MOVIES AND LANGUAGE LEARNING: WHAT SKILLS DO THEY CONQUER?

Nyak Mutia Ismail

Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, INDONESIA
Email: nyakmutiaismail2010@gmail.com

Abstract
The use of movies in English teaching and learning is believed to have a positive effect on language learning outcomes. This research was carried out to discover where movies can contribute to skills and aspects of language, whether in speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, or cultural aspects. This study is significant because this study tries to find out the teachers' perception about the movie-using in ELT classroom and which skill it is prone to, so that English teachers see the chance to maximize its pedagogical use in ELT process. The qualitative research method used in this study focused on 10 English teachers from a heterogeneous background — primary, secondary, and senior high-school teachers — to answer 12 questions in a questionnaire set in accordance with the research topic. The use of creative interviews was also employed during the data collection phase. The results showed that most of the subjects agreed that movies played the most important role in the cultural aspect; and suggested that movies could contribute considerable advantages to listening skills. While the least convincing aspect was that, neither the reading skill nor grammar was linked to movie-watching technique. And this only encompassed one of the teachers agreeing with this statement.

Keywords: English movies, English language learning, ELT process, language skills.

INTRODUCTION

The use of media is believed to be one of the techniques for occupying students in EFL classrooms with meaningful tasks and activities (Rarick, 2007). Media can help students to perform better, ignite ideas that seem impossible to generate or simply help a brainstorming process, or even enhance students with weaker ability (Barlex & Welch, 2001). Movies are easily accessed nowadays and this fact provides bigger opportunities for teachers to use this interesting audio-visual media in teaching various skills to their EFL students (Champoux, 1999).

Movies have generally been used in teaching listening. A study by Ismail (2011) found that the use of movie scenes in listening classes for two weeks (four meetings) had improved the students' score in listening from the average 62 to average 74. Besides, she also confirmed that students' positive response arose during the use of this technique which had become a strong proposition that motivation and behavioural traits played an important role in increasing their listening score in only four meetings. As Trent (2011) affirms that motivation is a vital indicator in determining the rate of acquisition process of a language where it majorly concerns to desire, attention, effort, goal setting, confidence, application for both spoken and written input, and teachability. Then, movies have also been used in speaking. A classroom action research project by Kalean (2013) supports that the students increased their score from 60.32 up to 70.81. As mentioned earlier, motivation also played

the dominant rules in this study. Next, in a classroom action research study by Agusta (2015), the students' ability in writing narrative text increases from 58.8 in the pre-test to 76.1 in the post-test.

The study was conducted within two cycles with three meetings for each cycle. This study also reported that the use of movies could enhance students' grammatical knowledge, especially the one employed in narrative text, Past Tense. The use of movies in the teaching of reading is seemingly possible because so many movies are made or adapted from literary works, especially if caption in the target language is provided. This would be especially relevant the issues related to extensive reading such as novels or biography. As it is evidenced by Alqadi (2015), movies have been profoundly influenced by literary works. Concerning the grammar ability, there have been no further related studies found — not to the author's current knowledge — in issues of movies in concern of grammar ability, except the one mentioned in Agusta's (2015) findings. While in vocabulary, a study by Gorjian (2014) revealed that students taught with L1-subtitled movies showed considerable development in vocabulary acquisition. The study's subjects were 90 fresh graduate students of English Translation at BA level in Abadan Azad University, Iran. They were divided into three experimental groups; bimodal subtitles (Group A), standard subtitles (Group B), and reverse subtitles (Group C). Group A was facilitated with movies played in English sound and English subtitles, Group B watched movies in English with Persian subtitles, while Group C watched movies played in Persian and English subtitles. After eight times of treatments, Group C with reverse subtitles learned more vocabulary items, the second increase is shown by Group B with standard subtitles, and the least improvement is from Group A with bimodal subtitles. Lastly, movies can certainly be employed in building cultural awareness such as geographic, sociolinguistic, socio-economic, socio-political, and educational issues (Istanto, 2009).

Based on those partial studies on movies towards their use in English language learning, this study was specifically scoped into the use of movies in EFL classrooms as a means of media implementation in the ELT process in order to seek which skills or sub skills are fundamentally affected by movies based on the English teachers' perception.

METHODS

The method used in conducting this study was a qualitative method with two data resources. The primary data source in this study was questionnaire consisting of 12 questions and the secondary data resource was several creative interviews — an unconventional way in collecting oral reports from the respondents that did not follow the general protocols of interviewing and it was responsive as well as adaptable to the situation — in less formal conditions with the respondents (Douglas, 1985). The questionnaire set which was answered through a Likert Scale categorical value (1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= I don't know; 4= agree; and 5= strongly agree) is as in the following.

Table 1. Questionnaires.

No.	Statements
1.	Teachings listening through movies help my students understand audio texts.
2.	My students respond positively each time I teach listening using movies.
3.	Teachings speaking through movies help my students express their ideas orally.
4.	My students respond positively each time I teach speaking using movies.
5.	Teachings reading through movies help my students understand various written texts.
6.	My students respond positively each time I teach reading using movies.
7.	Teachings writing through movies help my students express and generate ideas in written form(s).
8.	My students respond positively each time I teach writing using movies.
9.	Teaching grammar through movies help my students reinforce their grammatical ability.
10.	My students respond positively each time I teach grammar using movies.
11.	Teaching English through movies help my students expand their knowledge of vocabulary.
12.	Teaching English through movies help my students recognize the cross-cultural understanding issues better.

The questionnaire set was administered to ten English teachers; five of them were senior high school teachers, two of them were junior high school teachers, and three of them were elementary school teachers. The author held the creative interview a while after the teachers filled out the

questionnaire form about their perceptions on using movies in EFL classrooms. As soon as the questionnaire set filled and the oral data obtained, the primary data were analysed to find the percentage and the result of the oral reports were used as the complementary data in the process of triangulation. This study employed *Theory Triangulation* which uses theoretical perspectives in examining and interpreting the data (Patton, 2001).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned before, the data were processed to determine the percentages for the responses. The percentage of each questionnaire is precisely drawn in the following chart.
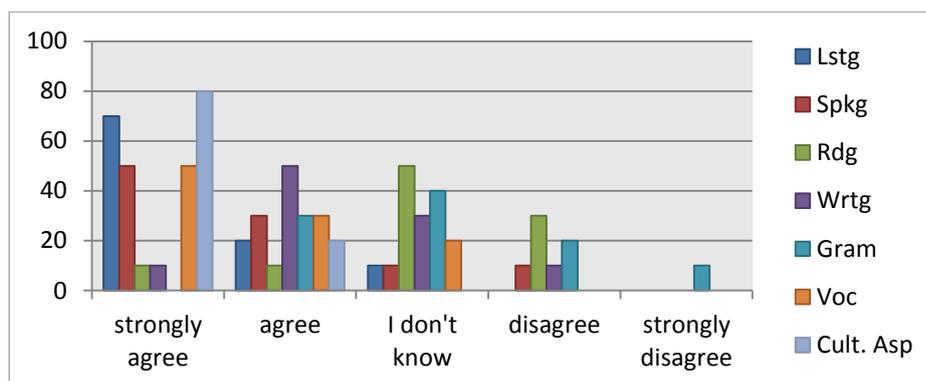

Figure 1. Questionnaire percentage (%).

It can be seen from Figure 1 that the most agreed skills affected by movies are the Cultural aspect, Listening, Speaking, and Vocabulary. In that order; Speaking and Vocabulary have an equal percentage, 50%. The prominently dominant effect is centred on Cultural aspect, which is 80%.This percentage is somewhat similar to the study conducted by Ruusunen (2011) that most teachers strongly agreed (54%) that the cultural aspect is the most affected sub skills in the ELT process using movies. Next, it is the Listening skill that is impacted by movies at 70%. And the only sub skill presumed without any impact from movies is Grammar, which is served by scarcely 10% in the respondents' assent in Agreement and 0% in Strongly Agree.

Second to this, the author accumulated the intention in finding further teachers' perception on using movies in ELT classes based on the interviews. The oral information from the teachers was written down. Some of the keynote interview transcriptions were provided and theoretically examined in the following. The interviews were originally in Bahasa Indonesia, but it was needlessly — with regard to space-format matter — to provide the original version since it was translated into English. Researcher is indicated by initial *R*, and Teacher by *T*.

Session 1:
R: What skills do you usually teach through movies? Do you integrate some skills?
T: Listening, but sometimes, if it's applicable for speaking, I'll teach speaking. But once, I integrated listening and speaking. And for writing and reading, it is also likely. But (to teach reading) I asked the students to read the story earlier.

From the interview above the teachers confirmed that the most probable skills that can be integrated are listening and speaking. As well as reading and writing. This is simultaneous with Wu's (2002) proposition that one of the essential goals in teaching through movies is to ascend the ability of speaking, listening, and interpretation ability. Rui (2014) further affirms that besides movies are convenient access to foreign language learning, they can enhance students' listening skills as well. Concerning to reading-writing, movies and books are both sources of authentic materials that can be explored in and outside the classroom, and movies can stimulate the learners' reading habits and make the reading texts become more meaningful since movies visualize written texts with rich background (Agullo, 2003; Raman & Vijaya, 2016).

Session 2:

R: What about vocabulary and grammar?

T: Vocabulary certainly increases. Even it is only one or two words. But if we teach grammar alone, I think it is irrelevant. Unless it is writing, we ask (the students) to write, then in the editing process, we check on the grammar.

Next, concerning the vocabulary development in movie-watching technique, the teachers were absolutely convinced that there must be new word inputs. Ruusinen (2011) emphasizes that, basically, the clear-cut between 'learning' and 'acquiring' was drawn in Krashen's input theories — although it was designed for second language acquisition, it is still adaptable for foreign language learning. In its affective-filter hypothesis, language acquisition is more likely to happen in a burdenless condition to which the learners are engaged temporarily and where no rigorous demand is authorized. When watching, learners are unboundly paying attention to encoding information during listening, and then he/she is more likely to process the lexicons into his/her long-term intake processing. While towards the grammar ability, movies pose no roles on it unless it is spiralized through writing (Ruusinen, 2011). However, Agullo (2003) argues that once the learners are familiar with the movies, they will automatically focus on the linguistic competence, *i.e.* vocabulary and grammar.

Session 3:

R: What about cultural aspects? Do you teach cultural aspects in your class?

T: That's the biggest impact. Many of our youths learn new trends from western movies. But there are negative impacts, because not everything shown in the movies is good. If we want to show the movie in the class, we have to carefully select them. We do not expect inappropriate scenes or attires. But I never explain them to my students because they are not demanded in the curriculum. But I'm certainly sure they have the biggest impact.

As stated by Raman and Vijaya (2016), the post-activity in movie-watching can dig students' awareness toward culture, themes, and ways of life. In short, the easiest way to teach cultural aspects in ELT classrooms is by having the students discuss after watching so they can unveil more intrinsic issues rather than the extrinsic ones.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the result has shown that the teachers perceived that the aspect mostly affected in movie-watching technique is cultural aspect and some integration are possible between listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. While vocabulary develops in this technique, yet the grammar is not enhanced alone but with the companion of writing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Agullo, G. L. (2003). *'Reading' film and 'watching' literary texts: 5 lesson plans for advances TEFL students.* Retrieved from http://www.publicacion.ub.edu/revistes/bells12/PDF/art07.pdf

Agusta, D. (2015). *Improving students' ability in writing narrative texts using short animated stories at class VIII C of SMPN 2 Sanden, Bantul in the academic year of 2013/2014.* (Unpublished Bachelor thesis). Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta.

Alqadi, K. (2015). Literature and cinema. *International Journal of Language and Literature, 3*(1), 42-48.

Barlex, D., & Welch, M. (2001). Educational research and curriculum development: The case for synergy. *The Journal of Design and Technology Education, 6*(1), 29-39.

Champoux, J.E. (1999). Film as a teaching resource. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 8*(2), 240-251.

Douglas, J. (1985). *Creative interviewing*. Beverly Hills, C. A.: Sage Publications.

Gorjian, B. (2014). The effect of movie subtitling on incidental vocabulary learning among EFL learners. *Proceedings Book of International Conference on Emerging Trends in Scientific Research* (pp. 816-826). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Ismail, N. M. (2011). *Enhancing students' listening skill by using movie-scene.* (Unpublished Bachelor thesis). Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh.

Istanto, J.W. (2009). The use of films as an innovative way to enhance language learning and cultural understanding. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 6*(1), 278-290.

Kalean, I. (2013). Speaking skill improvement by using movie as media. *Jurnal Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran, 1*(13), 155-160.

Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2ⁿᵈ Edition). Thousand Oaks, C. A.: Sage Publication.

Raman, M. G., & Vijaya. (2016). Reading through films. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 7*(1), 168-174.

Rarick, C. A. (2007). Reflections on the use of foreign film in the classroom to enhance cross-culture understanding. *The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning, 3*(2), 1-6.

Rui, Y. (2014). The influences of *Forrest Gump's* character on his language characteristics in film *Forrest Gump. Canadian Social Science, 10*(5), 221-228.

Ruusunen, V. (2011). *Using movies in EFL teaching: the point of view of teachers.* (Unpublished Master's thesis). University of Jyvaskyla, Jyvaskyla.

Trent, K.F. (2011). *Learning languages through media: Toward an understanding of mediated language acquisition process and the motivation cycle of mediated language acquisition.* (Unpublished Master's thesis). Brigham Young University, Provo.

Wu, S. Q. (2002). *American movies.* Harbin: Harbin Engineering University Press.