Eriona CELA

MOVIES AND THEIR EFFECTS IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

Abstract

The teaching and learning process improves and develops year after year. Professors try to find new ways and materials to make the learning experiences for EFL students more inspiring and fruitful. Beside usual authentic materials used in class, movies (in DVD format) have become very popular among EFL teachers. They are considered to be the core content of the course. These materials serve as motivation and a method from which students benefit. Furthermore, the genre of the movie effects the learning process. A few studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between students’ movie preferences and effective learning. If films shown in a class don’t arouse students’ interest, the learning effect will be lessened.

Key words: Autodidact, transactional conversation, listening competence, formation hypothesis.

1. Introduction

Nowadays learning a foreign language is a necessity. This is the reason why children start learning a second language when they are still in the elementary school. Different specialists believe that it is easier to learn a second language at an early age. There may be lots of reasons but I totally agree with this. Children, for example have more free time, so they are active in learning the second language. On the other hand they have no other obligations and they are focused only in learning the second language. But, the most important of all is that they are motivated and they don’t need special strategies to involve them in

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1 Paper presented in “3 International Conference ‘Foreign Languages in a Global World, Linguistics, Literature, Didactics” Durres, June 2017”
the teaching and learning process.

Another advantage that our society provides us is the enormous number of technological appliances easily used in class or individually at home. Some of this aims may be, computer, internet, tablet, smart phones, projectors, etc.

To be more specific regarding the language, English is widely taught in primary and elementary school. This, because of the great importance that it is taking lately, moreover in communication skills.

Through communication we can share ideas, thoughts, so, we can interact with each other. This is an easy process when we use mother tongue but it is obviously more difficult to do the same when communicating in English, where we have limitations of knowledge.

While learning a second language, we don’t focus only in speaking but even in listening as well as in grammar or vocabulary that we use. Some informal ways to improve these skills may be, watching movies in English, or listening to the radio. Sometimes, even listening to the song’s lyrics helps as much as reading a book.

What I am trying to say, is that media, and moreover movies, increase student’s sensibility in hearing sense and perception. Based on the survey of this paper, more than 50% of the students said that they prefer watching a movie rather than reading a book. This kind of activity is favorite for all ages and students of all levels in English like it. It makes the teaching and learning process more interesting and enjoyable for both, teachers and students as well. So, students need to behave and learning English by the way they like is more helpful, in this case by watching movies.

2. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this paper is to test students their skills in listening and moreover to find out what genres do students like watching in English, whether they prefer watching the movie with or without subtitles. If they prefer watching it with subtitles, how effective is this in learning new words and if not how effective is this in understanding English and getting the meaning from the context.

3. Methodology

The results of this paper are taken from the surveys provided to students of the 9th grade. The movies chosen to watch were played in two different classes. In one of the class the film had the subtitles but in the other the film didn’t have
the subtitles.

Movies chosen were *Home Alone 2*, is a family comedy movie directed by Chris Columbus, written by John Hughes and stars are Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern etc, and *Home Alone 4* is a family comedy movie as well and the story, in the foundation, is the same. Even the main character has the same name. The director is Rod Daniel, written by John Hughes and stars are Mike Weinberg, Chelsea Russo, Missi Pyle etc. It is the fourth installment in the *Home Alone* series. Both movies are comedy.

### 3.1.1 Method and Procedure of Research

After they watched the movies students had to fill in an questioner with 19 questions. The reason why it is used the questionnaire is because it has proven to be a trust worthy method to get feedback on important issues.

Another questionnaire was used to find out how much students have learned English through this activity. If they are able to recognize the new vocabulary or to answer the questions provided by the teacher. All these procedures for this study were conducted in the 2nd Semester of 2017.

### 4. Research question

- Are movies preferences related to effective learning?
- What are the most popular movies genres?
- The data analyzed evaluates the participant’s opinions on using movies to teach in EFL classroom.

### 5. Target group

There are 76 9th grade students from two different schools chosen to be part of this research. In these 86 respondents, there were (36%) female participants and (64%) male participants. (48%) of participants have taken private English classes and (51%) of participants have not taken any private classes but have learned English at school in an autodidactic way.

### 6. Literature review

Movies provide a wonderful opportunity for students to gain background understanding to combine with their own understanding about a story or concept. When reading a text, movie features can help students connect to new information they may have not had background in and adapt their new thoughts,
images, and feelings to the text at hand (Gambrell & Jawits, 1993). Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson suggest using a Watch-Read-Watch-Read (W-R-W-R) method in which students will build some background of the text, make predictions, watch part of the movie, read more of the text, confirm understandings, make more predictions, watch more of the movie, and continue reading the text (Rankin-Erickson, 2003).

The main component of using the movies in the class is actually enabling the reader to picture or to visualize the events, characters, narration, story and words in the context. Draper (2012) has characterized visualization as a very important prerequisite for a good reader. She has studied and concluded the following key points regarding the reading process and visualization:

- Proficient readers spontaneously and purposefully create mental images while and after they read.
- The images emerge from all five senses, as well as emotions, and are anchored in readers’ background knowledge.
- Proficient readers use images to immerse themselves in rich detail as they read. The detail gives depth and dimension to the reading, engaging the reader more deeply, making the text more memorable.
- Proficient readers use images to draw conclusions, to create distinct and unique interpretations of the text, to recall details significant to the text, and to recall a text after it has been read. Images from readers’ personal experience frequently become part of their comprehension.
- Proficient readers adapt their images as they continue to read. Images are revised to incorporate new information revealed through the text and new interpretations as they are developed by the reader.
- Proficient readers understand and articulate how creating images enhances their comprehension.

Draper (2012) states that Scholars have defined visualization as the ability to build mental pictures or images while reading. It is evident that our own visualizations, when reading the script, would greatly depend upon our prior knowledge and engagement with the topic (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997)

This is a great support on why should English teachers be more innovative, motivating and support the use of movies in English classes.

Helping our students gain visualization skills is an important way to foster greater comprehension when reading. It allows students the ability to become more engaged in their reading and use their images to draw conclusions, create
7. Listening skills

The listening activities develop a wide variety of listening in details, and inferring meaning from the context. These exercises often require completing an authentic task while listening, such as taking missing words in completion items, text of the song or taking telephone messages. Listening is very important part of learning English. It could be seen on the following statement. “The important of listening in language teaching can hardly be overestimated. Through reception, we internalize linguistic information without which we could not produce language. In classroom, students always do more listening than speaking. Listening competence is universally “larger” than speaking competence. Is it any wonder, then that is recent years the language teaching profession has placed content emphasized on listening comprehension?” (Brown, 1994:233)

8. Importance of listening skills

Listening can be characterized as problem solving activities involving the formation hypothesis, the drawing of inference, and the resolution of ambiguities and uncertainties in the input through the generation of “mages” (as a set of items: sensory, emotional, temporal, relational, purposive or verbal in nature) or as Rost’s (1991:90) view the goal of listening is “... to generate the intended image from the input and react appropriately...” But, the effect of prior knowledge and context also seem to be instrumental in listening in listening test, such as Rixon (1986:213) say that. “Listener constructs meaning by recognizing their previously acquired knowledge to accommodate new information and concept.”

According to Sheath Rixon (1986:1), the aim of teaching listening comprehension is (or should be) to help learners of English cope with listening in real life, but there is large variety of different types of listening in real life. Rixon (1986:2) mentions some in which listening is important:

1. Listening to announcement in stations, airport, etc
2. Listening to the radio
3. Participating in a conversation face to face
4. Watching a film, play or TV
5. Participating in a meeting, seminar or discussion
6. Taking a part in a lesson
7. Listening to talk or lecture
8. Eavesdropping on other people’s conversation
9. Participating in a telephone conversation

Rixon (1986:28) also differentiates between listening and hearing. There is an everyday distinction between hearing and something and listening to it. Hearing is only the recognition of sound, as we say, “I am sorry, I did not hear exactly what you said”. Listening implies some conscious attention to the message of what is said, as when we say, “Are you listening to me?”

Recalling important words and ideas Rost (1994:4) says, “Successful listening involves an integration of these component skills. In some case, listening is a coordination of the component skills, not the individual skills themselves. This integration of these perception skills, analysis skills and synthesis skills is what we will call a person’s listening ability”. Rost (1991:4) has also argued that even though a person may have a good listening ability, he or she not always be able to understand messages, some conscious actions is necessary to use this ability effectively in each listening situation. This action that listener must perform is “cognitive” or mental, so it is not possible to view it directly, but we can see the effect of this action. The understanding action for successful listening is depending on the listener’s decision.

Successful listening requires making effective “real time” decision about these questions. In this sense listening is primarily thinking process thinking about meaning as they listen. The way in which the listener makes these decisions is what we will call a listening strategy. Rost (1991:70) stated that there are four principles for developing listening ability:

1. Listening ability develops through face-to-face interaction. By interacting in English, learners have the chance for a new language input and the chance to train their listening ability. Face-to-face interaction provides stimulation for development of listening for meaning.

2. Listening develops through focusing on meaning and trying to learn new and important content in the target language. By focusing on meaning and real reasons for listening in English, learners can mobile both their linguistic and non-linguistic abilities to master.

3. Listening ability develops through work on comprehension activities by focusing on specific goals for listening. Learners can evaluate their efforts and abilities. By having well-defined comprehension activities, learners have opportunities for assessing what they had achieved and revised.
4. Listening ability develops through attention to accuracy and an analysis of form. By learning the perceive sounds and words accurately as they work on meaning oriented activities, our learners can make steady progress. By learning to hear sounds and words accurately, learners gain confidence in listening for meaning.

9. Movies

A film is a motion picture, often referred to as a movie. Film is a sequence of pictures in frame in which the sequence is presented through LCD. As a result we can see that the sequence of picture is alive and move (Arsyad, 2003: 49). According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary film is a kind of story that is recorded as a set of moving picture to be shown on the television or at the cinema. From these definitions, it can be concluded that film is a set of moving picture that forms a story which is shown through LCD or in the TV or at the cinema or movie theater.

A unique property of film is its ability to “. . . make one see and grasp things which only the cinema is privileged to communicate” (Kracauer in Champoux, 1999). Furthermore, he explains that the unique characteristics of film making add to its communication power. Focusing techniques, editing, framing of shots, camera angles, sound, and the like, help a director make a powerful statement of a subject. These techniques also let a director create an experience that often goes beyond what we can experience in reality. Viewers are not passive observers. Their responses add to the power of film. Cinema’s ability to create a unique experience gives it unbeatable power as a teaching tool.

10. The Use of Films for Educational Purpose in Classroom

Some previous studies have been conducted on the use of film in EFL teaching. For instance, Champoux (1999) has studied the use of films as teaching resource, Fjällström (2010), Ismaili (2010), Allan (1985), Stoller (1988), Katchen (2003) and Sufen (2006) have analysed the use of films and videotapes concerning particularly EFL or ESL teaching. All prove that film can be an alternative to teach English. Movies are versatile tool for foreign language teaching and they can be used in several different ways when teaching the different aspects of foreign language, such as teaching oral communication, teaching writing, teaching vocabulary, teaching grammar and teaching culture (Ruusunen, 2011).
Movies show the play with authentic and natural language, and real setting as the reflection of the real world, so the conversation within the movies also reflect the reality. In line with this, Kusumarasdyati (2004) states that movies provide exposures to “real language,” used in authentic settings and in the cultural context which the foreign language is spoken. Thus, it can be said that movies expose the students to real spoken language that a textbook cannot present. In movies, sometimes there are utterances related to the context of situation, concept and pragmatic expression that a textbook cannot illustrate. Therefore, this makes it possible for them to pick up for instance phrases or expressions that they could actually use in an English-speaking environment (Ruusunen, 2011), so that they can enhance their communicative skill. By watching movies, students can learn how to talk in a native-like manner. Considering these advantages, movies can be considered as authentic material in teaching English since they provide the learners with genuine input (Mishan, 2004:216).

In addition, movies make the learning process more entertaining, more enjoyable and possibly even somewhat easier (Ruusunen, 2011). It can motivate both the students and the teacher in the teaching learning process, because they get fun and the more comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. This is like what Kusumarasdyati (2004) point out that movies catch the learners’ interest and it can positively affect their motivation to learn.

11. The Challenges of Using Film in Classroom

The benefit that can be acquired from using movies is immense indeed, but unfortunately it cannot be implemented at every school in Albania. Not all of Albanian schools facilitated by the equipments which support, such as laptop, LCD, DVD player, and television, especially the schools located in the remote area. Besides, there sometimes happens a technical problem, so the teacher has to anticipate it. Watching films will only be time consuming and time filler if the teacher cannot manage the students well and make a good preparation for classroom activities accompanying the film viewing.

12. Data Analysis of the Questionnaire

The result of each question is analyzed as follows.
Q1. What kinds of English movies do you like?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thriller</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War movie</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspensor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sci-fi</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action movie</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animated film</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data show that comedy is the most popular movie genre. It is reasonable to point out that people like comedy because of its entertaining and funny elements. It would bring laughter and relaxation to life.

Q2. Do you think watching English movies has a beneficial effect on learning English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data show that 95% of respondents agree that English movies are useful in language learning.

Q3. Do you think your movie preferences will affect your learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the table, it is understandable that more than 80% of the participants agree, the highest percentage was at moderately agree with 35%.
Q4. I am interested in learning English if the teacher uses English films as teaching materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than 37% of participants chose “Strongly agree,” 22% of participants chose “Agree” and 36% of participants chose “Moderately agree.” The data show using DVD films in EFL classrooms is highly accepted by the students. Thus, using DVD films to teach EFL class is highly recommended.

Q5. How many English sentences have you learned from the movie?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>1-3 sentences</th>
<th>3-5 sentences</th>
<th>5-7 sentences</th>
<th>More than 10</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The % expected was higher than that it actually was. “No reply” had quite a high percentage. Also the “1-3 sentences” answer was higher than expected. Perhaps students enjoyed more the action than listening to the characters.

The data show that exposure to similar dialogues four or five times over the course of 100-minute movies showing time helps participants remember some of the sentences used in the similar scenes.

Q6. Why do these sentences impress you so much?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Been repeated many times</th>
<th>Too funny</th>
<th>Abusive language</th>
<th>Have learned before</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Too funny” was intended to get the highest percentage and it actually did. With 23%, the participants thought that the sentences that impressed them more were too funny.
Q7. Do you think the dialogs in the movie can be used in daily life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With 32% “Moderately agree”, the dialogues in the movie can be used in daily life.

13. Conclusion

The implementation of movies in the teaching and learning process was a new activity not only for students but even for teachers. This activity requires some important procedures to follow and it takes more time than an usual teaching hour takes.

Students have positives response toward the use of watching movie scene assessment in assessing listening competence.

There is strong support in using DVD films to motivate students to study English.

Movie preferences are related to effective language learning.
Comedy is the most popular movie genre.

14. Suggestions

To follow up the findings, some of suggestions are also made to be addressed to the teachers and the students.

To the Teachers
Considering that the method of watching movie scene can effectively assess the students’ listening skill, English teachers are recommended to apply this model as an alternative mean of teaching listening for the students.

They are also suggested to socialize this assessment model through teacher’s forums found widely in different websites, in serve training, workshops or even seminar.

To the Students
In view of the advantages of watching movie scene to improve their listening skill that can ease the student in their daily activity in the school especially in English lesson.

Watching movies are favorite activity for some students.
Moreover, English movies can increase their listening skill ability.
References:


