
IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH FILM WITH SUBTITLES

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Abstract: Researchers and practicing teachers have shown how clippings from films and other video material can be utilized in the language classroom. Some researchers have advocated the use of films as linguistics models for skills development. Some have highlighted the educational value of video material and showed how they can be used to create both imaginative and skill-developing activities. This researcher goes one step ahead and proves that video material enhances the speaking ability of students.

Keywords: Acquisition, ELT, Film, Speaking Skill.

Introduction: Language is the most important aspect in the life of all beings. Language is a set of symbols being used mainly for communication. The symbols may be spoken or written. Language is necessary in the world to communicate with others. Without language nothing is possible, i.e. our feelings and opinions cannot be shared. Language seems to be effective tool for communication. Language is used to communicate our thoughts and ideas are essential for our survival and development as human beings. Meaningful words merge together to form sentence which acts as the basic emergence of the language.

Language learning is an art. One can learn any art through continuous practice. In the same way, a language can be learned through careful practice. The child can acquire the mother tongue through action. In the similar way, it is possible for the child to learn other languages easily through practice. Language learning is a practice. Language learning is a process through which knowledge of language is developed by studying the rules of the language. It is clear that language learning differs from language acquisition. Language learning is the process which happens through practice whereas language acquisition is a natural process. Language learning happens through formal way of practice but language acquisition takes place informally. The learning of the rules of grammar along with the rules of use combined together in the language learning process.

English language is called as the international language. English language plays a major role in all over the world. English language is the mother tongue for most of the people in Britain, Australia, Canada, Ireland, South Africa, New Zealand and the United States of America. It is used as the second and official language in many countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Mostly, next to mother tongue the people would prefer to read English language than other language. The people would be interested in watching English films, reading English journals and newspapers. English language is accepted as the medium of instruction in many of the private schools and in the

colleges. Since English plays a vital role, it is difficult to get a good job or do well in a career without good English language skill.

Use of Film in Language Teaching: Researchers and practicing teachers have shown how clippings from films and other video material can be utilized in the language classroom. Stoller (1998) advocated the use of films as linguistics models for skills development. Stempleski and Tomalin (1990a, 1990b) highlighted the educational value of authentic broadcast and video material and showed how they can be used to create both imaginative and skill-developing activities.

Natusch (1990) advocates the use of fragments of film to teach language functions like apologizing, asking for information, greeting, complaining, etc. Car and Duncan (1987) warn against unfocused viewing, and believe class time is better spent discussing a film, or doing focused viewing exercises, rather than watching it in its entirety. Blakely (1984) believes showing films is viable only after students have a thorough knowledge of the language and the cultural concerned. Visscher (1990) warns against placing too much emphasis on the verbal component of the video/film and provides insights on how to exploit the language-generating potential of short scenes.

A survey on motivation done by Kirk (1992) indicates that movies encourage learners to study twice as much as ordinary texts, and nearly as much as teachers. Similarly, international teacher surveys for example, in video Rising (1990) indicate that not only do the majority of teachers using video prefer authentic to ELT video, but also that within the authentic range (including news and comedy shows) movies are most often their first choice.

Altman (1989), Burt (1999) and Stoller (1993) are of the opinion that authentic full-length films bring extended context and interesting content to the classroom. The use of film provides a rich context, which helps students to improve comprehension and practice listening and speaking. Arcario (1993, p. 114) contends that "extended context, interesting content, rich visual imagery and often exaggerated actions and

gestures in a film provide students with multi-sensory input that is close to what they would find in real life communication”

The Study:

Participants: A number of fifty undergraduate students of department of zoology from Bishop Heber College, Trichy are selected as learners for this study.

Procedure: The present study is an attempt to determine the effectiveness of films as a teaching aid in second language learning. Since the aim is also to understand student’s perceptions of using film in the classroom, I decided to adopt a quantitative framework. The sections that follow give a detailed account of the intensive course in using film to teach English. It is hoped that the findings of this study will motivate practicing teachers incorporate such materials and techniques into their own classroom teaching.

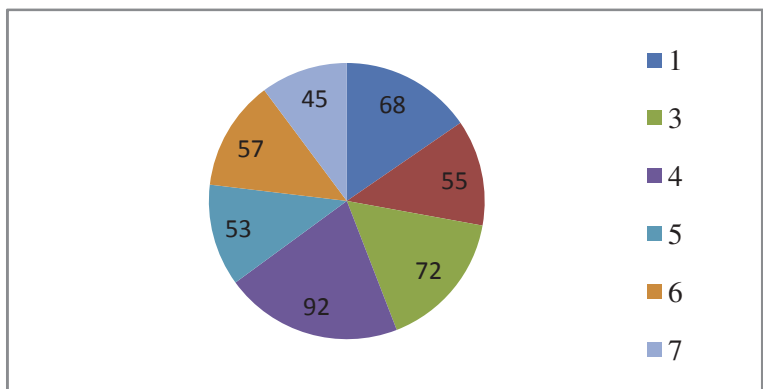
The film “Gods Must Be Crazy” was used for the study with English subtitles, for the learners.

Students’ perceptions towards using films in ESL classroom: Using films in the classroom was new and very pleasant experience for the students. They claim that they enjoyed the assigned activities in the classroom. Students were more motivated to see and hear real-life situations than to follow the activities in

the graded book. Their impression is that films also provide a relaxed atmosphere for students. Students claimed that using film is a good way to improve English vocabulary and gives them more chances to practice English. Most of students said that they have learned new words (approximately 3-5) mainly because those words that have been repeated many times throughout the film. According to them, key word preview given at the beginning of the class facilitates learning and it helped them to understand clearly the content of the film.

Questions Used:

1. Do you think watching English films with subtitles has a beneficial effect on learning English?
2. Do you think your film preferences will affect your learning?
3. Do you think English subtitles are good in learning English?
4. I am interested in learning English if the teacher uses English films with subtitles as teaching materials?
5. Do you think this film is useful in learning English?
6. Do you agree you have learned some English by watching the film with English subtitles?
7. Do you think the dialogs in the film can be used in daily life?



Activity:

Name of the Activity: Playing the film with sound and subtitles

- Class : B.Sc., Zoology
- Level : Pre-tertiary level learners
- Skill Aimed : Enhancing Speaking Skill
- Tools used : Laptop, LCD, Projector

Objectives:

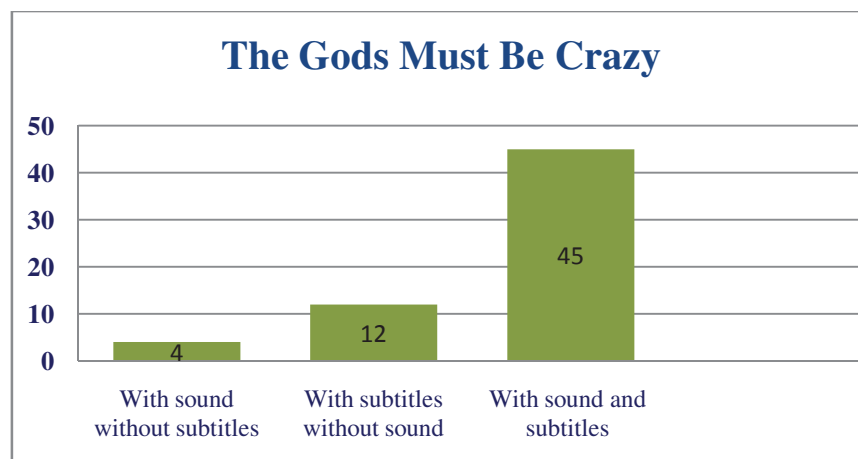
- To make an interest of the learners to watch film with English subtitles
- To distillate the speaking skill of the learners
- To evaluate the ability of language learners
- To encourage them to summarize through watching film with English subtitles

To motivate them to improve speaking skill by using this method of language learning

Expected Result

The learners exposed their attention and eagerness during the activity. They were able to involve intensely into the activity while watching the film with subtitles. They felt the liveliness in the classroom. They were able to understand the meaning of the sentences and words, and also, they involved in activity with an interest. After watching the film, among the 50 learners, 45 learners were able to summarize the whole film and they used the words

and sentences properly what they saw on the screen.



Interpretation: The diagram shows that the use of films with English subtitles in developing speaking skill among the pre-tertiary level students. When we give the repeated exposure of the same video (film) to the learner, they are easily acquiring the language. In this method of language teaching, students showed their interest in language learning. Most of the students improved their speaking ability as well as they have got an idea to learn language. Watching film with English subtitles has increased an interest among the students. Films were able to motivate the students to a great extent. Since films were considering to be an educational tool to persuade the

students learning process. According to interest of the students, it is one of the best methods to teach language to the students.

Conclusion: This study was an investigation on the correlation between the viewing the movies and effective learning in ESL classrooms. Although the study revealed that movies could facilitate the learning is not necessarily a must. It greatly depends on how pedagogically appropriate movies are used and how effective it is used in teaching. Movies and their special features such as subtitles were of a great help to develop an effective learning environment.

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