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## THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH MOVIES ON LEARNING ENGLISH IN ESL/EFL CLASSROOMS

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### ABSTRACT

As the world has been experiencing language globalization, and in this transition, English language has been playing a prominent role. So, many people in the world whose mother tongue is not English have been trying to master the skills of the English language. Since the ESL or EFL learners have very limited exposure to the natural language learning environment, they face many difficulties in learning English. For them, English movies are more suitable as they provide the real-time experience of learning the English language. Therefore, in most of the ESL or EFL classrooms, teachers of English have been presenting English movies for the learners in order to give more exposure to the English language. It is a fact that the learners get a golden opportunity of entering into the authentic English environment when the English lessons are taught by using the authentic material in the form of English movies. Watching English movies is a popular and powerful tool for the learners to learn English as a second or foreign language. It is in the hands of the English teachers to draw the complete attention of the learners using English movies in the ESL or EFL classrooms. In this connection, the teachers have to select useful and informative movies that are more suitable for the topic taught in the classrooms. This paper mainly focuses on the impact of English movies on learning English in ESL/EFL classrooms. It also focuses on the use of audio-visual technologies, such as English movies, in the English language classrooms, with a view to suggest the incorporation of these audio-visual technologies for ESL or EFL learners of English language.

**Key Words:** Activities, audio-visual technologies, authentic, English movies, ESL or EFL classrooms, impact, learners, subtitles, teachers of English.

### Introduction

The introduction of technology into the field of education has several benefits both for the teachers and learners of the contemporary society. The modern learners are luckier than the previous generations because of the availability of the latest technology. The learners can learn things anywhere

and anytime on their own using the mobile devices just by browsing the internet. With the arrival of new technology, learners can access the material and develop self-learning and become independent learners. As there are several changes in the education system, there have been several courses offered by many international universities and even the learners have got the opportunity to do courses online. Even some universities and

educational institutions have already started giving instruction through virtual classroom teaching where the learners can listen to the lecture of the instructor just by sitting in the classroom or at home. This type of virtual teaching has been increasing tremendously and most of the learners have been getting the real experience of listening to the experts in the desired field. This system is more useful in learning a foreign language like English as the learners can get the real experience of listening to the voices of the native speakers of the language. This type of environment is needed for the learners of English as a second or foreign language since they learn the correct pronunciation and accent of the language by listening to the actual voices of the native English speakers. Therefore, the use of captioned videos has been increasing enormously all over the world in the foreign language classrooms where English is taught as a foreign or second language.

In foreign or second language classrooms, captioned videos are increasingly used and it is because of the latest user-friendliness of authentic videos that can be effortlessly captioned by curriculum developers and teachers using software such as View Point, iMovie or Adobe Premier. Most of the universities in the world have been shifting to the online foreign language courses and they are offering many online courses that are implemented through blended-instruction or hybrid courses where some of the instruction is done in the classroom and the remaining is done through online and the learners here are supposed to continue the due course independently on their own. In these classes, the instruction is done partly through online and the content is automated with captioned videos which are more suitable for foreign language learning programmes as it is more difficult to search and find the well-qualified teachers for those online courses. Furthermore, video lessons are good resource for the foreign language learners as the lessons are presented with the real voices of the native speakers of English. Hence, the curriculum developers as well as the teachers of English should also think of introducing some useful and informative movies in the ESL or EFL classrooms so that the learners are attracted to

see them as they create more fun and entertainment for them.

English movies are more helpful in teaching the English language since the learners are highly motivated. There is a possibility of removing the anxiety of not knowing or familiarised with English. English movies are more useful for the second or foreign language learners as they not only give entertainment but also used as more valuable teaching tools to teach English in a natural way. The English movies have been used in teaching English as second or foreign language classrooms for a long time and it is not at all a new concept of teaching English. By introducing movies into the English classrooms, the teachers can present reality and variety into their classrooms. They can also have a healthy discussion based on the movie or its content that has been showed to the learners in order to bring the learners' own experience and their background knowledge into the classroom discussion. Talking about English movies gives more personal experience for the learners since they find it pleasure and enjoyment in watching them. The learners also get more information about the culture and style of the native speakers by watching English movies. At this juncture, the teachers of English should also explain the learners wherever they find it difficult to understand and after explanation, those parts can be shown to the students so that the learners will understand the theme well. English movies are the best choice for the teachers of English to motivate the ESL or EFL learners properly in the English language classrooms. Nevertheless, the whole responsibility lies on the shoulders of the teachers of English to investigate novel ways to make the English movies an educationally valuable tool for their teaching. In fact, the English movies provide rich aural input and the learners can get exposed to visual input because of the use of subtitles.

Kusumarasdyati (2004) asserts that without subtitles, teachers should always play such movies and ask the learners to view them while attempting them to comprehend the conversations spoken in the target language. But it is also possible for the English language teachers to present English movies with subtitles in the native language. The number

of viewers of the English movies has been increasing by leaps and bounds due to the advancement of technology. Sometimes, subtitles invite new direction to the language learning and comprehension and the English language learners of other countries and cultures can enjoy these English movies. The National Center for Technology Innovative and Center for Implementing Technology in Education (2010) says that subtitled English movies have some potential benefits for the students who are learning English (or any other language). Research on subtitled movies says that the use of subtitled movies has been proved to be more effective at improving overall listening comprehension than non-subtitled movies. With the use of subtitled movies in the English classrooms, the learners get the benefit of shifting watching just the typical classroom movies form a picture-viewing activity to a reading activity which benefits the struggling readers with additional reading practice. It is quite common to project the use of foreign language subtitles on the screen during viewings of English-spoken movies in general in the EFL or ESL classrooms. On the other hand, the latest DVD technology provides the authoritative function of selecting various subtitles that can facilitate the listening comprehension of the English language learners with various levels of proficiency and heighten their motivation toward learning the target language, i.e. English.

### Review of Literature

A review of the literature on the impact of English movies on learning English in ESL or EFL classrooms provides that the English movies are highly influencing the learners in many ways. Keene (2006) states that movies teach the learners through the use of paralinguistic features where the learners use the actions, pauses, gestures and reactions of the characters to understand the gist of the dialogues. According to Ismaili (2013), Seferoğlu (2008) and Florence (2009), as a method of teaching, movies have been found to be an affective motivator for studying language. Keene (2006) has the opinion that movies are unbeatable in developing interactional skills and providing contextual information when compared to CDs and audio cassettes. Eken (2003, as cited in Keene,

2006) says that movies provide a plethora of knowledge about language providing input in terms of drama, literacy, cinema and language aspects hereby promoting critical thinking as well as the other language skills of the learners.

According to King (2002), movies can be exploited in the English classrooms to enhance the learners' recognition of pragmatic usage and fluency, whereas, Swaffar and Vlaten (1997) state that movies are useful to improve comprehension-based learning. Kusumarasyati (2004) says that movies not only motivate the learners effectively but also stimulate their imagination a lot. In a research study conducted by Hanley and Herron (1995) discloses that films can help in developing writing skills through providing interesting and motivating clues, assisting in comprehension and production of foreign language input and output. Another research study conducted by Pezdek, Lehrer and Simon (1984) recommends that movie fragments are more useful in enhancing memory and recovery of information in reading and listening. Another study conducted by Herron and Hanley (1992) supports the use of movies in classrooms and this study unveils that using movies offers background information that activates prior knowledge that is essential in stimulating all the four language skills.

Various research studies have been conducted by several researchers on the impact of English movies on learning English in EFL or ESL classrooms. A study conducted by Seferoğlu (2008), Florence (2009) and Mirvan (2013) reveals that movies help in increasing the confidence of the learners in speaking as they know how to use certain words and to pronounce correctly. Anyhow, in selecting movies for the ESL or EFL learners should be chosen mainly with educational objectives in mind. According to the research done by Stephens, Ascencio, Burgos, Diaz, Montenegro and Valenzuela (2012), the theme and content of the movie should be such that they should not prove to be purely entertainment for the learners rather rich in content while being enticing and motivating for the learners to watch. While Keene (2012: 223) cautions the use of movies as they are "a technology that is mainly used in the learners'

home for entertainment, escapism and relaxation all of which encourage a passive form of viewing". Therefore, the teachers of English have to facilitate interactive viewing and invite discussions during the movie. King (2002) also emphasises the significance of selecting English movies in such a way that they are not too complex for the level of understanding to the target learners and the content should not prove to be offensive to the learners. The main role of the English language teachers is to implement the activities before, during and after the English movies.

### **The Use of English Movies to Develop Communication Skills of ESL or EFL Learners**

In the present millennium, there is a need to develop communication skills of the learners. As a result of globalisation, the situation demands to learn communication skills and the one who learns these skills will be the winner of the competition. The ESL or EFL learners can learn these communication skills in many ways. One of the easiest and realistic ways is developing communication skills by watching the English movies in the English classrooms in the presence of their teachers and participating in the classroom discussions. There are various opinions on the advantages of introducing English movies into the ESL or EFL classrooms. According to Bahrani and Tam (2011 and 2012) and Li (2009), "One of the problems that non-native English language learners face is the lack of interaction in the language at home, school, or neighbourhoods; which is generally understood to boost language learning through providing the necessary language input for spoken language learning". Curtis (2003) aptly says that in some cases, even the English teachers as the available source of language input in formal classroom setting; lack the sufficient knowledge in second language. At this juncture, Yuksel, D. and B. Tanriverdi (2009). state, "Various audiovisual technologies could be employed in non-native EFL/ESL learning contexts that can provide opportunities for communicative English through different authentic materials, which may not have been initially produced or used for language learning purpose". Furthermore, Sherman (2003) assumes that English movies are a shift from the

conventional and offer students realistic learning environments. According to Sommer, "A single English movie's clip can be employed as the foundation for English skills practice: listening, speaking, vocabulary and pronunciation". Curtis (2007) states that by making use of English Movies in the English classroom, students can enhance their vocabulary awareness and they can even make their pronunciation and intonation much better. In view of these opinions, movies are very important teaching materials to motivate the learners to learn the English language and to develop their language skills efficiently.

### **Providing Authentic and Diverse Language Scenarios Using English Movies**

Using English movies is an added advantage for the English language teachers to introduce them in the ESL or EFL classrooms since it offers a source of authentic and diverse language scenarios. The learners can get the real-life situations through English movies outside the classroom, especially, interactive language communication, i.e. real-life communication. In this context, it is wise to quote Pascoe and Wiburg (2003) who say, "English movies expose students to natural expressions and the natural flow of speech". When the learners are living outside the English-speaking environment, it is sure that English movies and television shows can give the ESL or EFL learners with real-life language input. Thus, English movies provide authentic materials and diverse language scenarios for the learners so that the learning of English language happens in the real-life environment.

### **English Movies Give a Visual Context for the ESL or EFL Learners**

In the traditional ESL or EFL classrooms, the teachers of English used to teach the English language using textbooks and the learners get bored of the monotonous teaching. In the modern ESL or EFL classrooms, the teachers are using the latest technology in order to grab the attention of the learners. In this connection, English movies are more helpful for the teachers of English to give a new dimension to the teaching and learning of English. Since English movies give the learners more visual context, they not only listen to the target

language but also visualize the real-life situations. As a result, the learners have the experience of understanding the facial expressions as well as gestures instantaneously. In this context, Long (2003) states, "The 'visualise' of English movies makes it a valuable language teaching tool, facilitating learners to learn better by interpreting the language in a complete visual context". Furthermore, Gruba (2006) adds, "English Movies aid the learners' comprehension by enabling them to listen to language exchanges and see such visual supports as facial expressions and gestures simultaneously". These visual clues support the verbal message and provide the learners a focus of attention. So, the learning of English will become easier for the ESL or EFL learners when the teachers of English introduce movies in their classroom and the learners also experience the visual context and improve their learning skills efficaciously.

**The Use of English Movies in the ESL or EFL Learning Environment**

It is a universal agreement among all the second or foreign language teachers to utilize audio-visual technologies in learning the second or foreign language in addition to the normal textbooks. The incorporation of varied audio-visual technologies, such as English movies, as sources of authentic language input into language learning, have been the focus of voluminous investigations. Chapple and Curtis (2000) piloted an investigation on the employment of various English movies as authentic and appropriate teaching materials in content-based teaching strategies in EFL classrooms in Southeast Asia. Their research focused on how intrinsically stimulating materials such as English movies together with content-based teaching can help the learners to enhance English language learning. They further say that English movies have abundant cross-cultural values which offer outstanding foundations for development of learners' critical thinking skills, provide a rich means of content for them and also provide linguistic diversities. All these excellent features of English movies combined with the motivating characteristic enable language learners' oral communication skills. Similar studies were also done by Gebhardt (2004) and Heffernan (2005) highlighting the

amelioration of motivation and language learning by means of English movies in the English language classrooms.

**Things Needed to Present English Movies in the ESL or EFL Classrooms**

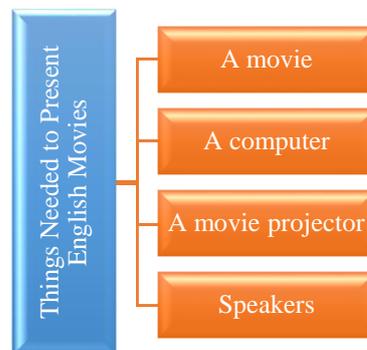


Fig.: Things Needed to Present English Movies

To present the English movies in the ESL or EFL classrooms, the teachers should have a movie, a computer or a laptop, a movie projector and speakers. The teachers of English can select any kind of movie such as drama, fiction, romantic, action-oriented, comedy, tragedy, adventurous, documentary, cartoon and so on depending on the theme and the interests of the learners. A laptop or desktop computer, a movie projector and speakers are also needed for showing a picture to the class.



Fig.: Kinds of English Movies

**Selection of Suitable English Movies for the ESL or EFL Classroom**

The selection of the English movies is a crucial thing for the teachers of English. They have

to take into consideration of the theme of the lesson or topic that they are going to teach in the classroom. Moreover, the teachers should ensure that the learners can connect the content of the English movies to the subject areas taught in the classrooms. Therefore, the teachers should wisely think of the content material of the English movies and select very popular ones for their learners. If the teachers search for quality movies, they will automatically find several English movies whose content is more reliable and suitable for all ages and cultures. Nevertheless, there are huge number of contemporary English movies with popular content, but in some cases may have unsuitable and explicit scenes related to violence, sex, death, crime and so on within them. So, the teachers should always refrain from using such kind of English movies because they may spoil the learners.

#### **Before Movie Watching Activity in the ESL or EFL Classroom**

Understanding the background of the theme of any English movie that is going to be presented to the learners is more important. Hence, the teachers of English should thoroughly prepare the theme of the movies and then they can have a discussion with the learners before they watch the movie. This before movie watching activity will be an alternative way to present a movie to ESL or EFL learners. Have the learners watch an excerpt of the English movies that are presented in the classroom and identify what they are going to be about. Once the teachers give them some clues, the learners will automatically respond to the questions asked in the classroom. With these before movie watching activities, the learners will have clarity about what they are going to watch. In before movie watching activities, the teachers of English can give the learners a fill in the blank activity with vocabulary words linked to the plot in the English movies. These activities are suitable for the lower level learners. Whereas, for the higher level learners, the teachers can have discussion groups and talk about the characters in the English movies and their individual features. Before conducting such activities, it is the main responsibility of the teachers to introduce a list of descriptive adjectives to their learners. The teachers can also hold

brainstorming activities as before movie watching activities.

English movies are more useful to present in the ESL or EFL classrooms. There is a high impact of English movies when they are presented in the classroom for the learners. The teachers of English should take care while selecting the movies that are showed to the learners. As movies are played with audio-visual technology, the learners concentrate more on them and also learn the real-time experience of learning English. Therefore, the teachers of English should always present useful and appropriate movies that are more connected to the subject that the learners are going to learn in the ESL or EFL classrooms.

#### **Conclusion**

This paper elaborates the impact of English movies on learning English in ESL or EFL classrooms. Firstly, the importance of technology in education, especially, in teaching English to the second or foreign language learners has been discussed comprehensively. Later, how the communication skills of ESL or EFL learners are developed using the English movies has been thoroughly presented. After that, how movies are useful as authentic materials and how they give visual context for the ESL or EFL learners have been clearly illustrated. Also, the use of English movies in the ESL or EFL environment has been presented well. Then how to select suitable English movies and the importance of the before movie watching activity have been systematically expounded. Finally, the teachers of English and the learners of ESL or EFL have been given valuable suggestions to make the presentation of the English movies a grand success in the ESL or EFL classrooms.

It is obvious that the ESL or EFL learners show a lot of interest to watch English movies when they are aware of the benefits of watching English movies in the classroom. Therefore, the main objective of the teachers of English is to channel this enthusiasm in a direction that has a constructive influence of their learning of the English language. The fundamental key to the productive application of English movies in the ESL or EFL classrooms lies in the innovative

presentation of the English movies and in the design of challenging, but practical learning tasks which are enjoyed by ESL or EFL learners. It is the duty of facilitators and teachers to induce and cultivate motivation by focusing on teaching and learning objectives, and attainable tasks employing English movies which might normally beyond the linguistic ability of the learners. The significant developments, easy accessibility, user-friendliness and inexpensive usability of various audio-visual technologies provide natural language learning environment for the ESL or EFL learners. Undeniably, audio-visual technologies play a major role promoting the English language learners. When it comes to the ESL or EFL learners, English movies which are aided with audio-visual technologies boost up their proficiency of the English language. If the learners are exposed more to the audio-visual technologies such as English movies, they can easily develop the skills needed for the second language acquisition and develop to a significant extent in English language environments. Since English movies are more useful in promoting the ESL or EFL learners' English language proficiency, the teachers of English have to take proper care while presenting the movies in the ESL or EFL classrooms.

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