The effects of key word captions to authentic French video in foreign language instruction
This study is motivated by the hypothesis that comprehension of video featuring native speakers can be optimized by the use of a key word method to content. Video featuring native speakers has been used to enhance curriculum since the 1970's. In order to teach the synthesis of culture and language, authentic materials (materials which portray the sights, sounds and routine of the country under study) have become daily fare in the classroom. Some of these materials are restaurant menus, train schedules, hotel bills, recorded dialogues with native speakers and authentic video. Authentic video is touted as the best of these because it contains the sights, sounds and gestures of the culture. However, the natural rate of speech of native speakers is problematic for beginners. Various methods have been used to address this problem, such as previewing preparation of vocabulary lists, written or oral summaries of the content in English, or subtitling the video. "By providing students with a familiar (i.e., comprehensible) graphic representation of an utterance, they are empowered to begin to assign meaning to previously unintelligible aural entities, gradually building their aural comprehension in relation to the reading comprehension" (Garza, 1991, p. 248). Subtitling in French and other foreign languages has already been proven to increase students' comprehension of content. In this study, the use of key word subtitles has been investigated.

Data were collected from two different captioning techniques on digitized video, and prepared in three different experimental conditions. The first condition displayed verbatim subtitles representing 100% of the text of the transcript of the audio message. This is referred to as the closed caption input condition. The second input condition displayed only 14% of that transcript, representing the key words to content. The key words were chosen in a preliminary study in which francophones read the transcriptions of the audio messages of two video clips and determined which words were most important to the message. There was a third input condition where the video has no captions. This was the control.

Approximately 200 respondents participated in the study, with approximately 70 in each experimental group. The results were calculated by One-way ANOVA, and showed that the mean of the scores on the comprehension tests of the respondents in the key word caption group (mean = 9.24) was significantly different (F=452.0013[2,202], p < .001) from that of the control (mean = 7.28) and there was no significant difference between the mean of the key word group and the closed caption group (mean = 10.09). There was a significant difference (F=452.0013[2,202], p < .001) between the closed caption group and the control.

The findings upheld the researcher's hypothesis that there is a positive effect of key word captions on the comprehension of authentic video by adult beginners of French. Further, since there is no significant difference between the scores of the key word group and the closed caption group, key word captions can be considered as effective in transmitting content in authentic video as the closed captions. This is a compelling finding for comprehension of authentic video in beginners, since the amount of text represented in the key word captions is only 14% of the script, while the closed captions represent 100% of the script. For transmitting content, key word captions do just as well as regular subtitles, with less cognitive load to the beginner reading the captions.