



A Study of English Major Students' Opinions on Watching English Movies with Subtitles to Enrich Listening Skill Development

การศึกษาเรื่องความคิดเห็นของนิสิตเอกอังกฤษต่อการชมภาพยนตร์ที่มีคำบรรยายใต้ภาพ เพื่อส่งเสริมพัฒนาการด้านการฟัง

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(Received: 12 April 2022; Revised: 29 May 2022; Accepted: 14 June 2022)

Abstract

Currently, movies play a crucial role in our daily life, and they can be used as a tool to develop EFL learners' English competence, especially listening skill. However, the literature has not paid much attention to using movies to improve listening skill. For this reason, this study aims to investigate students' opinions about improving their listening skill through movie with subtitles and the effectiveness of movie as an English learning tool. 76 third-year English major students in the Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University participated in this study. The questionnaire and interview were employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data sets. Based on the mean scores in the questionnaire and information collected from the interview, the findings showed that 91.5% preferred watching English movies with subtitles, and more than half of them purposely watching movies with subtitles for language skill improvement. Students believed that watching movies with subtitles helped them improve their listening skill, gained benefits from using English in everyday life, and comprehended foreign accents and dialects better. In addition, watching English movies with subtitles can enhance their listening skill and help them practice real-life conversations better. Finally, students considered that movies with subtitles could be an effective tool for developing their listening skill.

Keyword: English movies, subtitles, English listening skill, University students

Background

In everyday life, communication is always crucial. People communicate with others by using language to convey and express opinions or share thoughts and ideas. Everyone, especially through his/her social context, learn his/her first language automatically to communicate with others. At the international level, however, people are expected to communicate well with an international language such as English. To be effective communicators in English, it is important to develop English competence, especially listening skill.

Listening skill is one of the important skills in learning and communication in English, and listening is used more often than speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, speaker's listening ability plays a crucial role if a speaker wishes to become a skilled communicator in English. Effective listening is a key aspect in gaining more knowledge,

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avoiding misunderstandings, succeeding in business, and cultivating positive relationships. Several studies (Ismaili, 2013; Pimsamarn, 2011; Suetrong, 2015, to name a few) posit that watching English movies help language learners to improve their language skills.

At present, movies always come with subtitles. Watching movies with subtitles does not only provides amusement for students, but also conveys knowledge that affects the cognitive process. In other words, learners have a great time if they watch movies to learn English, and their English performance enhances (Suetrong, 2015). Similarly, Pimsamarn (2011) states that watching movies is the easiest way to improve English skills. Learners pay attention and are delighted to learn English because they will be able to enjoy the movies while improving their English comprehension at the same time. Moreover, Ismaili (2013) claims that using English movies to develop language competency has several advantages: increasing students' motivation, improving their oral and communication skills, developing their cultural awareness, and receiving more authentic language learning experience. However, even though much research has been done to understand the value of using media in language improvement, not much literature investigates the perspectives of English major students on the use of movies to improve listening skill.

With all of the advantages of watching English movies mentioned, it is interesting to find out whether watching English movies with subtitles can be effectively used in improving listening skill for university students and what their reactions to this type of activity are. As a result, the purposes of this study were to survey the students' opinions regarding using English movie with subtitles to increase listening skill, as well as to explore their reactions regarding the effectiveness of using English movie with subtitles as medium in developing listening skill.

Research questions

This study aims to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent are the third years English major students' opinions about watching English movies with subtitles to develop their listening skill?
2. Are English movies considered to be an effective way for improving listening skill in the students' opinion?

Research objectives

1. To investigate third year students' opinion about watching English movies with subtitles to develop their listening skill.
2. To find out if the English movie is an effective way for listening skill improvement in the students' opinion.

Theoretical framework

Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is a process of interpreting information by detecting tones, beats, speech, and meaning and allowing listeners to actively engage in communication. In order to achieve a high level of English listening performance, listeners can enhance their listening comprehension and practice being active listeners (Suetrong, 2015). In addition, Pimsamarn (2011) claims that listening comprehension is very beneficial for practicing other English skills, especially speaking skill because it allows learners to comprehend tone, intonation, stress, and sound. If they can hear



and comprehend speakers' utterances, their speaking ability increases since they will be able to apply what they heard to their spoken words. Moreover, according to Bourdeaud' Hui, Aesaert & Braak (2020), comprehensive listening is most often employed in listening activities. The messages must be understood by the listeners, and they must behave in line with what they hear.

The significance of movies in listening comprehension

Currently, movies are easy to access; they are a type of media that can be used to develop listening comprehension since students can see what is going on while also listening conversations. They can see all of the actions, hear all of the sounds, and understand the contents of the movies. Ismaili (2013) pointed out that movies can present full conversational situations. To improve listening comprehension, movies give learners rich contexts, attractiveness, and cultures. Furthermore, learners are able to hear native speakers conversing in ordinary conversation and practice English structures through movies. Besides providing real communication situations, movies can be more motivating than other forms of authentic material. Worawattananukul (2016) claims that learners can be motivated by movies, which keep their interest and attention. They are not aware that they are learning because the movies provide them enjoyment with mix sound, visuals, and human interactions.

Although watching movie can improve the listening skill, some researchers such as Vanderprank (1988) and Gorjian (2014) recommend using subtitles as an additional function to watch movies in order to enhance listening comprehension. Therefore, this study examined the participants for general information about watching movie behaviors and their attitudes toward the use of movies with subtitles for listening comprehension improvement.

Previous studies

Since movie is one of the effective tools for improving language learning, many research studies focused on investigating using English movies to enhance English skills. To be more precise, a large number of recent studies have been explored the roles of English movies as a tool to develop English skills.

Many previous studies were conducted with various participants and in various locations, including Iran, Slovakia, Macedonia, the United States, and Thailand. Based on previous studies, they found that many studies on watching English movies to improve listening skill used questionnaire to get information from participants. According to Albiladi, Abdeen & Lincoln (2018), the researchers surveyed adult English language learners' perceptions toward the benefits and challenges of using English movies to learn English. The results revealed that movies were an effective language learning tools that can be used to develop language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, and writing. Furthermore, movies may be used to enhance not just language skills but also learners' cultural awareness. One reason for this is that movies provide exposures to the real language used in authentic settings and the culture in which the foreign language is spoken. Since visual images and sounds are attractive and interesting, students' English abilities, particularly listening, improved significantly while they watched movies. As a result, students were encouraged and motivated to watch movies to better their listening skill (Woottipong, 2014). The use of movies to improve English skills was also supported by Pimsamarn (2011), Gorjian (2014) and Worawattananukul (2016) who investigated the



students' attitudes toward using English movies with subtitles to improve English comprehension skills. The findings indicated that students believed that English movie with subtitles was an effective tool for improving English language skills in a variety of areas, including listening comprehension, vocabulary development, and cultural understanding. Similarly, Suetrong (2015) investigated the use of movies with Thai and English subtitles to improve listening comprehension. The findings showed that watching movies with both Thai and English subtitles can be beneficial. In addition, the researchers mentioned that English subtitle is more effective than Thai subtitle in improving listening comprehension skills due to the fact that Thai subtitle just helps the students understand the conversation. To focus on the appropriate length of time it takes to watching movies with subtitles for improving listening skill, Abdullah & Rahman (2017) assumed that the more students watch English movie with subtitles, the more their listening skill will be better. This, however, is not always the case. Metruck (2019) pointed out that students who watched English movies with subtitles one or two hours a day seems to be of minor importance because the scores from experiment revealed that no statistically significant differences were found.

In conclusion, the previous studies reflect students' attitudes and effectiveness of using of movies with subtitles to enhance English skills. The majority of students had more positive attitudes towards using movies as self-instructional material. Apparently, the previous studies mostly employed questionnaires to elicit the opinions on the level of agreement in using movies with subtitles to improve listening skill. What makes the current study differs from the previous ones was that third years English major students were the focus of the study. Furthermore, a qualitative dataset in which to provides in-depth information was also employed. For this reason, the current study bridges the gap by conducting an interview to obtain insightful information and confirm a qualitative information collected from the questionnaire.

Methodology

This study focused on the opinions among English learners on watching movies with subtitles to improve listening skill. This part consists of four sub-parts: participants, instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

Participants

To survey the opinions toward watching movies to enrich listening skill, the target participants of this study were 76 third year English major students in the Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University. Their average length of English study was 15 years.

Instruments

This study was employed two research instruments: a questionnaire and a structured interview for both quantitative and qualitative datasets. The questionnaire was adopted from Pimsamarn (2011) which comprise of three main parts. The first part is background of the participants. This part was designed using closed ended questions to gather personal information such as gender, background of English study, frequency of English used in daily life, and frequency of English skills used. The second part was English movies watching behavior. This part was created to identify the participants' behaviors with frequency, subtitle preferences, movie genre preferences, and motivation to



watch English movies with subtitle. The third part was opinions on watching English movies with subtitles. This part consists of questions about the level of agreement for specific statements. Moreover, the structured interview was the second instrument employed in this study to elicit participants' data. the researchers made five question items to cover all other aspects of the research focus as follows.

1. Do you usually watch movies with subtitle? What language subtitle do you prefer?
2. What is the reason you watch movies with English/Thai subtitle?
3. Do you think watching English soundtrack movie enhance your listening skill?
4. What difficulties did you face when watching English soundtrack movies to improve your listening skill?
5. Do you think that English soundtrack movies is the most appropriate media to enrich your listening skill?

Data collection

The researchers used Google Forms to distribute a self-constructed questionnaire to 76 third years English major students. After collecting data from questionnaires, researchers started an interview process. The researchers made separate individual contact to each of five participants in order to schedule convenient times to interview. Once the schedule was made, the researchers started interviewing participants with five questions. Each participants spent time around seven minutes completing the interview.

Data analysis

After the data collection, the data from questionnaires were transformed into number and analyzed. The findings were presented in descriptive statistics which include tables of percentage, means and standard deviation. Moreover, the data from interview was analyzed by using content analysis that offers in-depth information in order to understand the participant's attitudes.

Findings

This part deals with the results of the study. The first part is the findings from the questionnaire, and the other part is those from the interview.

Part 1: The data collected from the questionnaires answers the research question one: What are the third English major students' opinion about watching English movies to develop their listening skill?

The findings from the questionnaires consist of two parts.

Part 1 is participants' behavior on watching English language movies: choice of subtitles and motivation. The results from data analysis are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3

Table 1 Preference of subtitles

Subtitles preference	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Movies with subtitles	65	91.5%
Movies without subtitle	6	8.5%
Total	71	100



The results showed that 91.5% of the participants preferred watching English language movies with subtitles and 8.5% of them did not like to use subtitles while watching English language movies.

Table 2 Language choice of subtitle

Language choice of subtitles	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Thai subtitle	31	43.7%
English subtitle	38	53.5%
No subtitle	2	2.8%
Total	71	100%

Table 2 reveals that 53.5% of participants chose to watch English language movies with English subtitle followed by 39.7% of them who preferred Thai subtitle. On the other hand, 2.8% of them did not want to have any subtitles.

Table 3 Purpose of watching English language movies with subtitle

Purpose	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Entertainment	30	42.3%
Language skills improvement	41	57.7%
Total	71	100%

Table 3 shows that 57.7% of participants watched English language movies with subtitle as a means of improving their language skills and 42.3% of them want to entertain themselves through watching movies.

Part 2 copes with opinions on watching English language movies with subtitle. This part is based on a five-Likert scale questionnaire. The results from data analysis are shown in Table 4.

The criteria for interpretation of positive opinions are: 4.50-5.00 (Strongly Agree) and 3.50-4.49 (Agree) = Positive Opinions, 2.50-3.49 (Unsure) = Neutral, 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) and 1.00-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) = Negative Opinions.

Table 4 Students' level of agreement

	Mean	SD	Meaning of agreement
1. English subtitles help you understand conversation in the movies better	4.07	0.95	Agree
2. English subtitles help you learn correct pronunciation.	4.07	0.82	Agree
3. Movies with subtitles help you to understand unfamiliar accents and dialects better.	4.20	0.77	Agree
4. English subtitles help you learn new vocabularies.	4.06	0.92	Agree



	Mean	SD	Meaning of agreement
5. Movies with subtitles help you to understand unfamiliar idioms, proverbs, and slang better.	3.69	0.98	Agree
6. The motion picture in the movies helps you understand the conversation better.	4.20	0.77	Agree
7. Watching movies with subtitle can improve your listening skill better than other English media normally used in class.	4.07	0.90	Agree
8. Watching Movies with subtitle is good for teaching listening for students.	4.15	0.79	Agree
9. Watching English movies can be beneficial for English use in everyday life.	4.24	0.78	Agree
10. You can improve your listening skill by watching movies with subtitle.	4.39	0.78	Agree
Total	4.11	0.85	Agree

Table 4 reveals that the overall mean score was 4.11; the respondents had a positive opinion on watching English movies with subtitles. Here are more details obtained from Table 4. Statement number 10 (*You can improve your listening skill by watching movies with subtitle.*) show the highest mean score (4.39). Moreover, the statement number 9 (*Watching English movies can be beneficial for English use in everyday life.*) has an average mean score (4.24), and it was the second highest average mean score out of the ten statements of this part. Surprisingly, two statements have equal score. That is, statement number 3 (*Movies with subtitles help you to understand unfamiliar accents and dialects better.*) and statement number 6 (*The motion picture in the movies helps you understand the conversation better.*) have the same average mean score (4.20) which is the third highest average mean score. However, the lowest mean score (3.69) is a statement number 5 (*Movies with subtitles help you to understand unfamiliar idioms, proverbs, and slang better*). These findings show that the majority of third-year English major students at Naresuan University believe that watching movies with subtitles enhances their listening abilities, provides benefits for English use in everyday life, and help them understand unfamiliar accents and dialects better.

Part 2: The data collected from online interview was analyzed by using content analysis as a tool to answer the research question two: Are English movies considered to be an effective media for improving listening skill in the students' opinions?

The interview findings were divided into three main areas as the following.

Students' opinions on watching English-language movies with subtitles

The participants were generally pleased to watch English movies with subtitles, particularly English subtitle. They mentioned that they watched movies for amusement and wanted to understand the storylines. For this reason,



watching English movies with either English or Thai subtitle is an excellent way for students to follow the plot while also strengthening their listening abilities. From the interview data, the participants' opinions for watching English movies with subtitles are presented in Excerpts 1-2. One prefers Thai subtitle; the other is English subtitle.

Excerpt 1

Watching English movies with Thai subtitle is better than watching English movies that is dubbed into Thai because watching movies with subtitles allows me to concentrate more on the content and obtain characters' feelings. Besides, while watching English movie with subtitles, I can improve my English listening skill.

Excerpt 2

I frequently watch English movies with subtitles. Watching English movies that have been dubbed into Thai might lead to problems such as lost in translation. Furthermore, watching movies with English subtitles allows me to improve my English skills.

Students' opinion towards watching English movies with subtitle to improve their listening skill.

The participants' positive opinions toward using English movies with subtitles as a tool to develop listening skill are shown in Excerpts 3-4.

Excerpt 3

Watching English movies with subtitles, in my opinion, is an excellent way to enhance listening skill since I can listen how native speakers speak. Therefore, it allows me to practice listening—not just to British or American accents, but also to other accents such as Australian, Indian, and so on. Watching movies on a regular basis help me hear a variety of English accents.

Excerpt 4

Even though the purpose of watching movies is for entertainment rather than for learning English, I cannot deny that watching English movies with subtitles can improve listening abilities. Since I hear English accents from native speakers, I instantly absorb the sound and words they say in the movies. However, when I watch serious movies, I must concentrate on the plot. As a result, I'll pay close attention to the subtitles rather than listening the conversation.

Students' opinion towards English movies with subtitle as an effective media for enhance listening skill.

The opinions of participants towards English movies with subtitle as an effective media for enhance listening skill was presented in Excerpts 5

Excerpts 5

To decide which media is effective to improve English, I personally think that it should be the one people can have fun while learning English. Therefore, watching English movies with subtitles is an effective medium to improve listening skill because people can entertain themselves and enhance their English skills. Furthermore, watching English movies with subtitles will be much more beneficial if the subtitles are in English. People learn additional vocabularies in addition to improving their listening abilities. Furthermore, using English movies as a medium for practicing English



is incredibly easy because people can watch movies on their cellphones, iPads, MacBooks, or Notebooks, all of which are portable. As a result, watching movies with subtitles is a great and practical way to enhance your English.

The notion of both in tables and excerpts can be interpreted as “agree”. In other words, the respondents had positive opinions towards the instruction. The findings of the study will be summarized and discussed in the next section.

Discussion

According to the findings, the overall results indicate that the third-year English major students at Naresuan University had positive opinions toward watching English movies with subtitles to improve listening skill. The findings from questionnaire showed that students preferred watching movies with subtitles for developing listening skill. Moreover, the answers from interview reflected the students’ in-depth opinions about the use of movies with subtitles to promote their listening skill. The students believed that they could gain more knowledge or learned new things while entertaining themselves by watching movies.

Based on the obtained findings, the students believed that their listening ability could be improved by watching English movies with subtitles. Many students usually watched movies with subtitles, especially English subtitle to learn English. According to the findings, it can be concluded that, in students’ opinions, the most effective type of subtitles for improving listening skill is English subtitle. Likewise, Suetrong (2015) point out that English subtitles are more helpful than Thai subtitles in increasing listening comprehension abilities because Thai subtitles only help students comprehend the story rather than listening what the actors say. In present study, students’ opinion indicated that watching movies with subtitles help them to understand conversation in real life better. Its motions and interaction in the movies provide students with more opportunities to practice their listening comprehension. Besides such benefits, movie with subtitles also be an effective tool to improve their listening skill. It provides convenience and a relaxed atmosphere for students to enrich English listening skill. These findings correspond to those in the previous studies in the sense that movie is an effective medium for language learning and teaching (Pimsamarn, 2011; Gorjian, 2014; Woottipong, 2014; Worrawattanukul, 2016). In the present study, researchers found that the majority of students believed that watching movies with subtitles could help them improve their listening skill. Particularly, English subtitles help them in comprehending emotions and feelings, as well as what they hear in movies, new words or phrases with unfamiliar accents, slang, idioms, cultures and traditions. They could verify whether what they heard was accurate or not. Thus, this is perhaps one of the reasons why watching movies with subtitles helps students enhance their listening skill. Similar to Albiladi, Abdeen & Lincoln (2018), the researchers found that movie strengthen not just language competence but also cultural understanding. To thoroughly better students’ listening skill, they must learn various cultures and customs. All of these results seem to shed light on the benefits of watching English movies with subtitles to improve listening skill since students have positive attitude towards using movies as learning tools can bring about better listening competence.



Recommendation

As presented in this study, most students have positive opinion toward watching English movies with subtitles to enhance listening skill. Moreover, they believe that movies are the most appropriate media to use for developing listening competence. For the further research, researchers can explore the effectiveness of using movies to improve other language skills. They can explore the effects of using movies towards reading, writhing, or speaking skills. To increase reliability in further studies, researchers may conduct studies with students from various majors, Faculties, and year levels, or use more advanced research instruments such as pre-post tests to gather data on various topics.

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