

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION: FILMS AND CLIPS IN LANGUAGE LESSONS

● Laura Loder-Büchel
| HEP Zurich
Matteo Casoni
| Osservatorio
linguistico della
Svizzera italiana



Laura Loder Buechel has been a teacher trainer at the Zurich University of Teacher Education in Switzerland for over 20 years.



Matteo Casoni ricercatore presso l'OLSI, i suoi interessi di ricerca vertono sulla sociolinguistica dell'italiano in Svizzera e sulle politiche linguistiche.

Noio volevòn savuàr... come si usano oggi in classe di lingua i film e i video.

Let's begin our introduction with a quote from a film, as we feel it captures well the 'spirit' with which Babylonia and those who have contributed to this issue view the relationship between languages, film and education – a 'spirit' open to experimentation and to finding innovative and engaging teaching methods.

L'expression *Noio volevòn savuàr* („nous voulions savoir“) est tirée du film *Totò, Peppino e... la malafemmina* (1956, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EP-WYhR8N7nw>)). Totò a été un maître de la comicité verbale (cf. F. Rossi, 2002, *La lingua in gioco. Da Totò a lezione di retorica*, Bulzoni). La scène est devenue iconique pour l'utilisation d'un pastiche de langue. Elle repose sur un malentendu linguistique et culturel: Totò e Peppino sont arrivés à Milan depuis Naples et ils sont convaincus que à Milan on ne parle pas italien mais que la ville soit encore sous la domination autrichienne. Ayant besoin

de trouver une adresse, Totò s'adresse donc à un agent de police qu'il prend pour un général autrichien. La solution pour se faire comprendre? „Polylinguaging“ et „arte di arrangiarsi“: „Dungue, excuse me. Bitte schön [...] Noio volevàn... volevòn savuàr, noio volevàn savuàr l'indrìs... Ja? Dunque, noi vogliamo sapere, per andare dove dobbiamo andare per dove dobbiamo andare. Sa, è una semplice informazione“.

Babylonia always strives to provide its readers with 'straightforward information'. It does so by drawing on the expertise of specialists and those working in the field. In the call for papers for this issue, we wrote:

we are curious about how full-length cinema, short films and clips and even shorter social media posts can be used to promote foreign language learning or learning about the world through the foreign language.

We are looking for contributions that are novel, concrete and backed by evidence from classrooms; use films and clips for

both language learning and deepening perspectives, for example on issues of social justice. We are looking for examples of activities that convey powerful and timely messages in the classroom and encourage deeper reflection; clearly show how learners have benefited; include ethical and other considerations and limitations on using films and clips in our current “screen age”.

We believe that the articles we have received and selected meet these objectives and what we love about all these ideas is that it is easy to change the settings on the streaming platform to be able to use them for any language.

Film as a tool for critical analysis of social and scientific issues

Several contributions explore how film can open up spaces for critical reflection on social, cultural, and scientific issues.

Nikola Mayer and Lena Schwarz, in *Windows and Mirrors: Approaching Diversity with the TV series Heartstopper*, revisit the metaphor of films as both “windows” into other lives and “mirrors” reflecting learners’ own experiences. Through the series *Heartstopper*, they show how questions of identity, diversity, and belonging can be meaningfully addressed in the language classroom.

Jennifer Wengler’s contribution, *Feministischer Widerstand in virtueller Realität mit DRAW FOR CHANGE! We exist, we resist*, takes this engagement further by examining the use of immersive media. Working with a VR-based short film in Spanish, the article highlights both the affective power of such experiences and the pedagogical responsibility of carefully guiding learners through their emotional and critical responses.

The intersection of film and scientific literacy is explored in two complementary contributions. **Georgia Gödecke**’s analysis of the French mini-series *Générations Carbone* demonstrates how audiovisual narratives can help learners engage with complex ecological issues. Building on this, **Jan-Erik Leonhardt and Karoline Thorbecke** propose a framework linking *Film literacy x scientific literacy*, inviting learners to analyze and produce science-based video essays. In doing so, they

develop not only critical viewing skills but also the ability to evaluate how films communicate scientific concepts and help us engage with complex ecological issues.

Crucially, these contributions remind us that it is not only *what* we do with films, but also *which* films we choose that matters. **Evangelia Kyritsi**’s article on using short films and clips to raise awareness of speech, language, and communication needs illustrates how carefully selected materials can foster empathy and inclusivity. La contribution de **Debora Porfiri**, *Watch Me If You Can: intégrer la vidéo en L2 pour forger une conscience citoyenne*, propose un cadre méthodologique et des pistes de réflexion et d’intervention en explorant le potentiel des courts métrages et extraits vidéo pour soutenir l’engagement des apprenant-e-s envers les contextes historiques, culturels et sociaux d’œuvres littéraires.

Film as a tool for language development

While all contributions demonstrate the linguistic potential of audiovisual media, the following articles focus more explicitly on the *how* of language learning with film. In *Girotondo: Filmisches Lernen im frühen Italienischunterricht am Gymnasium*, **Antonino Arcuri** shows how even beginner learners can become active producers through film-based activities, transforming the classroom into a space of creative and functional language learning.

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Due mondi da sempre vicini sono la letteratura e il cinema, avvicinati anche dal potenziale didattico dato dalle possibilità comparative di due generi narrativi: l'opera letteraria e la sua trasposizione cinematografica. Anche tramite questo approccio il focus sui contenuti e le istanze sociali veicolate dalle opere d'arte diventa parte integrante e fondante delle attività in classe. **Alessandra Minisci** illustra *L'uso dell'input filmico nella didattica della letteratura italiana* descrivendo attività in classe basate sul romanzo e film *Sostiene Pereira*, dove sono sviluppati temi quali la libertà d'informazione,

Film as a tool for visual literacy development

A further thread running through this issue is the development of visual literacy – the need to realize that images, too, must be consumed with awareness. A fact that is perhaps not yet taken for granted even in our “image-driven society,” if Minisci’s assertion is true that in school “many students are not accustomed to consciously reflecting on the expressive means of the audiovisual text, tending to view this type of analysis as a practice linked almost exclusively to literature” (our translation). A statement that also challenges those involved in teacher training.

Finally, this season’s Teaching Taster, by **Thorbecke, Gödecke & Leonhardt** is entitled „Lights, camera... and science!“ It provides teachers with a structured way of combining scientific with film literacy in a tool that can be used by learners for analysis and provides myriad additional ideas for teachers in French, German and English lessons. To conclude, we include a „Primula“ practical parts of **Abitha Ranganathan**’s MA thesis entitled „Anti-Bias Education Approaches to Visual Storytelling using Avatar: The Last Airbender“ which provides a useful framework for unpacking bias in film that can be used with secondary school learners.

Across all these contributions, one message emerges clearly: films and videos are not merely supplementary materials, but powerful pedagogical tools that can foster language development, critical thinking, and meaningful engagement with the world. Like Totò and Peppino, our learners – and we as educators – may sometimes navigate linguistic and cultural complexity with improvisation and creativity. Yet it is precisely this process of searching, experimenting, and striving to understand—*noio volevòn savuàr*—that makes learning both possible and profoundly human.

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la responsabilità individuale, l'impegno civile. Nel contributo di **Chiara Falcone**, *Apprendimento linguistico e schermi: un percorso didattico tra letteratura, cinema e giustizia sociale*, le attività si appoggiano al libro e film *Como agua para chocolate* dove si discute per es. di tradizioni (e oppressioni) familiari o del desiderio di libertà giovanile. Entrambe le autrici evidenziano come accanto all'acquisizione di competenze linguistiche (rispettivamente in italiano e in spagnolo), si sviluppano anche competenze sulle diverse strategie narrative di un romanzo e di un film, sulla capacità di discutere e argomentare in una lingua straniera e sulla visual literacy. **Isciane Favre** propose par contre une métaréflexion sur la norme ou l'idée de norme linguistique: à partir de la question “« Tu veux parler comme un Français ? » » elle propose une étude sur les *représentations linguistiques dans les vidéos éducatives de FLE en contexte numérique*, en montrant comment les vidéos éducatives de FLE au format court sur les médias sociaux nous renseignent sur les représentations linguistiques des différents acteurs de l'enseignement-apprentissage du FLE.

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Fotogramma da “Totò, Peppino e... la malafemmina”, un'altra celebre scena: la dettatura della lettera. Fonte: Wikimedia Commons. Opera nel pubblico dominio. L'utente che ha caricato in origine il file è stato Ligabo di Wikipedia in italiano, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=29890373>