

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FILM AS A MEDIA IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

Film is an audio-visual art form to present a story to an audience. As an entertainment medium, films can be used as complementary media in delivering language learning materials and training language skills. There are four macro language skills that must be mastered in order to be skilled in communication, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. One of the skills, namely listening, uses films as one of the learning materials. In the process of listening comprehension, films can be used to attract students' attention to several aspects of spoken language expression. Introducing and using films as a medium in language learning has been used, including as a tool to increase student interest in learning, expand knowledge and diverse cultures, improve language listening skills, make students familiar with English, and have an impact on increasing vocabulary development. In addition, films have a different effect on the learning process in the classroom because films have the power to motivate students to pay attention to the target language. For this reason, this paper tries to explain how film can be an effective medium in building listening comprehension and to elaborate further on the effectiveness of film as an audio-visual medium during the English listening process.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Audio Visual, Listening Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

A film, commonly known as a motion picture (or cinema), is an audio-visual form of art to present stories for audiences. Film could be viewed as a combination medium of image, story, and sound that has a context of a personal story. It also could be viewed as a popular culture that is bound up in a particular social and cultural context. Film is considered a powerful visual aid due to the attraction that it makes toward the human psyche, which often makes the viewers could not resist it (Macwan, 2015). These definitions highlight a glimpse of the importance and influences of film in society. Film allows the viewers to be entertained and gain deeper insight from a story that reflects a problem in society. It also allows the viewers to connect the motion picture to the broader fields, such as in the educational context.

Film is not only a form of entertainment but also an audio-visual for pedagogic purposes. Films are often used as supplementary media in delivering

materials from a subject or skill. Moreover, films are also used as a medium to acquaint learners with diverse cultures and perspectives to certain phenomena (Yaseen & Shakir, 2015:31). These facts show that films bring a different impact on the classroom learning process because they have the power to motivate the audience to pay attention to the target language.

Regarding the issue, films are often used as a medium in many educational situations, including in language learning. In language learning, there are macro language skills that need to be mastered in order to be skilled in communication. The macro skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening often uses film material during the learning process. Sands (1956:10) added that people can learn more quickly and easily through the audio-visual process compared to using only verbal explanations. This implies that visual involvement in teaching listening is very strong to help students understand the given material.

In the listening comprehension process, films are used to gain the learners' attention toward several aspects of spoken language expressions. Several film and language learning studies such as that conducted by Xi-chun and Meng-Jie (2015) propose that introducing films to the English listening teaching process gave several impacts. They believe that the aids improve students' learning interest, expand their knowledge, and improve their listening ability, thus promoting the level of teaching.

Although several studies suggest that film is one of the best medium options in the listening comprehension process, other studies try to transverse the opinion. Several language researchers believe that in several conditions, film could be inefficient for both teachers and learners during the learning process in the classroom. For example, the language in film is often too rapid and difficult to understand for learners with limited linguistic competence. This example suggests two propositions, whether films are only suitable for advanced language learners, or they only make the language learners more distracted. Another major problem that might cause films to be ineffective media is that learners often get distracted by the subtitles that inserted in the film. When learners watch a film with subtitles during the listening process, it will be easier to comprehend its contents. However, the learners might be distracted by the target language texts and end up paying less attention to the images and the sounds (Liando et al., 2018:6). The above explanation suggests that the learners will only understand the film from the translated text, not from the source language itself. As a result, it only makes learners watch the film solely for the purpose of entertainment.

In general, the above studies have raised important questions about the effectiveness of film in listening comprehension. Therefore, this essay attempts to fill the gaps in how film can be an effective medium in building listening comprehension, despite the contradicted remarks on the distraction that might occur. The essay will elaborate further ideas on the effectiveness of film as an audio-visual media during the English language learning process, specifically in listening. It will also explain further why people believe that a film can be a distraction during the listening comprehension process. Another goal is to show the implementation of films as a medium in the listening comprehension process that is shown by previous related studies.

Film as an Audio-visual Aid in the English Learning

In real-life practice, teaching and learning processes that rely only on the textbooks and teachers' explanations as to the sources of the language input are considered as monotonous methods. In order to vary the language learning process, teachers explore several aid options that would help the learning process. One of the options is by using audio-visual aids. Audio-visual media often combines audio aids and visual aids into a material that would attract and retain people's attention. Audio-visual aids are divided into several types, including pictures, photo dictionaries, charts, maps, diagrams, and films.

The use of any audio-visual aids in educational situations brings several important aspects. It will make students easier in understanding a concept for an extended period, which makes the learning process more effective. Audio-visual aids also develop students' critical thinking skills and reasoning when they understand the provided contents in the aids. This idea was proposed due to the sequences that exist in visual aids that allow the learners to conjunct each form of communication with their critical thinking process. As a result, the learning process will be structured and more efficient. Another importance of audio-visual aids is that it makes the language learners gain motivation and curiosity in the learning process. When traditional verbal instructions often bore the students during the learning process, audio-visual aids will stimulate students' interest in the subjects. Kleinman and Dwyer (Safran, 2015) state that the use of colourful graphics in learning modules eventually resulted in a better achievement learning process rather than the grayscale graphics.

As an audio-visual aid, films hold the same importance and value as other audio-visual aids during the English learning process. The use of film in learning interactions is an effective communication medium because students are invited to use their senses simultaneously. Combining the two senses, namely sight and hearing in one process will help students to understand, remember, and make better use of content and meaning in the classroom. There are many reasons why a film as a visual aid is used as a medium of learning, first, students can listen to a foreign language in a visual context that helps to understand. Then, secondly, students can correctly see the culture that is introduced rather than just reading or listening to a culture. Films make abstract things more realistic, as well as visual depictions of various traditions, customs, and social values. Another aspect that would make a film as a magnetic medium for teaching is that it will significantly enrich students' vocabulary that would bring further potential in enhancing students' English skills experience. With this possible success during the learning process, students will also develop a better relationship with the teachers in order to develop the projected learning objective in the classroom.

In the context of listening comprehension, films are seen as a proper audio-visual context. Most researchers claim that films as a form of integration between pictures and audio will help language learners develop their listening skills (Lina, 2018). It will evoke an audio-visual response of the learners during the learning

process. Films also often make the learners relate themselves to the learning process since the regular learning aids would bore them. By relating the films to the learning process, the students eventually develop their motivation to study English in the classroom (Safran, 2015). From what has been described above, making film media is a good tool for learning listening comprehension. However, the level of the effectiveness of film as an audio-visual aid in the listening comprehension classroom will vary, depending on several circumstances.

Films' Effectiveness in Listening Comprehension Process

The issue of a film as an audio-visual aid has led to the question of whether films are sufficient to be used in the listening comprehension process. Although films are often claimed as an effective way of teaching and listening to English, it is crucial to look for empirical results proving the outcome of implementation in the real classroom situation. Therefore, it is essential to determine and compare the shreds of evidence from previous studies on whether a film is effective or not.

Several studies show that the use of films in the listening comprehension process is often confusing and inefficient for the students in the learning process (Liando et al., 2018; Qiu, 2017; Safran, 2015). Some teachers often have higher expectations for the students' ability to process films during the listening process, which leads them to pick films with sophisticated vocabulary and unfamiliar expressions. Instead of being intrigued by that, the students grow uninterested in the materials. Safran (2015) explains, based on a questionnaire session, almost a quarter of the study's participants believe that film is not only unsatisfying for their needs in the learning process but also wasting time.

Asides from that, it is found that films do not affect the motivation and anxiety levels of language learners. Qiu (2017) explains this problem by examining students' responses toward the listening comprehension process before and after they use films as learning aids. After observing the students for one semester through different teaching interference, the result shows that the experiment does not show a significant difference in the students' anxiety level after learning through films. The students also show a similar, low motivation in learning through films with the traditional method. These findings indicate that films do not always give effective results to every language learner and have an underdeveloped theoretical framework, despite the public acclaim that films are always practical for everyone (Metruk, 2019; Qiu, 2017).

These negative results exhibited by the studies happen due to several conditions that may occur during the observation process. First, the teachers only choose the film based on their interest, not on the learners' interest in the classroom. Another supporting factor is that film, as previously stated in the earlier passage in this study, is incomprehensible by the learners. Sometimes, a film that is given by the teacher does not include any subtitles, which makes non-advanced English learners feel perplexed to understand the content itself. Instead of recognizing the phrases or expressions in the film, they will only guess the meaning of a particular dialogue.

Despite there being several studies that show the ineffectiveness of film in listening comprehension, other studies tackle this claim and bring different yet positive results (Lina, 2018; Safran, 2015). These different results are heavily caused by the diverse response from the students about the film as the learning aid. This aspect is also caused by the capability of the teacher to correctly use the films as visual aids.

One of the recent studies shows that film indeed enhances the students' capability and engagement to listen and learn more carefully. Lina (2018) compares the use of films to audiotapes on the listening comprehension process, which results in students' better progress while using films. Based on the questionnaire in the study, the learners majorly admit that the use of films indeed improves their ability to understand listening audios. Aside from that, the use of films also increases classroom interaction and cooperative learning during the listening comprehension process. This proved that with a combination of images and sounds, learners ultimately will not only engage with their imagination based on the sounds, but also the exact, physical visuals that are shown in the film. Furthermore, this process will also lead to the growth of learners, active students engagements, and motivation to the learning process.

Films are also proved as a beneficial aid in helping the students to understand various language elements, such as idioms, proverbs, vocabularies, and slang (Liando et al., 2018; Sari & Sugandi (2015). Typically, films contain a different kind of language expression that matches the cultural sets contained in the story. These expressions eventually help international students to understand the natural form of English itself. Liando et al. (2018) prove this hypothesis that half of the respondents agree that films stimulate them to develop their listening comprehension skills. In this case, the majority of the students agree that English films improve their listening skills better than other language teaching aid that teachers generally use in the classroom. The result also contributes to the students' motivation to join the learning process.

Besides it is having been sufficiently known that film can help students to develop their listening comprehension skills, it also helps them to improve other primary language skills, especially speaking skills. With adequate listening skills partly improved by the visual aid, the learners will also develop a better speaking skills that match with the contents in the film. Through the listening process, learners eventually know how to apply correct pronunciations, better dialects, put new slang and idioms and even inspire the students to practice daily conversation better. Liando et al. (2018) agree with this speculation, where there is an overall average level of the respondent's perception of the direct influence of films on listening and speaking skills.

The Implementation of Films in Listening Comprehension

Based on previous research, it is proved that many factors can influence the films' effectiveness level in the listening comprehension process. To maximize and fully develop the use of visual aids in this process, teachers should pay attention to several aspects during the implementation process. The next few aspects that will be explained in later paragraphs are about what teachers should prepare or do in implementing films in the listening comprehension process.

The first and the essential step before implementing films in the listening comprehension process is choosing the listening materials. The teachers' film choices often result in students' problems in comprehending listening content or improving their skills. This happens due to the films have complex language arrangements or conversations. Therefore, teachers should be more careful in choosing films. Chen (2015) recommends teachers use life, humorous films and avoid pornographic films in the language learning process. With this, learners will receive not only spiritual enlightenment but also avoid bad influences in understanding the films' contents. Aside from that, the writer also recommends using films with British or American accents since the pronunciations are more accessible to be understood. The learners also are able to pick up the content and imitate them in other skills, including in speaking class.

Another important aspect of film implementation is about making a reasonable arrangement of time. This aspect is specifically leaned more to non-English primary students or middle and high school students, who rarely have a particular time to see and hear English contents outside the class (Chen, 2015). In order to make the English content succeeds in the listening comprehension process, teachers should be able to find the time to make the learners appreciate the English films themselves. To do this, the teachers can give the film to the students as a material that should be proceeded at home, so that the students can review the contents in the film and grasp the real meaning in the next listening class session.

The final step is designing proper teaching steps in using films. This step can be divided into three steps: before watching the film, while watching, and after watching it. During the first step, the teacher should choose on film that fits with the context of the Listening class theme and the learners' ability to comprehend the content. Afterward, the teacher will give several points that the learners should write and pay attention to during the film listening process, such as the keywords, the plot, expressions, and others. After watching the films, the teacher can use the rest of the learning session by testing the students' understanding of the film through tests such as questions, discussions, reports, or presentations. Teachers can also ask students to evaluate the use of films in the listening comprehension process and attach the importance of visual aid in the listening comprehension process (Chen, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Films are useful audio-visual media for pedagogic purposes, including in the English language learning process. In the language learning process, films are commonly known as effective in terms of the listening comprehension process due to their importance in gaining students' motivation in learning the language. However, based on many researches, it is proven that films are both practical and ineffective in the listening comprehension process, depending on how teachers use the visual aids and how the learners perceive the learning materials. Therefore, in order to maximize films' effectiveness in the listening comprehension process, teachers should implement several methods in using films, including choosing the proper film in the listening comprehension process, making a reasonable arrangement of time to watch the film, and designing proper teaching steps in using films in the learning process. By doing this, teachers will not only motivate the learners to improve their listening process but also maintain a better relationship with the learners themselves.

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