on.

> **Patrick:** There could be aspects of this might be controversial or are controversial, that these are subjects that are discussed in society so that this is what a classroom is to do [because] that's the ultimate goal of these classes. So if something in that's really superficial and sweet or nice, it's like eating a piece of candy: it might taste good for a minute, but there are no real health effects. It doesn't make your body stronger or healthier, and it's gone in a minute. Or something that pushes the limits,

breaks down ideas is more helpful and not just in terms of languages, but again developing critical thinking, which most of our students or probably all of our students will need in the future.

Similarly, these teachers want the materials they choose to reflect the target culture even when some aspects of the culture might be a bit uncomfortable for some students, since teaching Canadian culture is one of the goals of the program.

> **James:** At the end of the day, I'm teaching young people, I'm teaching them to speak and read and write English better, and I'm also teaching them about our culture here.

> **Mellissa:** I am always aware of the fact that I am teaching values as well, and that every time when I select something I am saying something very purposeful about culture.

Finally, some participants also shared beliefs showing that they understand engaging with potentially controversial material, though uncomfortable, can be very helpful to students as it can increase the latter's tolerance of different points of view.

> **Mellissa:** I think sensitive content can be all kinds of things, but I do feel like as a teacher in Canada and as a language teacher [it is] important to engage students in difficult discussions … [the] conversations can be difficult and I think there are a lot of teachers who are not particularly prepared to manage or facilitate those conversations and so they stay away from them … in my opinion, [including potentially controversial videos is] usually a good thing because you have engaged students, and engaged students are active and then you can get them on board and putting that engagement into writing in their next paper.

> **James:** I understand [that] it might really make some students feel uncomfortable, [but] part of me goes "ya, ok, but is it my job to protect people from feeling uncomfortable?" Is it my job to not present an idea, or not present an image because it's going to make someone feel uncomfortable? You know, I don't think that is necessarily a bad thing, for someone to feel uncomfortable, sometimes it might be a good thing, you know … It's out of, you know, the discomforting things that change happens, internally, externally, and so on ... I think that it is better to challenge people and have them overcome whatever fears, whatever negative feelings they have, I think in the long run it is more productive for the group, and it is also more productive for that individual … I think that's part of my job.

4.3.3 Attitude toward different themes

All of the participants noted that they were more or less willing to present certain types of controversial material provided in the definition during the interview (violence, sex and nudity, profanity, political material, religious materials, negative stereotypes, and controversial historic events), and even teachers who in general avoid it said they included some if they felt it would benefit the class.

4.3.3.1 Nudity and sexual content

Most of the interviewees mentioned that they completely avoided sexual content, and nudity, even when they were willing to present other types of materials.

> **Steven:** Sex and nudity I don't do in the classroom. I make a point of avoiding any kind of videos that might include that because I think people might be offended and … more difficult to explain away.

Similarly, some teachers pointed out that they avoid presenting sexual content; however, they are willing to introduce topics related to sexual issues but not visually.

> **Mathieu:** [It depends on] if they are talking about sex or is [the video] showing sex. I would – if they are talking about sex, most of the time it would not bother me, but again I would use it more for my adult students rather than my younger students. But to show it … I wouldn't consider that appropriate, even if all the students were Canadians. I wouldn't show anything like that.

> **Patrick:** If there's aspects of sex it's usually more of a social question like access to birth control, abortion, things like this and [for] those I don't use visual material. Again, reading is a little bit more distant so it's not as emotional, so generally tend to [use] articles.

For James, as long as the video focused on relevant issues, even if there were sexual scenes, he would still present it.

> **James:** In a certain sense I am challenging students, but I'm not choosing it saying "I'm looking for a movie with a sex scene so I can challenge my students!" It is absolutely not what's happening … I realize that it might make some people like feel uncomfortable, but if I look at the whole thing, and say, thematically, the discussions and activities I can get coming out of it, or the quality of the film, then I do not have a

problem with it, and then, and I think my students don't [either]. I think there's a difference between causing offense and making somebody or challenging somebody's ideas. You can challenge somebody's ideas, or you can talk about ideas that might force them into a reflection of their own ideas, in a respectful way … I think respect is the main thing here.

4.3.3.2 Content with violence

Four of the participants mentioned that they avoid showing any violent content to their students as they think it is inappropriate and does not serve any purpose. However, they explained that they do not consider violent content very controversial or problematic for students as students are exposed to an extensive amount of violent content through media in their lives so they are immune to it.

Mathieu: Violence I don't consider – my God, every culture has videos of violence. I particularly don't like them and I find most of the ones that people here find acceptable – I find too violent, you know! And violence is rarely controversial, and even video games that everybody plays all over the world, they are so violent it's incredible

Patrick: Personally I haven't found any particular material that used – that was useful for any particular point that was a graphic show of violence … Occasionally we would see a movie in the past and there might be shootings or something like that. [Even then], I haven't done that for many years, and I mean, realistically, most students, adult students, go to movies on the weekends and see a lot more violence than anything I would show them.

Rita: Violence not so much – it's funny eh! I mean maybe because they're immune to it, maybe they've seen too much of it – really you know it's sad in a way. But nobody really speaks against that.

James: Violence, ah, yeah again: never gratuitous. And I feel violence can be, and is usually shocking, and more shocking than nudity, so, I, again it has to be in a context. You know, but I would shy away from triple-X violence to a certain extent.

4.3.3.3 Content with profanity

Though some teachers prefer to avoid it, a few participants noted that they are not really worried about the profane content in videos.

Mathieu: Profanity, again I never thought about that because the problem is I don't

like it when there is a lot of swearing – even in my own language, but foreign students… like, they don't understand it. It does not mean anything for them, profanity. It has punch in your own language. It shocks, it has strength, you know, because it is part of your culture. But profanity in another culture, it is just syllables, you know.

Patrick: [Profanity] becomes like a joke because yeah I've shown a few videos where they've interviewed people who use profane language and that became kind of a joke with students because they've heard these words. They know them and that was interesting because, usually, when you learn profane words in another language they don't have the emotional content, so they are kind of funny, whereas for a native speaker that can be strong. I mean the example I'll give is the opposite: here in French – in Quebec French – the profane words are religious, so if I use them or somebody I know uses them, for me, they don't have any real force. So profanity is like a discussion. It's part of language and so we just look at it that way I say 'You know, these are not good words to use in public but people use them and so you know you can make your choices if you're gonna use these or not.'

4.3.3.4 Content with stereotypes

The interviewees also explained that they sometimes included videos that show

stereotypes.

Mathieu: Sometimes the negative stereotypes are used [as] a teaching thing to show you shouldn't use negative stereotype, so we shouldn't have them. I certainly wouldn't choose a film where the characters had negative stereotypes and that this was assumed that that is the way these people were.

Patrick: We try to deal with stereotypes – to say that stereotypes are just that: stereotypes. They aren't real and it's important to see the people behind them. So we discuss that and we can look at critical thinking.

4.3.4 Strategies for using videos with potentially controversial content

Participants who reported using controversial content explained that several factors

influence how they present these videos. They mentioned that careful selection, class

preparation, and introducing the content (i.e., clarifying the pedagogical objectives of using

such material) before showing it in class were crucial to the lesson's success.

As mentioned above in Section 4.1.2, though the appropriateness of the content is an

important factor they consider when selecting videos, these teachers believe that the level of

appropriateness can be controlled by how well the class is prepared to view such content and by the way the content is presented. Therefore, even though the content is controversial, it is considered appropriate for the class if it can be handled in a diplomatic and respectful way.

4.3.4.1 Class preparation

Participants also mentioned that preparation at the beginning of the course helps students understand the purpose of viewing controversial content and reduces potential negative reactions.

> **James:** One of the things I always tell my students at the beginning of the session [is that]"You're in a classroom with fifteen or sixteen other people from other countries and cultures … You are not always going to agree with the way other people think about certain things. Just remember that they are not necessarily going to agree with you, but try to find a common point between you and them in a respectful way to discuss these kinds of issues," and I say "remember please to separate the feelings about the issues from the feelings about the person." and […] "You are just as much a product of your culture as they are of their culture, and what might seem quite normal to you might seem quite offensive to somebody else and vice-versa."

> **Patrick:** In English, we say that 'Prevention is better than cure.' So if in the first day in class we say 'Look, we'll deal with a lot of topics. The world is complex, people talk about these issues, especially in North America. You might find things that are seem strange for you, foreign to you or uncomfortable for you', but you know, we try to emphasize that 'This place is safe; it's a respectful environment so you don't need to feel you are threatened, your culture is threatened'. It just kind of opens up: these issues exist in the world. So I think again: stress preparation at the beginning of class about what kind of topics that can be approached is part of it.

> **Mellissa:** I make sure that at the very beginning of every course I teach that's very clear what the parameters are in terms of a safe space in the classroom … [I also] make sure that everybody understands ... It's not just putting a mandatory blurb at the end of my course outline, right. It needs to be a topic of conversation in my class. This is what's meant by a safe conversation – a safe space, and also say that, you know, this is a space where, you know, we need to tolerate diversity. We may not agree necessarily with the choices of the person beside us, but as – especially for me as a Canadian in this space – the choices we make as a society, these are the values we uphold and we need to create a space where tolerance … So that is really important to just start the course with that understanding and then work towards maintaining those skills.

4.3.4.2 Introducing the Video

The interviewees also mentioned that it is important to prepare students right before

showing the video with potential controversial content by introducing the topic of the video

to students.

> **Patrick:** If there is something controversial about it, that would be explained at the beginning and forewarned.

> **Mellissa:** [I] give background on the video and then maybe even, you know, stop at certain moments and then check in – I mean checking for comprehension and following it up with a thorough, you know, activity in order to get that – sort of, unpack what they've seen and try to understand that and engage the group in meaningful, productive … discussion and activity afterwards … I have to [prepare] the students very well.

> **James**: [Class preparation] makes all the difference in the world, yup makes all the difference in the world … I'll give a warning … You don't just say "ok, here's a video" ... You introduce it. You talk about the theme … There has to be a discussion, a vocabulary development--there has to be something more than just showing the film.

> **Steven:** I think a big part of it in the classroom is actually the introduction of the topic. For example, I've done videos on Islamophobia before, and in videos on Islamophobia some stereotypes about Muslims come up as we were doing them. And it is a consideration: Are people who were Muslims gonna be insulted when that is mentioned even though the point of the video is to kill the stereotypes? Are people going to be insulted either way? So I am trying to be careful and delicate in the way that I introduce it ... One of my goals as a teacher I think is to create understanding and break stereotypes'. So just in introducing the material I think that is to be introduced in a sensitive way. It has to be introduced in a respectful way as a preface to actually doing the activity with students

Even though Nancy avoids presenting potentially controversial content, she believes that

introducing the topic before showing it is helpful and reduces students' sensitivity.

> **Nancy:** I suppose if it was really, really important to show something and that you would talk about it to students – you talk about it before they're asked to listen, to watch and reserve judgment until it's finished, until you discussed it. I guess, you know, like a warning.

A technique used by Nancy to reduce students' sensitivity of the controversial content is to

show it briefly in class. Also, explaining that the materials are controversial in nature reduces

the tension.

> **Nancy:** Well, I mean you try not to do it too long because there is other aspects [so] you try to move on ... don't do it too much, get into the message [and] then you can move on.

Participants who reported that they intend to present potential controversial content explained that not preparing students to be exposed to the potential controversial content could be problematic.

> **Mellissa:** I mean for me, there has gotta be a lot of scaffolding that occurs in order to do this. I think just throwing out a video about a really controversial subject and getting students to debate with no scaffolding up to that is a problem – would be definitely a problem.

> **Patrick:** If you take something without putting it in the right – without preparation – it's a recipe for real tension and conflicts … it's usually when something hits students without they're being expecting it. Then it really becomes problematic.

> **James:** Again, it depends on how it is presented, depending on the context … You have to, there has to be a point to the lesson, you know. You don't just show something to shock people, that doesn't make any sense. It is non-productive as far as I'm concerned, unless I just want anybody, unless I want to provoke some kind of fight, but I don't want to do that. I tend to be more of a peacemaker.

4.4 Students' Reactions to Potentially Controversial Content

The participants' opinion regarding students' reaction to controversial content was varied. Some teachers believe that students' reactions are positive in general and that students embrace such content, while other teachers believe that students get offended when content contrasts with their beliefs and values.

4.4.1 Positive student reactions

Three of the participants reported that they believe that students' reactions to exposure to potential controversial content are positive in general.

> **Nancy:** In general, their reaction is pretty good because, actually we have – again, I have to say the students that come to [this school], most of them are very privileged young people, meaning that their parents have money, their families have money ...

what it means is that this is a privileged group of people who have been exposed to a good education, the ideas of the world [so] most of them are fairly open–minded [because] they come from worldly environments, like their parents maybe have good jobs and have travelled a lot and they have seen the world … They are not shocked in the same way that a student would be shocked [if he/she has] never been out of their country [or] experienced other cultures.

Mellissa: I think that in general, globally, it's very productive and generative because students are really interested in controversial subjects, right! Like 9 times out of 10 if you show them something that's a bit controversial or a lot controversial the students become very engaged because they have a position that they want to share.

Steven: From my experience, it's been very positive.

4.4.2 Mixed student reactions

Some of the participants noted that students' reaction towards the exposure to

potential controversial content varies.

Rita: Well, some students will just absorb it and not accept it, and some students will actually vocalize and say 'Hey, this is not my concept. This not what happens in my country', and some students will, maybe, question it and say 'Maybe this is the norm.'

Other interviewees were not sure about students' reactions; however, they said their

students had never had negative reaction towards the potentially controversial content.

Mathieu: They were fascinated that [cohabitation] was widespread and they wanted to know how it developed and how it changed over time – like, 'When did this happen?' None of them were surprised because they all knew about it. Then there was a brief part about a lesbian couple who got married … I said 'There might be some comments or somebody, you know, doesn't like it or gets upset'. I showed the video to three different groups. Nobody said anything, nobody seemed to respond to it positively or negatively … There was one comprehension question specifically on it – although it did not have to do with lesbians, it had to do with something else about the marriage – and so they all answered the questions and nobody said anything.

James: I can't recall any difficulties where, or any situations where somebody said "I was offended by that" or that it really caused a problem with, or in the discussion, or whatever … I've never [from what] I can remember received a negative reaction or very strongly negative reaction from that. You know, where is someone has said [to me] "come on that wasn't okay," I've never had that.

James reported that he never experienced negative reactions or complaints, even when showing sexual content to students coming from conservative backgrounds.

> **James:** There is a scene at the very beginning where the main character where Sammy is in bed with his girlfriend and the shot shows his girlfriend from behind and on her ass, on each buttock is a tattoo of the W ... so Sammy says to her, he asks her "Why do you have a W tattooed on each side?" And so she says "So when I bend over, it spells 'wow'!" Alright it's a funny line but there's a visual, right? And you know it is kind of sexual (laughs) and I had two or three married Saudi women in the class, not like the 19-year-olds but the 30-year-old Master's and PhD students, and they laughed at that more than anybody else in the class. I just thought that was great, you know, I just thought that's really fantastic. I think it was probably maybe the people who weren't Saudi who felt more uncomfortable [because] you're a little bit worried you're making somebody feel uncomfortable and that's an uncomfortable theme.

4.5 Factors Affecting Students' Reactions to Potentially Controversial Content

According to teachers there are many factors that affect the way students respond to the potential controversial content. These factors include the student's backgrounds, the presentation of the content of the materials, the degree of the controversy, and the students' linguistic ability.

As mentioned in Section 4.1.3, students' backgrounds can affect what is considered controversial, and therefore, students' backgrounds can also affect what their reactions to different videos are.

> **Rita:** A student – years, years ago – had recommended a movie, I think it was called "Roadtrip" or something like this – and at that time – I think I was too young and naïve – and I didn't watch it before. I just (thought) 'Oh, ok. The student thinks it's a good movie. What could be wrong with it?' So I did have a group of multicultural students in that class, and I did play it and there was a little scene that was – would be considered – I mean there were naked people…and I did have [Muslim students] in class but one in particular actually walked out.

> **Patrick**: I once showed a documentary and – not only once, I showed it over sessions – one documentary by the American film-maker Michael Moore and he is very critical of corporate behavior in the United States. Some students who were very, kind of, conservative, business-oriented students disagreed with the video.

Nancy: You can tell, you can tell when you're looking on their faces that … not all, but some [Muslim students] find [homosexuality] disgusting and they don't want to talk about it. They barely believe it exists – they're still not comfortable with the idea, and it would be similar to the way people think about homosexuality fifty years ago here in North America.

Furthermore, the participants who tended to include controversial content believe that students' reactions depend on teachers present the content. As mentioned above, if presented adequately and students are prepared to be exposed to such content, then students reaction will be positive.

According to one teacher, students' reactions seemed to depend on how extreme the content is.

Rita: Depending on how extreme some of the ideas portrayed are.

On the other hand, some of the other interviewees believed that students' reactions depend on the students' level of language proficiency, as exemplified by the following statement.

Rita: Depending on the language factor, like how much of it did they understand – even advanced levels. It doesn't mean because you're advanced you understand all the subtleties of the language. Like [at the school talent show], there was one particular song – it was very racy! [But] nobody picked up on it! … So, this, you know, this is one thing [where] if English is not your first language you're not gonna pick up on the subtleties of the language, and this is just a little example.

4.6 Types of Negative Reactions to Controversial Content

According to teachers' responses, students' negative reactions to controversial content are classified into two types. The first is individual reactions when students feel personally offended by the content. This can lead to students reacting negatively to the content or even walking out of class.

Nancy: Certain cultures are more sensitive than others to comment on their beliefs, their practices, etcetera, right! So you know – and definitely Muslim students are sensitive

Patrick: I did have Catholic students in the classroom and once I had a priest who was very annoyed by this, but again I put it this way: 'This is fine – we can look at this. You don't have to agree with it, but this is a perspective and you need to understand this. Then if you don't agree with it, that's fine, but you need to say why you disagree with it.'

Mellissa: I showed something about marriage in Canada and gay marriage … So the students – it was a big class [with] at least 25, maybe 28, something like that, in the class and diverse background, adults, different ages but quite a few mature, like, older students ... I was shocked at the comments that came out after showing
… I had that student who was a doctor, she is an older woman ... after that video she said well … 'That's a sin.' She said that 'It's an illness', she said 'I am a doctor so I know that's an illness that needs – that can be cured.'

The second type of negative reaction to presentation of controversial content in a

multicultural ESL classes is when it leads to conflict between the students in the class.

Mellissa: A lot of our students come from mainland China or from Taiwan: those are two countries that have a lot of baggage. We can have Japanese students and Korean students in the same classroom and those students can be a lot of tension. And that situation occurs in many different dynamics – Ukraine and Russia. This, you know – all kinds of that stuff going on in terms of the dynamic. So bringing up a video about censorship in Saudi Arabia: that could create tension. Bringing up issues about censorship in China could also create, you know – talking also about Taiwan as a country could create tension

Steven: The discussion on globalization [led] to the discussion maybe of capitalism, exploitation of the working classes by the upper classes – the lower classes by the upper classes – and tensions about people who might – tension felt by people who might have come from a wealthy backgrounds – who came from a background where their families – or whatever friends – were actually owners of corporations that were being pointed at as exploiting the lower classes, that is an example that I can think of.

4.7 Teachers' Approaches and Strategies for Handling Negative Students] Reactions to

Potentially Controversial Content

Concerning the use of potentially controversial content, James mentioned that he

responded based on the students' discomfort or offense depends on students' reactions.

James: I think it would depend on the type of discomfort, the level of discomfort that the student expressed to me.

Some of the interviewed teachers mentioned that they tend to explain the purpose of

showing the video with controversial content when students react negatively to the

controversial content of the videos are used in class.

> **Patrick:** For the one for evolution, I just said to the student 'That's fine if you don't agree with this.' Basically, this was simply a listening comprehension, and to write what it was about. So whether I showed, you know, 'God created the world six thousand years ago' or 'That's evolution and this is a theory' – even if you don't agree with this, you should know about this theory, it's a basic theory of biology and science that is taught in university. So you can disagree with that for whatever reason, but you should know at least what it is, and this is just a linguistic exercise and I am not asking you to believe this.

Participants also mentioned that they may talk personally to the student/ students who are

offended by the content presented in class.

> **Patrick:** So if I ever sense that a student is upset I will try to talk to the student. They also reported that they would apologize to the student.

> **Rita:** I did apologize to her. I had to go find her and (laughing) – because she had actually walked out and I apologized. I took the blame for it because … I should've been, you know, pro-activist and I should have watched the movie and done my own research – my own leg work.

> **Steven:** I might typically talk to the group in question if it is a group of three or four, four people maybe, talk to the group … So I would say, yes I would talk to the individual group.

Also, in the classroom, participants reported that they never try to silence students and

believe that students have the right to express their feelings and opinions freely but in

respectful manner.

> **James:** My view is that everybody should, within the realms of not causing violence or harm to other people, express themselves and be themselves, you know.

> **Mellissa:** I definitely try to let students respond and I am not going to try to shut down somebody [who] says something … But sometimes I do need to, and sometimes … I may just come in and especially if there are really hurtful comments.

Patrick: He was able to speak and say what he felt, and it was interesting to students to hear. It's a response, you know, a critical response to something, and I want them to be able to do that. And then they can form their own opinions

They also reported that they tend to handle students' reaction by challenging them and asking them questions and draw their attention to the other sides of the issue to promote discussion.

Patrick: You need to say why you disagree … I mean, I just said 'Well that's fine, you can disagree with it. Why do you disagree and what bothered you so?' You know, I would use that as discussions.

Mellissa: The other day that happened in my class! Yes, yes, they were talking about the Burkini ban in France. So one of my [Korean] students [started] talking about [it] and he's really passionate about how – he had a complex argument but he basically boiled down to, you know, ultimately this is oppression of women, right. And just that line of argument and I just – it was good though because I kind of stepped back a little bit and waited and let him talk and asked if anybody wanted to respond to that. So somebody, another student, kind of, responded and challenged that argument a bit. That was good and then I followed it up by, you know, another kind of challenge to that sort of logic and – see if we can make that discussion bigger and more productive … But if they strongly believe in their conviction, you know, I go and question them and say 'Ok so what's that?' And I definitely invite other students – because a lot of the time the other students will, sort of, mediate and they will generate all that discussion and sort of – I think that's much more productive when it happens than if I need to sort of corral the conversation all the time.

James: If it's something that really is uncomfortable I will raise it as a question in the classroom, I will say, "Well, look, here's the deal, ok? We're looking at something like this. Now, you can, you can hear me talking, in that, and, you know, I'll give you an example: I'll say, "What do you think about that?" Or "What would you think about that?" You know, turn it around. You know, and, uh, "How would you take it up?" And, I think that helps people. I think that's a useful approach because of the issues that I've had with students in class, they tend not to be around things like that.

Finally, the participants emphasized that all discussions need to be respectful. Though they believe that challenging students' ideas is important and required, the interviewees believe that it should be done in a respectful way that does not silence, harm, or threaten students for expressing their ideas.

James: I don't want to make people feel threatened. I don't mind challenging

somebody, I don't want someone to feel threatened or humiliated I think that's there's a line to be drawn there. You can challenge someone's ideas … there is a way of challenging someone's ideas that is not aggressive, that's not blaming or anything, [such as] just to say "what do you think about this?" or "what about that?" is just another way of looking at it [but again] that has to be done with respect. All of it has to be done with respect. You're not going to go "you people" you know? No, no, that's just a disaster that's the worst thing that you could possibly do.

4.8 Factors Related to Negative Student Reactions

Participants believed that the content of the materials should be well-screened before being shown to students, so that they can note any potentially controversial content and anticipate the potential reactions of their students. They further explained that teachers need to be equipped with the skills needed for handling students' potential negative reactions. These skills include the ability to enforce the notion of respect and reconciliation when problems and tensions arise in the class.

> **Steven:** I always screen things carefully and taking into account we are dealing with a multicultural, multi-faith, very diverse human body … I think it is our job as instructors at that point to be equipped with the skills that we can use to defuse any kind of conflict that might arise, any kind of misunderstanding. So we try and troubleshoot what potential issues might come up, and we're prepared in order – as to how to deal with these things as they surface in class.

From the data and as explained below, tension and/or conflict might be the expected consequence when teachers do not carefully screen (evaluate) the content, or when they do not have the skills to handle students' potential negative reactions.

4.8.1 Not previewing or screening the video

Some of the participants noted that they had negative experiences with using authentic videos when they did not preview the materials before showing them in class, did not notice the problematic content, or forgot about the sensitive content featured.

> **Rita:** I didn't watch it before. I just [thought] 'Oh, ok. The student thinks it's a good movie. What could be wrong with it?' … I did play it and there was a little scene [where] there were naked people … So from this experience, I learned that, you know,

NEVER, never, never to dare show something if you haven't seen it … after that experience I've always screened my movies.

Mathieu: There was one scene where the boys had played football and then they came and – I had forgotten the scene and – in the shower – and there is a brief moment where you could see one of the boy's bums. So when I showed it I just put my hand there (laughs) and I said 'You guys are too young to see this.'

Nancy: [I showed the class] a picture of a white woman and what I thought was a black man and an Asian baby. The students looked at it and said to me 'that's a white woman, a black woman and an Asian baby. That's a gay couple'. All right! So I didn't really see that.

4.8.2 The lack of knowledge and experience

Participants also reported that they experienced negative reactions by students when they were not equipped with the needed skills and the knowledge to handle students' negative reactions to controversial content. They explained that their ability to handle the consequences of presenting videos with controversial content developed over time. They believe that at the beginning of their careers, they lacked the knowledge needed to deal with such issues and that they gained that knowledge over time.

Patrick: These things happened actually before we had a lot of reflection about creating a learning environment in the classroom … When I first started, many years ago, I might just take something, and it was there, so we just showed it, and this was the topic and I didn't look more deeply and do the constructions.

Mellissa: it was early in my teaching career in higher education and I don't think I was actually fully prepared for the types of responses that were going to come … There might be something that maybe we learn as novice teachers too, right! You have these great ideas and what you wanna do and all the potential for the classroom and then you try something out and something you know really volatile happens

James: I didn't know what to do about this and I did not have that much experience at the time. I certainly didn't, I didn't have the knowledge of the cultures that I have today, and the experience of dealing with people in that dynamic … I only showed it just that one time in the class, and I think that even I maybe I was trying to see how far I could push it and see what the reaction would be to a certain extent again this is coming from a younger teacher again I might not show it today.

4.9 Teachers' Professional Development

In the interviews, the teacher participants were asked whether they would be interested in attending a professional training program designed to help them address sensitive content, as well as how to handle students' potential negative reactions toward such content in multicultural classrooms. All participants reported their enthusiasm for these training sessions. Furthermore, they explained that this type of program would be very helpful, as it would allow them to share and compare approaches and experiences with other teachers working in the same circumstances and to learn from each other. However, teachers also had some doubts about what this training program would mean, and whether it would really help them.

> **Mathieu:** I think maybe training program is too big a word, you know. Some advice, some hints of video, some information, some guidelines, yeah, sure

> **Steven:** Yeah, I think it's great. I think this is something that's dealing in a multicultural, multi-faith setting is something we all encounter and along with that – among the training program I think that could be useful, but I would be interested in a training program combination round-table, I think. By that I mean we could share ideas with other people who've been in such situations who dealt with these things, so we could compare notes, compare approaches, compare stories.

> **Rita:** Sure, why not. We can always learn something. Yes! Yes!

> **Patrick:** Yes, I think that would be useful and there is a famous sentence or question from a pedagogy: 'Who educates the educators?' Sometimes instructors don't know that something that could be controversial or could offend or be offensive in a certain culture, so I think that kind of training is useful so that they will consider these kinds of issues before they present something.

> **Mellissa:** Yeah, absolutely. I think more of that kind of training would be amazing … We have had some workshops – more or less useful [but] I haven't seen one about this particularly, and I think it would be very, very useful and I think there should be stuff like that.

> **Nancy:** I think a workshop – something where you can talk about this and something where [you can gain] some ideas [on] how to approach this or how it might be a good thing … A workshop might be useful, interesting, a chance to talk and maybe you get some ideas.

James: Hmmm, yes, certainly a workshop, a sit-down thing. I think that there's a bit of a danger here of when you do these things, of setting a strict policy about this sort of material they can be shown, again, my problem with that is that it tends to, ah, be, it tends to be too restrictive, and based on the idea that, "oh no we can't make them feel uncomfortable" and it's like, no, they're in University, and they'd be challenged. I think that discomfort is part of the process, you know.

And, so, I prefer, I prefer not to have guidelines as such, or at least not to have strict rules, maybe guidelines are better than strict rules about that sort of thing. But certainly, I would be happy to share my experiences about that sort of thing.

This chapter has presented the results from the data collected by interviewing seven ESL teachers, which aimed to understand the perspectives and practices of ESL teachers regarding the use of authentic video materials and the incorporation of potentially controversial content in multicultural classes. The following chapter discusses these results.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

In this chapter, the findings presented in Chapter 4 are discussed in response to the three research questions of this study as well as within the context of the existing literature.

5.1 Research Question 1: Criteria for Video Selection

The first research question asked how ESL teachers approached the selection of authentic video materials for multicultural adult ESL classrooms. Five specific criteria for video selection emerged from the interview data. These criteria were 1) the language level of the video, 2) the appropriateness of the content, 3) student characteristics (including students' cultural background, age and maturity level, social and educational backgrounds, and the class dynamic), 4) students' potential interest and needs, and 5) the video's characteristics—in particular, its sound and image quality as well as its length.

5.1.1 Language level

These criteria represented a variety of further considerations. Some were related to the language level of the video. More specifically, Steven, Mellissa, Mathieu, and Rita all noted that the language used in the video should be appropriate for the linguistic level of the student group. (i.e., the material should not be too easy or too difficult). Spelleri (2002) also noted how the language level of the materials must be slightly beyond the learners' current ability. However, if the content is too difficult, the content can decrease motivation and rate of language acquisition; on the other hand, content that is too easy will not promote student learning.

Based on their responses (see section 4.1.1), many teachers in this study's context were aware of the importance of selecting materials that match students' proficiency and have

therefore focused on the level of the students first. James expanded on this discussion by stating that if the language is too difficult, students would be unable to learn from the material. On the other hand, James noted that material that was too easy would give students "less of a learning opportunity." His comments highlighted the importance of matching the level of difficulty with students' ability, as anything more or less can lead to suboptimal learning conditions. What is interesting here is that this is the consensus between teachers of different backgrounds and experience levels (i.e., 6 out of 7 participants remarked on its importance), thereby suggesting that it was a priority for these instructors. Furthermore, none of the participants mentioned that authentic materials should not be used with lower proficiency students. It can therefore be inferred that the participants found authentic materials suitable for less proficient students as long as they matched learners' linguistic capabilities. As such, the participants' attitudes seemed more in line with Cook's (1996) and Mishan's (2005) perspective, whereby if teachers created appropriate tasks and scaffolding for learners, authentic materials can still be useful for less proficient students.

5.1.2 Content appropriateness and student characteristics

Many of the participants remarked that they selected authentic material based on the appropriateness of the content. In the interviews, it became clear that these teachers' judgments of appropriateness was heavily influenced by their students' characteristics, such as the overall class dynamic and students' individual personalities. Students' cultural, religious, social, and educational backgrounds, as well as their age and maturity level, were also noted as being particularly important to consider when evaluating appropriateness. This observation is in line with the recommendations from the literature; for example, Gareis (1997) suggested that the appropriateness of the content is influenced by several

characteristics of the student group, particularly their age and cultural background.

However, in terms of actually defining what "appropriateness" means, the participants each had their own interpretation and understanding. For Mellissa, the suitability of the content of an authentic material depended on the maturity level of the class, the class dynamic as well as their needs. As such, she did not necessarily generate a list of topics that would be deemed "off-limits" in the classroom. This is in line with Oguz & Bahar, (2008) suggestions, whereby " for the learners to enjoy dealing with the authentic materials, it should be paid attention to whether they are appropriate to the learner's age, language level, interest, needs, expectations and goals" (p. 331).

On the other hand, Nancy and Rita explained that in order for the content to be appropriate, it should not be controversial or sensitive. For Nancy, religious and political topics were off-limits, while Rita felt that violent, sexual, and profane content should not be introduced in the classroom. It is also worth noting that their comments demonstrated the anxiety teachers of multicultural language classrooms may feel, as their decision to avoid certain topics appears to be because they did not want to offend their students. This is in line with Franklin's (2001) observation, where instructors in multicultural classroom faced more challenges and stress when teaching a diverse student population.

Steven was also sensitive to his students and to whether the target content might offend them, but his approach to dealing with potentially controversial text was different than Nancy's and Rita's. More specifically, he did not avoid any specific themes and would include the content if he felt that it can be presented in a diplomatic and tactful manner. His method therefore focused more on whether he can adapt the material so that it was less problematic in the classroom. As such, what was considered appropriate to Steven was much

broader than Nancy and Rita's idea of appropriateness.

Patrick presented a very different definition of "appropriateness," such that as long as the material has pedagogical value, he would find it suitable for the classroom and would not hesitate to use it. For example, he stated that he would include materials that were "perhaps not good" (i.e., contains stereotypes, biases) in order to give students opportunities for critical thinking, such as by requesting learners to comment on how or why the speaker in a video is presenting a biased perspective. James' definition of appropriateness was quite similar to that of Patrick's, but he focused more on the importance of preparation and how it can help re-focus the students on the lesson's objectives rather than on the content of the authentic material. However, when pressed further to give a definition of appropriateness, James explained that it is a fairly intuitive process for him. James also recognized that some of his selected materials may seem controversial, but he felt that it was necessary to present them in class to increase learners' awareness of the target language culture.

Based on the above comments, it is clear that the participants each have their own understanding of what was considered suitable material in the classroom. As a result, it is very difficult to generate a single definition for what is and is not appropriate authentic material. This could explain why the literature has left the term "appropriateness" rather vague and has not established concrete guidelines for selecting appropriate resources. This ultimately left teachers to function autonomously, such that they themselves must first understand what is and is not suitable for their classrooms. Unfortunately, this can be problematic for novice instructors, as they may not have adequate experience to choose resources to use in multicultural classes. This is in line with Larkin and Sleeter's (1995) comments, where they mentioned that teachers may lack the experience to effectively work

with diverse student populations since their training does not typically prepare them to instruct in multicultural classrooms.

However, even if teachers gained more work experience in multicultural contexts, it does not necessarily mean that they would be able to avoid contention in the classroom. Four of the seven teacher participants interviewed in this study acknowledged that sometimes students' reactions to the videos' content were quite surprising and unexpected. For example, Patrick mentioned how it was quite surprising what students considered as sensitive topics. The participants also noted how it was difficult to gauge how students will react, as what was controversial to one learner may not affect another. Mathieu highlighted this by talking about a class where he discussed daycares with his students. While he personally did not find the topic to be too sensitive for the classroom, some of his students reacted very poorly to the idea of sending children to these facilities. Steven had a similar experience. In his situation, he introduced the theme of globalization to his students, but the discussion activities soon led to conversations on capitalism and the exploitation of the lower classes. As a result, some of Steven's students felt personally attacked as their family members were part of companies that were accused of abusing their employees.

The above illustrates how even experienced teachers can be caught off-guard by students' reactions. Firstly, this may be due to how teachers cannot be expected to be experts in all cultures. Another possible explanation could be the lack of consensus in what appropriateness means, but this suggests a deeper problem, such that without a clear understanding of what "appropriateness" is, teachers would have trouble selecting and preparing materials for the classroom. For example, Rita noted how she was unprepared for students' reactions as she did not take the time to preview the video before class.

Mathieu also recalled an instance where he did not review the material and had forgotten about a nude scene in the clip. In Nancy's case, she had an awkward moment in class when she did not look closely at a picture she was using; she was subsequently caught off-guard when her students told her that the image was of a gay couple.

These comments were somewhat surprising as previewing is important for determining factors for effective language learning. This includes verifying the language level of the material, something which the majority of the participants emphasized as an important criterion in content selection. One possible explanation for why this occurred could be how vetting the appropriateness of authentic video materials is difficult due to how they often contain controversial themes or content (Burt, 1999). Thus, to ensure teachers are not surprised by students' reaction or by the content itself, it is imperative that adequate preparations are made in advance (e.g., setting classroom expectations, clarifying lesson objectives); this will be discussed later in Section 5.2.

5.1.3 Students' personal interests and needs

Four of the seven participants in this study also reported that they paid attention to students' interests and needs when they selected videos. Their responses were consistent with the recommendations from the literature. For example, Arcario (1992) and Wing (1986) explained that for authentic video materials to be effective and engaging, teachers should consider students' interests and choose videos that match those interests and students' tastes. As for students' goals and needs, Widdowson (1980) highlighted the importance of choosing materials that met students' learning objectives in the course. The consensus between most participants suggested that like language proficiency, this was a major guiding factor in teachers' material selection process.

5.1.4 Characteristics of the material

Based on the participants' responses, there was a clear preference for static

material (i.e., readings). Several of them shied away from visually presenting

sexual/violent content that did not serve an educational purpose or could not be easily

explained away. The explanation for this avoidance of visual materials was found in

Patrick's comment, where he felt that videos and pictures generated a much stronger

emotional response. This follows Gareis' (1997) suggestions, where visual content

(particularly with sexual content) can be more problematic when presented in the

classroom.

Additionally, even though the literature (e.g., Arcario, 1992) emphasized the

importance of video characteristics (such as the length of the sequence and the clarity of the

picture and sound), only Mathieu and Patrick specifically mentioned that they assessed the

quality of the video and its length. One explanation for this discrepancy between the literature

and this study's observations was that most teachers took video characteristics into

consideration, but found this part of their decision-making to be self- evident. Also, since

teachers must respect the time constraints of their classes, they may believe that the fact that

the video should be well produced did not need to be stated. This section's discussion

demonstrates how teachers need to be aware that content should always be evaluated, even for

'intuitive' features like length; if not, they run the risk of creating tension in the classroom.

5.2 Research Question 2: Dealing with Controversial Content

The second research question examined how ESL teachers approached and addressed

potentially controversial content featured in the authentic video materials they selected for the

adult multicultural ESL classrooms**.** Teachers' approach to presenting videos with

controversial content in their multicultural ESL classes was affected by their beliefs about their role as an instructor and the goals of language classes, as well as by their perception of the effects of potentially controversial content on learning. Teachers who avoided presenting controversial topics to their students believe that the main goal of language classes was to develop the four language skills (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing), which did not involve presenting controversial content from the target culture to the students. This was evident from Mathieu's comment, where he stated that language teachers' function is to improve students' linguistic abilities and all selected materials should help learners meet this goal. Furthermore, some of the participants believed that presenting controversial and sensitive topics that contrast with students' cultures and values could distract students from learning and may negatively affect their engagement. Nancy's comment reflected this as she felt that controversial materials "alienated students" and that this would reduce their engagement in class. Interestingly, her comment reflected a very traditional approach for second and foreign language teaching, which was adapted in the 1960s and 1970s where teachers were encouraged to only teach language skills in isolation from controversial content and to stick to safe topics as to not create conflict in the classroom (Vandrick, Messerschmitt & Hafernik, 1996).

On the other hand, four of the participants who reported that they presented controversial content to their students believed that discussing controversial issues was a crucial part of language classes. Thus, in contrast with their colleagues, these teachers believed that controversial material enhanced learning, promoted critical thinking, and encouraged students to express their opinions and views using the second language. Furthermore, the four participants who presented such materials believed that it was their job

to present different sides of an existing issue. These beliefs and practices were in line with the recommendations given by Brown (1997). He stressed the importance of exposing learners to different perspectives and noted that teachers should not intentionally avoid topics which could enhance the progress of students. Ultimately, the responses suggested that these teachers believed that a big part of their job is to help students to develop cross-cultural understanding and awareness, and they believed that presenting controversial content fosters understanding, engagement, and tolerance towards other cultures and perspectives. Like Steven, James, and Patrick, Martinez- Gibson (1998) noted that the "language classroom is where students can begin to acquire some awareness of people who not only speak differently but also act, react, and live differently" (p. 115). He also noted that enhancing learners' cultural knowledge as it "leads to a more tolerable acceptance of the world's variation" (p. 115). As such, the role of the ESL teacher is not simply to enhance students' linguistic abilities; teachers should also introduce and prepare learners to work with a range of perspectives, which will be a particularly useful skill should these students pursue higher studies (Vandrick, Messerschmitt, & Hafernik 1996).

These beliefs and practices were consistent with the goals of the intercultural communicative approach, which the current study's target school adopted. Byram (1997) pointed out that the intercultural communicative approach emphasizes the promotion of certain attitudes in students, in particular "curiosity," "openness," and "readiness" to observe other cultures besides to their own without judgement. Savignon (2001) also added that the intercultural communicative approach aimed to foster attitudes of "open- mindedness, tolerance and empathy" towards other cultures in learners (p.18). In fact, so long as teachers treated controversial topics with sensitivity, these themes could push students to talk and to

give their opinions more freely in the classroom (Gareis, 1997).

Based on the above discussion, it seems that controversial topics should be presented in the classroom, as they can enhance learners' cultural awareness and thus improve students' ability to use the target language appropriately. However, the participants' comments also highlighted how videos needed to serve a pedagogical purpose; if none can be found, it may be best to select another material that better suits the lesson's objectives.

The results further suggested that the participants believed careful selection and class preparation are crucial for effectively using controversial content, as these processes can help reduce the risk of negative student reactions. Preparation, in particular, seemed to be an important aspect to developing a more open and secure classroom environment that can help learners be more receptive to sensitive topics. More specifically, the participants noted that from the initial video selection, they attempted to carefully preview the content of the video and decided whether it can be presented in a way that allows students to discuss the topic in a respectful manner. Moreover, the above participants reported that by noting any potential controversial content in advance, they were better prepared to handle students' reactions. In terms of class preparation, the participants noted the importance of preparation both at the beginning of the course and before showing the content. Establishing classroom expectations and standards early in a course has been found to reduce disruptive behavior and to increase engagement and conflict resolution (Lane, Wehby, & Menzies, 2003; Lo, Loe, & Cartledge, 2002). Stating that controversial content may arise during classroom discussions and activities and establishing guidelines for dealing with such content seems to fit within this same pedagogical framework.

Furthermore, the above participants believed that presenting the content to students

before showing the video ensured that all students in the class felt respected and prepared to interact with the content. This finding is consistent with the literature, which highlights the importance of preparing students to view a video with controversial content by introducing the subject matter of the potential authentic video and explaining the purpose of the video before showing it (Stempleski, 1990; Gareis, 1997; Wing, 1986).

Specifically, Gareis (1997) argued that if selected and treated carefully, videos featuring controversial content can be an effective tool to enhance second language learning and development, as these topics push students to talk and use the second language to express their opinions. The participants in this study also noted the importance of explaining the purpose and the goal of presenting controversial content, as it makes students more likely to engage with the controversial topics with less sensitivity. Even the participants whose approach was to avoid controversial content entirely were aware of how class preparation can prevent or reduce tension. Nancy, who explicitly said that politics and religion are off-limit topics in the classroom, acknowledged the positive effects of preparation on lowering the potential for negative student reaction. However, it is interesting how she noted preparation may not always be effective, as "sometimes students will have a clash [and] you can't prevent that." Her comment here presents a striking way some teachers may explain why content-related conflicts occur in the classroom. This attitude can be problematic as it implies that the source of student backlash is a characteristic of a specific individual or group. Although preparation cannot always prevent negative student reception, it is important for teachers to understand that it is still necessary for them to prepare as much as possible (e.g., set classroom expectations, anticipate possible problems) so that they are not caught off-guard by learners' reactions. As such, this could lead to inadequate preparation and classroom management,

which may cause unnecessary strain in teacher-student relationships. This can be addressed by not only increasing teachers' awareness of the benefits of preparation and previewing, but also by ensuring teachers are taking the time to address local preparation needs.

5.3 Research Question 3: Responding to Conflict

The third research question focused on how ESL teachers responded to situations in which authentic video materials created discomfort among students. Teachers who utilized controversial content for learning seemed fully aware of the associated challenges and risks, such as increasing tension and/or conflicts in class. Based on their comments (see section 4.3.4.2), it was clear that the best methods for reducing potential conflict is preparation and to show students how the authentic material relates to the lesson's objectives.

Steven noted that another part of this preparation was being equipped with the skills to handle tension or conflict in the classroom. Taking this in conjunction with the discussion earlier on the importance of preparation, it seemed that effectively using controversial content entailed the development of conflict resolution skills (e.g., knowing when and how to step in), preparing students to discuss more sensitive topics, and anticipating problems so that students' reactions do not catch teachers off guard.

The participants also mentioned that students' negative reactions varied, and they classified them into two main categories. The first was an individual or personal reaction that occurs when students feel offended by the content. The other entailed a clash among students who begin to fight each other because of the controversial content. The teachers then mentioned several ways they can defuse these situations, such as by talking to the students personally, apologizing, allowing students to share their opinions, and reinforcing the classroom expectations.

Some of the participants (i.e., Patrick, Rita, and Steven) opted to resolve the conflict personally or apologize to the student. These teachers noted that talking to the offended students and discussing their feelings is an effective strategy. Additionally, they may take a moment to review the course objectives and standards with the whole class.
The effectiveness of this strategy could be attributed to the benefits associated with reinforcing classroom expectations, which is reported to lower disruptive behaviors and to assist in resolving conflicts (Lane, Wehby, & Menzies, 2003; Lo, Loe, & Cartledge, 2002).

James, Mellissa, and Patrick also emphasized that students have the right to express their opinions and beliefs, and that they never try to silence students as long as the conversation remains respectful. They also mentioned that they try to challenge students' points of views, without intending to alter the student's beliefs. It was apparent that these teachers are leveraging students' responses and turning them into an educational moment in which they can practice their critical thinking skills. This strategy also served as a way to avoid tension in the classroom, as students were given a space to express their thoughts freely. These teachers' method was in line with Brown's (1997) statement that students have the right to express their opinions and that teachers must create a respectful and safe environment for discussion. He added that teachers need to be open and respectful to students' views and beliefs, while encouraging students to think critically about the subject under discussion by presenting the all sides of an issue. Thus, a possible way to address tension in the classroom could be simply to allow students to exchange their opinions openly.

Lastly, an unexpected theme emerged when the participants were asked to give examples of negative student reactions, namely that several of the participants recounted their

experiences early on in their career. More specifically, Mellissa, James, and Patrick pointed out that they lacked the knowledge and the experience to address controversial content and culturally diverse students, particularly at the start of their careers. These comments highlighted the difficulties new teachers encounter when it comes to actual classroom practices, particularly when it comes to working in multicultural contexts.

These findings suggest that teachers do not receive the needed knowledge, skills, and training to qualify them to work with such complex content. However, as stated previously, not much attention has been paid to preparing teachers to address the challenges of working with multicultural students (Larkin & Sleeter, 1995).

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. Teachers' responses to the interview questions were discussed in light of the research questions and the recommendations in the literature regarding the best practices for selecting and using authentic video materials in multicultural ESL classes, as well as ways how to address any associated tensions or cultural clashed. The next chapter provides the conclusion of the thesis. It presents a summary of the findings and the study's limitations. Implications and recommendations for effectively using authentic video and potential controversial content are also discussed. The section will conclude with suggestions for future directions.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the study and their implications. The limitations associated with the study and recommendations for future directions are also presented.

6.1 Summary of Findings

This study explores the use of authentic video materials in adult multicultural ESL classes in terms of teachers' perceptions and practices. A qualitative research design was used, consisting of an in-depth semi-structured interview with seven ESL teachers working in an adult multicultural ESL school. In particular, the findings explored the criteria ESL teachers consider when selecting authentic videos, their approach to the incorporation of potential controversial content in their multicultural ESL classes, as well as strategies for handling the risks associated with showing videos featuring potentially controversial content. The results showed that teachers consider most of the criteria and guidelines proposed in the literature (see section 2.4.1).

When selecting videos, teachers reported that they consider the video's language level, the class composition and students' backgrounds, the appropriateness of the content (although there was no consensus on what is considered "appropriate"), students' interest and needs, and video characteristics (e.g., the length and the quality of the sound and picture). Teachers emphasized that presenting controversial content in multicultural classes involves many challenges and risks as students might be offended, which could create tension and conflict in the class. The findings suggest that for authentic videos with potentially controversial content to be used, teachers should pay attention to students' backgrounds and the makeup of the class,

carefully select the videos, and prepare the class before showing the potentially sensitive content.

Almost half of the teachers in this study reported that they try to avoid presenting controversial content. These teachers believe that such content has a negative effect on the learning process, such as distracting students from learning, and negatively affecting their engagement and the class dynamic. They believe that discussing controversial issues and promoting critical thinking are not the aim of language class. In contrast, the other teachers explained that they show videos with potential controversial issues to students.
This decision is motivated by how they perceive the role of teachers, namely that it is part of their job to foster cross-cultural awareness and to enhance students' critical thinking.
They reported that they do so by exposing students to issues related to different cultures and raising current issues for discussion. They aim to make students consider all sides of an issue.
Moreover, they believe that showing students videos with controversial subjects promotes class discussion and pushes students to use English to express their views.
However, appropriateness was not well defined by the participants, as they had different understandings on what is and is not suitable for the classroom.

Most teachers, including those who try to avoid presenting controversial content, reported instances when they were surprised by reactions to content they would not consider controversial. Teachers mentioned that they use many strategies to handle students' negative reactions. In particular, they explain the purpose of presenting the video and/or talk to the offended students in person to discuss the issue. Teachers mentioned that they let students to express themselves freely in class as well, as long as they do so in a respectful manner and do not cause harm to others in the class.

6.2 Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study have several implications for the field of ESL regarding the usage of authentic video materials in multicultural classes. Based on the teacher interviews, a series of best practices were found on for authentic video selection, how to best handle the incorporation of controversial and sensitive content, and how to handle students' potential negative reaction to such materials. These best practices include strategies for selecting and adapting controversial content as well as for handling students' reactions to such content.

6.2.1 Factors to consider for video selection

For video selection, teachers should carefully preview the selected source so that they can anticipate any potential problem that might arise and be prepared to deal with it.

They should also evaluate the linguistic level of the source and make sure the language used in the video matches the students' proficiency level. If it is not at the correct difficulty, the activity should be adjusted accordingly. The content should also be assessed in terms of whether it can help learners reach the lesson objectives. Teachers should select materials that meet students' needs and interests.

6.2.2 Addressing controversy in the classroom

Based on the literature and the findings of this study, it seems that regardless of whether teachers intend to incorporate controversial content in their classes, controversy cannot be avoided. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of best practices when approaching all sorts of materials, particularly sensitive topics.

Firstly, they need to be prepared to deal with the potential consequences of controversial content. The findings of the study indicate that careful selection of videos and class preparation are very effective strategies for the successful use for authentic

videos, especially those with controversial content. These strategies help to prevent or at least reduce the potential negative consequences of showing controversial content. Therefore, teachers should prepare students to view and discuss sensitive content and controversial subject matter.

Students also need to be prepared at the very beginning of the course by explaining the course objectives, classroom practices, and standards. This could involve providing them with a clear explanation of the type of the content they will be exposed to, the purpose of presenting such content and how they are expected to deal with it. The effectiveness of this strategy could be attributed to the benefits associated with reinforcing classroom expectations. Students also need to be prepared before watching any video material, such that the teacher should inform the students how the material relates to the lesson's objectives. Teacher should also review classroom standards and expectations from time to time with students in order to enforce these norms.

Another important implication of this study relates to how students' reactions in the classroom should be handled. Teachers should supervise and let students express their ideas freely, as this can allow them to not to practice the target language, but can decrease tension in the classroom.

6.2.2 Teacher education/professional development

The findings suggest that teachers should be further educated about the issue of presenting controversial content and the best ways to handle its risks. This study's findings suggest that negative reactions are often a result of not preparing the students to watch the content, not previewing the content before showing and/or because the teacher does not have needed knowledge and experience. Many teachers reported experiencing negative reactions

from students, especially at the beginning of their careers when they were not equipped with the knowledge of how to best approach the use of videos featuring controversial content. Most of the participants who had these experiences felt that they gained the experience to manage the risks of using these videos over time. As such, this implies that teacher preparation programs should make future teachers aware of the challenges they might encounter when working with a culturally diverse student body and provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively select and use video materials with potential controversial content. Teacher preparation programs should also prepare future teachers to handle the tension or discomfort that might arise in class as a result of showing sensitive content. For in-service teachers, professional development programs such as workshops would allow teachers to share their experiences, ideas, and strategies for dealing with the challenges related to authentic video materials, and provide suggestions for how to deal with its risks.

6.2.1 Defining 'appropriateness' as a process

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that all of the participants have different definitions of what is and is not appropriate content in the classroom despite being from the same ESL context. If this observation is extrapolated to other L2 contexts, this means that teachers' understanding of appropriateness could vary greatly. This problem makes it very difficult to provide teachers with a concrete definition to guide their material selection and adaption process, as there is a wide array of definitions for practitioners to explore.

However, even though the participants of this study did not agree on a single understanding of what is considered appropriate content, their *process* of choosing, preparing, and addressing controversial material is very similar. Thus, instead of attempting

to operationalize what appropriate content is, it may be more useful to teachers to reinterpret appropriateness as a process, whereby materials are not inherently suitable for the class and must therefore be adapted by the language instructor. This approach should allow for greater flexibility and generalizability across most L2 contexts where cultural information may be used for pedagogical purposes; however, the validity of this recommendation needs to be verified by future research. Based on the major findings in the discussion section, the following procedure is recommended to teachers who may be working to adapt potentially sensitive material in their classrooms. This procedure can be integrated into current practices either through in-service training or as part of pre-service teachers' curriculum.

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<u>Recommended Procedure for Making Content Appropriate for L2 Learners</u>

- Check level matches students' proficiency

- Evaluate whether material matches interests and needs

- Ensure preparation is in place

  - Are the objectives of utilizing the content made clear to students at the start of the course (as an expectation) AND at the start of the lesson (as a lesson objective)

- Anticipate potential conflicts and prepare solutions for said conflicts

</div>

Figure 1. Proposed method for teachers to adapt sensitive content for classroom use.

Using the above procedure, teachers should verify that all four points have been addressed before they can present the content to the class with minimal anticipated contention. Teachers should also be aware that if any of these points are not fulfilled, the content needs to be adapted further until it meets these guidelines. By carefully applying

this procedure, teachers from a variety of L2 contexts should be able to leverage a wider range of authentic content. Additionally, teachers should always verify the pedagogical purpose of the video – if none can be found, the target material should be replaced with something else that has more educational value.

6.3 The Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations. First, the sample size was small and, consequently, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to all ESL teachers and/or classroom contexts. Moreover, since teachers all worked in the same school and program, their perspectives might not be representative of those of teachers in other ESL schools. In addition, recruiting teachers from the same institution restricted me from presenting some important themes in order to protect their anonymity, such as the impact of teachers' personal backgrounds on their understanding of their students' perspectives and on their practices regarding video selection and controversial content. Finally, the responses provided by teachers provided insight into their perspectives and opinions, but since I did not observe their actual instruction, these statements may not reflect actual in- class practices. Therefore, class observation could be used in future studies to explore teachers' practices in relation to the usage of authentic video materials and the incorporation of controversial content in different ESL programs. Lastly, as this study was unable to receive approval to interview the students, the findings here may not reflect learners' perspectives; this is something that future studies could also explore.

6.4 Future Research Directions

I hope that the findings from this study will draw researchers' and educators' attention to the challenges associated with using authentic video materials and controversial content in adult multicultural ESL contexts and will open the door for further investigation on the topic.

In particular, future work should include direct in-class observations of teacher practices and student reactions. Future work should also include an examination of students' perspectives regarding the use of controversial content in authentic video in order to draw accurate conclusions and develop best practices for its use. Furthermore, studies are needed to explore the role of the other parties such as school administrators in evaluating and guiding teachers' practices. Finally, more work is needed on teacher preparation and professional development programs in the context of the use of authentic video materials and potentially controversial content.

6.5 Personal Reflection

I was motivated to conduct this study based on my experience as both an EFL teacher and learner. As a teacher, I was unsure of how I could incorporate cultural concepts of the target language without generating conflicts with my students. On the other hand, as an ESL student, I began to understand how my students reacted the way they did, as some of the content presented in class greatly clashed with my cultural and religious beliefs. Thus, in this study, I particularly wanted to know how to deal with and handle tension that might arise due to exposing students to material which conflicts with their values and beliefs. Prior to conducting the current study, I was in favor of avoiding controversial content as it could be very challenging for teachers to handle students' negative reactions. However, the findings of this study led me to change my opinion. In fact, they made me understand how the inclusion of controversial issues is important and helpful in the ESL context, as it fosters students' critical thinking. I also recognize how creating a respectful and safe environment for discussion is productive. As a teacher, I am now aware that preparing students and explaining the purpose and the benefits of the materials are key factors for the effective use of

controversial content. As a former ESL student, I recognize that the ESL program I enrolled in succeeded in its goal of promoting open-mindedness, tolerance towards others, and critical thinking by drawing my attention to the fact that there is always another piece of the puzzle on any issue. However, I still believe that certain materials are too sensitive to be shown in class, especially those with sexual or violent content, as they are potentially very offensive and serve no broader educational purpose. Though it may be valuable to discuss such topics in the context of an ESL class, I believe the materials used should not include visual content because showing sexual or violent material in videos can rarely be redirected toward a learning objective.

Interestingly, this personal view was also reinforced by the findings of this study. Some of the participants expressed that visual presentation for some sensitive materials such as sexual content is inappropriate and it would not serve any pedagogical purpose; therefore, it should be totally avoided.

This study shed light on a gap in the literature regarding the usage of authentic video materials in multicultural ESL classes. My hope is that the findings of this study will contribute to the field of ESL, as they provide insight and empirical data on teachers' perspectives and practices regarding the use and selection of authentic video materials. In particular, the study helps to improve our understanding of the factors influencing teachers' approach to showing authentic material with potentially controversial content, as well as the best practices for selecting, presenting, and managing the potential risks of these materials.

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Appendix A. Guided interview protocol.

1. What factors do you take into account when selecting authentic video materials for the multicultural ESL classroom?
   a. Do you take aspects of the student group as a culture and ethnicity into account and How? On aspects of the content?
2. What kind of materials do you consider controversial?
3. What is your approach to dealing with potentially controversial materials in authentic video materials?
   a. Do you tend to use it a lot, avoid, or use it in a particular manner?
   b. Why do you take this approach?
   c. (Avoid) what made you avoid it?.... do you think because it is not useful or because it creates tension?
4. What topics have you find it create the most discomfort among students?
5. How do you feel students in general react controversial materials featured in authentic video materials?
6. Can you describe a specific experience where the presentation of a video led to a situation of culture clash or discomfort among the students?
   a. What kind of materials was presented in the video?
   b. How did you become aware of the issue?
   c. How did you feel about that situation?
   d. How did you react to this situation? Did you attempt to resolve the discomfort? If so, how?
   e. Did this experience change anything about your use of the authentic video materials or approach?
7. Would you be interested in a professional training program designed to help teachers manage these kinds of situations?

Thank you for your time

Appendix B. Email to teacher participants.

Dear Teacher,

My name is Aisha Mohamed R Abokraa and I am doing a Master of Arts in Second Language Education at McGill University. I will be conducting a study to explore how ESL teachers approach selecting authentic video materials they use in culturally diverse adult ESL classes.

In fact, not much is known about the factors that influence teachers' selection of authentic videos and how teachers approach dealing with potentially controversial content sometimes featured in authentic videos. Therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in this study, which involves an audio- recorded interview (45-60 minutes) about teachers' experiences dealing with authentic video materials and potentially controversial content in a multicultural ESL context.

Your participation will help to inform best practices for the use of authentic video materials featuring potentially controversial content in a diverse cultural adult ESL context. Your responses will be kept confidential, and your identity protected by the use of a pseudonym. Participation is voluntary, and you can terminate the interview and withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me on my Email address provided bellow to schedule a meeting to go over the informed consent form and then proceed to the interview.

Student Researcher: Aisha Mohamed R Abokraa: aisha.abokraa@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisors: Dr. Caroline Riches: caroline.riches@mcgill.ca Dr. Susan Ballinger: susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca

Sincerely, Aisha

Abokraa

Appendix C: Cover letter and informed consent form).

Department of Integrated Studies in Education 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, QC H3A 1Y2
Consent Form to Participate in MA Thesis Study: Authentic Video Materials in the ESL Context: Teachers' Considerations

Dear Teacher:

My name is Aisha Mohamed R Abokraa and I am doing a Master of Arts in Second Language Education at McGill University. I will be conducting a study to explore how ESL teachers approach selecting authentic video materials they use in culturally diverse adult ESL classes.

In fact, not much is known about the factors that influence teachers' selection of authentic videos and how teachers approach dealing with potentially controversial content sometimes featured in authentic videos like violence, sex and nudity, profanity, political material, religious materials, negative stereotypes, and controversial historic events. I would like to invite you to participate in this study, which involves an audio- recorded interview (45-60 minutes) about teachers' experiences dealing with authentic video materials and potentially controversial content in a multicultural ESL context. Your participation will help to inform best practices for the use of authentic video materials featuring potentially controversial content in a diverse cultural adult ESL context

Your responses will be kept confidential, and your identity protected by the use of a pseudonym. The interviews will be audio recorded. The audio files will be listened to and transcribed for data analysis. The audio files will be destroyed after data analysis is completed. Participation is voluntary, and you can terminate the interview at any time.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign your name and write down your email address on one of the two (2) copies provided and, then return the consent form in the envelope provided and hand it back to the researcher. Please make sure to keep one of the copies for your records. Please understand that even if you agree to participate now, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. After having read the consent document, please sign below if you agree to participate in this study

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca. If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at aisha.abokraa@mail.mcgill.ca. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Student Researcher: Aisha Mohamed R Abokraa: aisha.abokraa@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisors: Dr. Caroline Riches: caroline.riches@mcgill.ca Dr. Susan Ballinger: susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca

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Consent Form

I have read the description of the research and agree to participate. I understand that my identity will remain confidential and that I can withdraw from this study at any time.

Name:_____
Signature:_____
Email: _____