

Employing POV Video to Develop Interactional Competence in Oral Communication Courses

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Abstract

With the relatively recent development of lightweight and inexpensive point of view (POV) camcorders, naturalistic classroom events can now be captured from a truly participant perspective. Over the past two years, the presenter has conducted trials with a number of these head-held camcorders to examine the nature of interaction in freshman oral communication classes at a private Japanese university. One promising result of these trials is the use of POV video clips to create language-learning materials focused on the development of students' classroom interactional competence (CIC), particularly in collaborative dialogues (CDs). This report provides a brief description of the camcorders, their introduction to and use with students, and an example of POV-derived materials focused on communication strategies. The report concludes with the results of a question and answer session.

Note: This report recreates the actual presentation, based on video captured by a POV camcorder (Figure 1).



Figure 1: A still of the presentation from POV video

Introduction

“Welcome, everybody. It’s nice to see a lot of interest in this topic, *Employing POV video to develop interactional competence in oral communication classes*. I do have a handout (see Appendix A) [that gives] you information about different sources and websites. It also has a transcript of one of the materials I made to help develop [students’] interactional competence (Appendix B). If there is anything that you’d like to know more about, my email [is on this handout] and you’ll be able to contact me.

“I’m at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. I’ve been there for 13 years. I’ve been teaching in Japan [24] years, and it seems like a very common problem to try to get students to exploit conversations in the classroom and improve their competence. I started using POV video to try to help [overcome that problem] in my classroom. So, POV [or] point of view camcorder—we have one of them on me now. If you look [at the] back [of the room] at Howard [Brown], he has kindly agreed to wear a POV camera. You can see it’s also wired. He has a microphone and I have a microphone that is [transmitting] to the camera. So my voice and those around him and probably some across the way would be captured on the video.”

POV camcorders

“Anyway, POV video has a [number] of different types and I [tried several] of them because I was trying to find the [most effective] one. Contour[®], Drift[®]—these are called *side-mount* cameras. The iPhone[®] and Hatcam[®] [combination] is useful because most students have a smartphone. But I think the best one [in my trials was the *center-mount*] GoPro[®] Hero 2[®] (Figure 2), which is what Howard is wearing right now.



Figure 2: The GoPro Hero 2

“Unfortunately, after extended wear it [can become] heavy, and so I had [hoped for] a lighter camera that didn’t have the heavy, waterproof shroud on it. Last December the

GoPro Hero 3[®] (Figure 3) [was released]. The Hero 3 [is] lighter and also more powerful.



Figure 3: The GoPro Hero 3

“The advantage of POV camcorders might be obvious, but [there is] a kind of [subjective,] qualitative difference in the video. For example, the teacher traditionally might use a hand-held camera or a stationary camera on a tripod, and [from these objective perspectives,] this is what you would see (Figure 4).



Figure 4: View from the teacher

“Our understanding of the classroom is based upon what we see, [an observer’s point of view], however, this is what the student sees, [a participant’s point of view] (Figure 5).



Figure 5: View from a POV camcorder

“[To demonstrate this,] Figures 4 and 5 [were] taken at the exact same moment. [In Figure 5, I am] in the doorway taking this picture. [From my perspective, I was unaware that] a student was laughing. This [shows] that there’s a lot going on that we don’t see, and I think POV camcorders can help give us new insights into [what’s actually happening] the classroom.”

“[Here is a] summary of the [rest of the] presentation: I’m going to talk about the [GoPro] technical [specifications]. Those of you that use camcorders will be able to [evaluate] the level of quality of the camera. Then [I will explain] how I introduced the GoPro [to students, which is important] because we need to present it in a way that will [encourage them] to try it. Then I will give you an example of materials that I used to try to help develop interactional competence, potential benefits of POV recordings in general, [and finally] give you [the opportunity] to ask questions and give comments.”

GoPro technical specifications

“So, the newest [POV camcorder], the Hero 3, costs about ¥22,000, roughly 200 American dollars. It weighs 75 grams, about half of the [Hero 2]. It has many recording modes, the best being 1440p. This “p” [stands for the number of] *points*, [indicating] a level of *high definition* (HD). It is [exceptionally] clear at 48 *frames per second* (fps). The *field of view* (FOV) is 170°, so the widest [setting] will easily capture the whole room. [It] also [has] 127° and 90°; I tend to rely on 127°. It’s enough for what’s going on in the classroom. A fully charged battery will last about 2 hours. The Hero 3 also has capability for a 64GB microSD card, which will give you 8 hours. Since [the release of] the Hero 2, we have an external microphone plug on the camera. The original Hero didn’t have one, so the sound quality was [relatively poor]. Currently, there is] an optional WiFi and a remote, so you can use your smartphone [to] see what students are seeing, and also start and stop their cameras.”

Introducing the POV camcorder to students

“I introduced the GoPro to students in the summer of 2011. I [had seen] a video of my nephew. He’s a motorcycle racer and he had a video where he’s racing with the camera on his helmet and someone is also videoing him, and I could see the different perspectives. I thought, I [could] almost feel what it’s like to ride that motorcycle. [Then I thought,] wouldn’t it be interesting to see what students feel and see? I decided in the beginning of the second term, in 2011, to introduce this to students. I used a clip from the GoPro website (gopro.com) (Figure 6, GoPro images and trademarks used with permission).



Figure 6: Still from a GoPro® promotional video

“If you google “GoPro,” you’ll see a number of promotional videos that show extreme sports from different perspectives. I showed the students some bicycle jumping, and [after brainstorming some possible uses for the camcorder] I asked, ‘Wouldn’t it be great to try in class? It would be a chance for me to help you better because I could see what you are really seeing and saying.’ Then I [showed students my GoPro,] put it on, and talked to them while it was recording.

“The next week, I reminded students why we wanted to use the camera. Then I asked for a volunteer because I wanted to capture them watching my clip. I showed my clip to the class while the volunteer was watching. I’ll show you that clip [from the volunteer’s perspective] now (Figure 7).



Figure 7: A volunteer wearing a GoPro watching a GoPro clip

[On the video, spoken to the students:] “Do you remember last week, when I put the camera on? So this is just a video of you from me. So you’ll be able to know what it’s like to be 186 cms tall. And the view that I see of the class. So let’s take a look at this short clip we took last week when I was wearing the camera.’

[On the video, from the original clip:] “And now I’m recording you guys. And it’s really neat because the view is so wide. Even if I’m looking over here [the left side of the class], you’re still on camera [points to the right]. And if I look at something, it shows what I’m looking at [looks at the class handout]. And I was really impressed with the idea of camcorder in this classroom. Okay, I thought it would be really interesting for teachers to learn what students really see, what students really say. So I’m going to ask one of you every class to wear this camera. Isn’t that cool?”

“Isn’t that cool? Silence. So, I didn’t want to come out right from the beginning and say, ‘Any volunteer?’ I wanted to wear it first and I wanted to show them the clip, and we got that captured by one of the students in the front.”

Materials for increasing interactional competence

“[After several classes,] I started thinking about how we can exploit this video, what we are capturing. I probably made 24 or more lessons from different POV clips, but I decided to target classroom interactional competence (CIC) in collaborative dialogues (CDs). For those of you who aren’t familiar with those, CIC is defined by Walsh (2011) following Kramsch (1986) as ‘the ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning’ (158). And CDs, based on mainly the work of Swain and others (Swain and Lapkin, 1995, Swain et al., 2011) is ‘engag[ing] with others as a joint endeavor in meaning making’ (34). So, [these are] conversations where students work together to use different strategies to understand meaning, and share meaning.

“In one case, I captured students discussing *free time*. Then I looked over the POV clips, and I found a section that was about 2 to 3 minutes [long] that I thought had potential for teaching students to improve their CDs (Figure 8). I trimmed the section, saved to an .mov file, transcribed it, made a handout, underlined some interactional strategies, and noted the errors. In the next class, a week later, I told students, ‘Okay,

we're going to watch it. Let's listen for strategies' and that's what I'd like [the audience] to do now. This is the clip of students talking about free time, what I thought was really [useful] for improving their ability to communicate during these dialogues. Let's watch (see Appendix B).



Figure 8: Still from POV video during a collaborative dialogue

“So [there is] a lot going on there. It may be hard to follow. In the handout on the back, there is a transcript of the main part there. I just wanted to note that after watching it and trying to think of the different strategies, I had students watch with this handout. You are probably wondering [whether or not] this is a bit much, but actually in the first semester we taught the majority of these strategies, showing ways for students to be more effective in their conversations, so it is a review.

“There were a few things that I was impressed by, especially Shota [all students' names are pseudonyms]. I mean, you could tell that Yuki is quite good. She is a returnee; she lived in Canada for a year. She's [assertive], and Shota was good-natured about it and took her advice. He [was also clarifying meaning when he] said, 'Do...do you know what I mean?' So he's using that language to try to be understood by her as well [as receiving her suggestions]. I thought that was a nice example. After [brainstorming] that list of possible strategies [on the handout], I did tell students to try to use them, encouraged them to use them, and I did hear instances of other students using different [strategies].”

Potential benefits

“So what are the benefits? Well, I think there is a lot of potential for using clips from POV cameras to improve students' interactional competence. I [plan] to carry this further in a more systematic study and try to see if there aren't ways we can better help students. I did notice students were affected very positively by it. I had them comment and one student wrote, 'It helps me to try harder because I feel like another teacher is watching me,' because they are being captured in the camera. Also [because of the] novelty, students will sometimes take off the camera and play with it, so it does add a kind of playfulness to the classroom. I can use clips for the same class or for other classes and, in fact, I did use [this clip] for other classes. I also noticed that with some students when I brought [clips] to them, they enjoyed seeing their own language and [appreciated the teacher's investment]. I think also, [there is] great

potential for teacher development. I teach an MA course for teachers, and I've suggested that they have a student wear [the camcorder]."

Question and answer session

"Okay, that's all I have. Like I mentioned before, I've been using these for a couple of years and [in many] different ways. But I want to hear your reactions, any questions, comments, or suggestions?"

Participant 1: I heard a lot of noise in the clip. Is there a problem with the microphone or wireless system?

"Yeah, it's when you hit [the microphone]. It'll crackle [if there is interference]. I'm looking for a better system because this [one uses] FM radio waves, not Bluetooth waves, so I'm looking for something [that provides better audio]. We want to be able to capture [both] the camera wearer and the partner clearly [but still providing freedom of movement], so we're looking for a solution to that."

Participant 2: We are considering cameras for teacher training. We are currently using handheld cameras but would the POV be better?

"Yeah, I think it's wonderful because [the students' or trainees'] hands are free. They can participate, so POV is an improvement [in] that way. With [some of] the footage I've captured, you just can't hear the partner well. The classroom is so noisy, but that is what we want. We want it to be in a naturalistic situation, so I think that will help once an audio solution can be found."

Participant 3: Have you had any problems with students wearing the GoPro because they are concerned about their appearance?

"Yes, I had one student use a mirror to get the camera on just perfectly, and it took 2 or 3 minutes and then finally he just took it off and said, 'No. It looks bad.' He wouldn't wear it. [Fortunately, his partner agreed to wear it.] As far as students in general, however, they seem to understand they will probably have to wear the camera at some point, so generally it's not a problem to get volunteers. [Some enthusiastic students even volunteered to wear it twice.]"

Participant 4: I think the best way not to look bad is to have the camera on your head.
Howard Brown: "It's working for me."

"Yes."

Participant 5: Have you ever had your students edit what they made?

"I haven't. I have a [Communication Studies] seminar [that could]. They were using the Hatcams, and we had the GoPro in the audience, and a stationary one. We had all this really rich video data, and we were thinking to start putting it together but [didn't have time]. That's a lot of work and it will take some thought to get it designed and [implemented]."

Participant 6: About how long can you record at one time?

"It depends on the size of your [memory] card. This one has a 32GB card so it will record for about 4 hours at your normal setting."

Participant 6: How much do you record at one time?

“I record the whole class [period, 90 minutes] because you can edit after. You can go back and pull out the clips that you want to use. And you never know when something [interesting or useful] is going to happen. I’ve considered passing it on to different students, but I just give it to one student to wear the whole time. [I think] that helps them to forget about it.”

Participant 7: Do you think some teachers will hesitate to use POV cameras because they might be afraid of being recorded doing something “wrong,” particularly in this day and age when things can be sent around the world and perhaps misconstrued?

“I haven’t really been concerned with that because I’m in complete control of the use of the video. This one [Howard is wearing] isn’t beaming anywhere. [Once recorded,] I take it and put it on my computer and [only] I have it to edit.”

Participant 8: Do you get permission to use these clips beforehand?

“Absolutely. And if anything, I like to overdo [permissions]. I have a form that [students] can sign, and then, even in the last moment, [I tell them,] ‘If you don’t want me to use your clips to show the class, email me, or come to my office and tell me.’ It happened one time. I had all the materials done and ready to go and I got [to school] in the morning and someone emailed me saying, ‘Please don’t show my video,’ so I couldn’t use it.”

Participant 9: Have you ever had difficulties finding a volunteer?

“I’ve had a couple of classes, when I’ve asked for a volunteer, no one raised their hand, nobody volunteered, so I didn’t [video that class]. The next [class meeting] I showed them a clip from another [group], with permission, and I [said, basically], look what you’re missing. And then somebody raised their hand [to volunteer].”

Participant 10: Do you have any data to show that their competence actually increased?

“Not yet. That’s coming next. I’m going to do a more systematic study. But there are so many angles to look at. The POV video gives us another tool, just like regular video [has become a common research tool]. Anyone could use POV for whatever they are looking at, in certain situations. I want to look at how we can get students to be better in their CDs, so that’s what I plan to [focus] on in my research.”

Participant 11: Thank you for sharing this information. I have a comment. We know that in SLA, motivation is a critical factor. I think students would be motivated by being able to see how they can use these conversation strategies effectively.

“Yes. I think the camera does that. I really think [students] are getting some kind of boost. You can see it in the videos. For example, Shota, in this video, not at the end but at the beginning of the course, he was quite shy and hesitant, and through this kind of strategy instruction, he did become more active. I was really impressed, that he was able to keep up with [other students] at the end of the course.”

Moderator:

“Thank you for that very interesting presentation. Actually, I use one of them at home. I have a part-time hobby racing cars and we use one, mounted on the dashboard. So you can learn, if you spin or something, it will show you how to improve. But I never thought of using one in the classroom, so thank you for bringing—to me anyway—a great idea to use in the classroom.”

Acknowledgement

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The logo for 'iafor' is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The logo is partially enclosed by two large, overlapping, brush-stroke-like arcs: a light blue arc at the bottom and a light red/pink arc on the left side.

Appendix A

POV-related resources

Duane Kindt — Nagoya University of Foreign Studies
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Popular POV camcorders

- Contour+ <contour.com>
- Drift HD <driftinnovation.com>
- iPod Touch/iPhone <www.apple.com> with Hatcam <www.hatcams.com>
- GoPro Hero 3 <gopro.com>

Online resource

Kindt, D. (2013). POV media in the classroom. Retrieved Apr. 21, 2013, from
http://www.profkindt.com/site/POV_media.html

Related papers (available in PDF at the online resource above)

Kindt, D. (in press). Improving collaborative dialogues with POV video. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Kindt, D. (2012). A selection of point-of-view camcorders: Technical specifications, classroom trials, and potential applications. *Nagoya University of Foreign Studies Journal of the School of Contemporary International Studies*(8), 125~146.

Kindt, D. (2011). Seeing through the eyes of the students: First impressions of recording in the classroom with a GoPro[®] head-mounted camcorder. *Nagoya University of Foreign Studies Journal of the School of Contemporary International Studies*(7), 179-199.

Kindt, D. (2010). First impressions from recording in the classroom with a GoPro[®] head-mounted camcorder. *PeerSpectives*(6), 14-18.

Appendix B

Excerpt from POV clip: Shota and Yuki are talking about *free time*

37. Shota: And I, how can I say <uses Japanese> the lyrics?
38. Yuki: Ah, okay, okay.
39. Shota: Yeah.
40. Yuki: It's, like, kind of singing...
41. Shota: Do you know wha, what I mean? checking partner's understanding
42. Yuki: What do you want to say? Just say it in Japanese. requesting Japanese
43. Shota: Ah, <uses Japanese>. using Japanese
44. Yuki: Ah, it is, like, humming. offering a translation
45. Shota: Humming?
46. Yuki: Humming. Humming. Hmm. I think that's what you mean.
47. Shota: Yeah. guessing what your partner means
48. Yuki: Humming.
49. Shota: Humming spell...? How do you spell that ? asking for spelling
50. Yuki: Uh, okay. I'll write it down. Uh, I think it's this. H-u-m-m... Yeah. Ca, do you have a dictionary? requesting a dictionary
51. Shota: Yeah.
52. Yuki: Oh, just, no, no, no. Use this one, use this one.
53. Shota: Okay. using a dictionary
54. Yuki: Thank you. How do you turn it on? Humming... Ah, wait. See? Hum.
55. Shota: Yeah. Yes, that's right. clarifying