



The Effect of English Movies on the Effectiveness of Listening and Speaking Teaching

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Abstract. With the increasing importance of English in Chinese teaching, how to effectively improve students' listening and speaking skills has become a pivotal issue in English teaching. Due to the lack of a natural language learning environment, English movies as a teaching tool can provide students with a real language situation, stimulate learning interest, and promote the improvement of listening comprehension and oral expression. The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of English movies in English listening and speaking teaching and to analyze the specific advantages of movies in enhancing students' listening and speaking abilities. It is found that English movies can provide authentic language input through immersion learning and help students better understand and use English through their context and cultural content. Appropriate teaching strategies and instruction in the classroom can further facilitate students' language learning. Studies have shown that the appropriate use of English movies can significantly improve students' listening and speaking skills.

Keywords: English movies, impact, listening skill, speaking skill

1 Introduction

Under the background of rapid globalization, the importance of English as an international common language has become more and more prominent. In China, it is generally weak for students' English listening and speaking skills, especially lack sufficient opportunities for language practice. That makes it difficult for traditional English teaching methods to improve students' practical communication skills effectively. The traditional English teaching mode in China often focuses on grammar and vocabulary. Students have limited opportunities to train their listening and speaking skills, making it difficult for them to truly communicate in the language. Although learning grammar and vocabulary is important, this single mode of teaching often neglects the need for practical language use. To address this problem, English movies, as a kind of immersive learning tool, have gradually become a widely noticed teaching tool because of their rich cultural connotation and vivid language context. Through the study of English movies, students are not only able to get in touch with the real language environment but also gain a deeper understanding of the cultural background of English-speaking countries, so that they can better improve their listening and speaking skills.

Numerous scholars have already completed various research on the application of English movies in English teaching. He Ning explored the way of using English movies in listening class to improve students' English ability; Wu Jing studied the application of English movies in English listening and speaking teaching from the point of view of stimulating students' interest; and Zhang Lihong paid attention to the reasonable use of English movies in English listening and speaking teaching, etc [1-3]. These studies provide a certain theoretical and practical basis for the application of English movies in English teaching.

This paper focuses on using English movies in English listening and speaking teaching. The goal is to explore how to improve the process of teaching these skills. Firstly, this paper will introduce the theoretical foundations of English language learning and analyze how these theoretical foundations are combined with English movies; then this paper will analyze the advantages of English movies, and how English movies can be used to improve students' listening and speaking skills in teaching. Different learning theories are applied to help optimize this teaching method, offering more targeted and practical guidance for English teaching practice. By using English movies effectively, students can enhance their listening, speaking, and cross-cultural communication abilities.

2 Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Constructivism Learning Theory

Constructivism has been a great influence on education and psychology. Constructivist learning theory emphasizes that knowledge is not acquired through teacher instruction, but through meaningful construction by the learner. It focuses on how students actively construct a body of knowledge by linking new information to what is known and then actively constructing it. This theory is always student-centered, and the teacher plays the role of supporting and guiding the students.

In the teaching of listening and speaking, constructivism enables students to actively identify and solve problems in listening and speaking interactions, and enhances students' self-learning ability and active participation in activities.

Through film watching, students are motivated to actively combine their existing experiences with the new information they receive from the film and positively construct the meaning of the information. The contextualization of films helps students promote collaborative learning and critical thinking skills.

2.2 Cognitive Learning Theory

Psychologist Jerome. S. Bruner emphasized the importance of thinking and cognitive processes in individual learning [4]. He introduced the concepts of discovery learning and meaningful learning, advocating that learners should acquire knowledge through active exploration and self-discovery, rather than simply receiving information. In this way, students can build up a deeper understanding and memory during the learning process.

In language learning, discovery learning emphasizes the process of learning rather than the outcome. Through meaningful learning, students can better understand the essence of language and know how it is used in real life. By watching English movies, teachers can make use of the situations and dialogues in the movies to guide students to discover the rules and expressions in the language themselves, so that students can continuously improve their language comprehension and practical application in the process of independent learning. Thus, they could significantly improve their listening and speaking skills during the process.

2.3 Stages of Second Language Acquisition

There are five stages of second language acquisition, including the comprehension stage, early production stage, speech emergency stage, intermediate fluency stage and advanced stage. Linguist Krashen believes that language occurs through natural and unconscious processes [5]. The language input hypothesis is the central idea of second language acquisition theory [6]. Students acquire a language naturally by being exposed to comprehensible input that is appropriate to their language level, and the more input they receive, the better the acquisition will be.

Movies are effective in facilitating language acquisition as a tool that can provide comprehensible input. As a combination of visual and auditory media, movies can make it easier for students to understand the language expressed in them, which can provide students with a large amount of comprehensible input, especially suitable for improving students' listening and speaking skills.

2.4 Functionalist Linguistics Theory

Functionalist linguistics highlights the social function of language and considers language as a tool for human communication. The ultimate goal of language learning is to help students improve their communicative competence in real situations, rather than simply mastering grammatical rules. Functionalist Linguistics advocates that language should be closely related to real communication situations, and students should learn language through actual language communication activities.

In English movie teaching, movies as a vivid teaching tool can provide real communicative situations and rich language expressions to help students understand and use language in real situations. By listening to and imitating the dialogues of the characters in the movies, students can learn how to use language to communicate effectively in different situations and improve their listening and speaking skills.

2.5 Socio-Interactivism

Socio-Interactivism, put forward by L. Vygotsky, emphasizes that language is a social phenomenon [7]. Communicative language teaching (CLT) is the most important teaching method in Socio-Interactivism [8]. The communicative teaching method proposes that the ultimate goal of learning is to improve students' communicative competence in real-life situations, not just mastering grammatical rules. This theory emphasizes that

language learning should serve actual communication needs and focus on the functional use of language in different social contexts. Learners learn language through actual language interaction. In this pedagogy, the teacher's role is to motivate students to engage in communicative activities and to enhance their listening and speaking skills through these activities. Communicative pedagogy emphasizes the simulation of real-life communicative language situations in the classroom so that students can practice their language skills through interaction with others.

In film teaching, teachers can use character dialogues, plot interactions and cultural backgrounds in films to help students simulate real communicative situations. Through the context and dialogues in movies, students can not only improve their listening and speaking skills but also deepen their understanding of cultural differences.

3 Advantages of Teaching English through Movies

3.1 English Movie Teaching: Immersive Language Environment through Realistic Situations

First of all, characters in movies often use “guy” or “dude” instead of the formal “man”, and these words seem more casual and natural in daily conversations. For example, in the movie *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry and Ron often use “guy” to mean “man” or “friend” in their conversations, which makes the conversations sound more intimate and natural.

Secondly, many words in spoken English are omitted or simplified, which makes the conversation more fluent and faster. For example, “because” is often pronounced as “cause”, while “have got to” is simplified as “gotta”. In the movie *The Avengers*, Tony Stark (Iron Man) says, “I gotta go, I'm late for the meeting! Here “gotta” is a simplified form of “got to”, reflecting the natural tone of everyday communication.

In addition, these words used in movies do not have strict grammatical rules, but they play an important role in daily communication. For example, in the movie *When Happiness Comes Knocking*, the character played by Will Smith says, “That's a bummer,” when going through a difficult time, where “bummer” indicates a disappointment or something frustrating, showing the character's feeling of frustration. This “bummer” indicates something that is disappointing and shows the character's emotions. In addition, the character Cady in the movie *Mean Girls* says, “I was like, ‘No way!’” when she hears what someone else said. “like” in this line is often used in spoken language as a tone of voice to help express emotions.

In conclusion, English movies provide learners with a language environment close to the real one, and these oral expressions not only make the dialogues more vivid and interesting, but also help students better understand and use the informal language in English, and improve their listening and speaking skills.

3.2 English Movie Teaching: Creating a Relaxing and Enjoyable Learning Environment to alleviate language learning pressure

Since it is a second language, children cannot master a new language through natural acquisition. From the students' point of view, anxiety is the biggest obstacle in English listening and speaking learning. Nervousness and fear due to anxiety may lead to errors in the reception of the language. It may also cause students to be afraid of speaking and expressing their ideas in English. However, movies can often give learners a relaxing audio-visual environment, allowing students to follow the ups and downs of the movie and immerse themselves into the English language environment. This can help students to reduce some of the negative emotions of traditional teaching methods, and thus increase their motivation to learn the language.

3.3 English Movie Teaching: Stimulating Students' Interest and Enhancing Motivation for Listening and Speaking

Under China's general education system, most of the listening and speaking instruction in English is taught by textbooks. Students practice listening and speaking by learning the language expressions in textbooks. In this process, students usually receive information passively instead of actively acquiring it. On the contrary, movie teaching is interest-oriented, and can make use of many vivid story plots and a variety of close-to-life dialogues to make students have fun in the process of language learning, thus increasing their motivation for listening and speaking [9]. For example, by imitating the dialogues in the movie, students can not only learn the standard pronunciation and vocabulary, but also feel the emotional changes in the context, which helps them to be more comfortable in actual communication.

3.4 English Movie Teaching: Helping Students Understand English-Speaking Cultures and Avoid Cultural Misunderstandings

Language and culture are closely connected, and learning a language is actually learning the culture behind it. For example, in the movie *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, students can not only see the expressions of British English, but also learn about the British school culture, family concepts and the unique setting of the Wizard World through the movie. For example, the culture of "afternoon tea" in the movie shows how the British people communicate and relax through this traditional habit, which is very helpful for students to understand British social etiquette. In addition, the four houses of Hogwarts School in the movie also reflect the British culture of stratification and competition, especially the competition between "Gryffindors" and "Slytherins", which reflects the importance of courage and wisdom in British education.

Movies like *Forrest Gump*, on the other hand, through Forrest Gump's simple and sincere character, show some basic values in American society, such as hard work, dreams and the spirit of personal struggle. There is a scene in the movie in which Forrest Gump insists on running no matter what difficulties he encounters in order to fulfill his mother's wishes, and eventually achieves his extraordinary life. This spirit of "never

give up” is one of the important values in American culture, which emphasizes personal struggle and dedication to dreams. These elements help students understand some of the core concepts in American society.

Through these specific movie plots, students can not only improve their English listening and speaking skills, but also gain a deeper understanding of the cultural practices, lifestyles and ways of thinking of English-speaking countries, so as to better adapt to cross-cultural exchanges, and to avoid language use deviations due to cultural differences.

3.5 English Movie Teaching: Enabling Students to Learn Authentic English Expressions and Improve Listening and Speaking Skills

The language in movies is usually the real expression of native English speakers in their daily lives. By learning these expressions, learners are able to acquire slang and colloquial usage more naturally, thus improving their ability to use the actual language. Many slang words are often used in movies, for example, in the movie *Coraline*, the main character Coraline describes the challenge she faces as a “piece of cake” expression, which means that it is very simple and effortless to do this thing. In addition, take the word “cool” as an example. “Cool” not only means “cool”, but also “great” or “cool”. In the movie *Superbad*, the characters often use “cool” to express their appreciation of something, for example, the line “That’s cool! That’s cool!” This line uses ‘cool’ to express love for something, which is a common oral expression.

4 Implementation and Application of English Movies in Listening and Speaking Teaching

4.1 Before Watching

Emphasis on Movie Selection. In terms of movie selection, it is important to choose movies that are suitable for students’ age [10]. First of all, the difficulty of the movie should be moderate and in line with students’ English level. In the teaching of the lower ages, teachers can choose movies with simple language structures with easy expressions, such as *Harry Potter*, *Finding Nemo*, or *Monster Power*, which have more basic vocabulary and easy-to-understand plots. It can attract students’ interest. For high school or college level students, teachers can choose some classic English movies, such as *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Forrest Gump*, or *The Matrix*. These movies not only have a high level of language difficulty, but also deal with profound life philosophies and social issues, which can help students better understand the many ways of expression in English and also improve their ability to discuss complex topics. The vocabulary in the movies should also consider the students’ ability, avoiding overly complex language or too much jargon. In addition, it is best to choose the original movie to avoid the interference of the translated version, so that students can get in touch with the real language expression.

Teaching Methods. Firstly, focus on student-centered learning by encouraging independent thinking and preparation before engaging with the content. Before watching a movie, teachers can stimulate students' thinking through some inspiring questions to help them guess the plot or character settings of the movie. For example, before showing the movie, teachers can show the poster or trailer of the movie and let students guess the background of the story and the relationship of the characters based on this information. This can increase students' interest and prepare them for the subsequent viewing. Secondly, utilize a top-down teaching approach by providing key background information and context to facilitate better understanding of the material. To help students better understand the content of the movie, the teacher can introduce the main characters and background of the movie. In this way, students can understand the development of the plot more clearly when watching the movie and reduce the confusion caused by not knowing the background.

4.2 During Watching

Controlling the Duration. In order to keep students' concentration, the movie should be watched for a moderate time [11]. It is recommended that the movie be viewed in segments of 10 to 20 minutes each to give students time to digest the content and engage in appropriate discussion and reflection. Segmented viewing also helps the teacher to ensure student understanding and engagement by providing a brief summary and asking questions at the end of each segment.

Focus on the Level of Student Engagement. During the viewing, teachers should always pay attention to students' participation and observe whether they are fully engaged in the movie. Sometimes students may be distracted or lose interest. Teachers can pause at the right time to ask questions related to the plot and encourage students to interact. For example, ask students what motives they think are hidden behind this character's behavior? Why? Or can you speculate on what might happen next in the plot? Based on what clues? Questions like these can better promote student thinking and engagement.

Moving from subtitled to non-subtitled movies. In the beginning, movies with English subtitles can be provided to help students understand the dialogues and plots in the movies. As students' listening level improves, they can gradually reduce the subtitles and even try to watch movies without subtitles in some suitable parts. Subtitle-free movie watching can help students focus on listening comprehension, develop their listening skills, and improve their ability to adapt to English accents and speed of speech.

4.3 After Watching

Discussion and Feedback. After watching the movie, teachers can organize students to have a discussion and share their understanding and feelings about the movie. This not only helps students consolidate the language they have learned, but also improves

their critical thinking skills. Teachers can ask questions such as “Which character do you like best? Why?” Or “If you were the main character in the movie, what decision would you make?” Through discussion, students can practice their oral expression skills and deeply analyze the cultural background and plot content of the movie.

Out-of-class Teaching Practice. In order to strengthen students’ learning effect, teaching practice outside class is very important. Teachers can arrange dubbing practice, so that students can imitate the characters in the movie to read out the lines and enhance their perception and memory of the language through dubbing. Besides, simulated speech is also a very effective practice method. Students can choose a scene or a character in the movie and do role-playing or a short speech, through which they can improve their oral expression ability and deepen their understanding of the content of the movie at the same time [12].

Through this integrated teaching method, students are able to improve their English listening and speaking skills in a relaxed environment, while enhancing their cultural understanding and language use.

5 Conclusion

The paper aims to explore the influence of English movies on the effectiveness of English listening and speaking teaching, and develops the study through a combination of theoretical research and teaching practice analysis. On the theoretical level, it elaborates the connection between constructivist learning theory, cognitive learning theory, second language acquisition stage theory, functionalist linguistic theory and social interactionist theory and English movie teaching, which provide strong theoretical support for the integration of movies into listening and speaking teaching. On the level of teaching practice, the study analyzes the advantages of English movies in terms of two dimensions: teaching advantages and implementation applications, revealing the significant advantages of English movies in creating an immersive language environment, facilitating a relaxing learning atmosphere, stimulating learning interests, promoting cultural understanding, and facilitating the learning of authentic expressions, etc. Meanwhile, the study also systematically introduces the specific teaching strategies for pre-viewing, during-viewing, and post-viewing of the movies.

The study found that English movies can provide students with authentic language situations and a large quantity of comprehensible input, which can effectively help students improve their listening and speaking skills. Before the movie, teachers should choose the movie reasonably and use heuristic teaching to guide students to think independently. Control the duration of the movie, pay attention to the students’ participation and gradually reduce the subtitle assistance. Organize discussion and feedback and extracurricular practice after the movie. The interaction of these teaching steps can significantly enhance students’ language learning and deepen their understanding of English culture.

In the future, this study can further carry out empirical research to quantify the specific effects of English film teaching on the improvement of listening and speaking

skills of students of different ages with different learning abilities. On the other hand, it can explore how English films can be deeply integrated with modern educational technologies, such as Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence-assisted teaching, in order to create a more immersive and personalized learning experience for students.

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