

EFL Students' Perceptions of the Impact of Watching English Movies on Language Skills

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تصورات طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية حول أثر مشاهدة الأفلام الإنجليزية في تنمية المهارات اللغوية

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Abstract:

The present study investigated the impact of watching English movies on enhancing EFL students' language skills. A descriptive research design was employed to explore students' perceptions of the educational value of English movies in language learning. The study was conducted among 36 undergraduate students from the Department of English Language, Faculty of Education, Sabratha University, Libya. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of three sections: socio-demographic characteristics, the linguistic benefits of watching English movies, and the psychological and motivational effects associated with movie-based learning. Prior to data collection, a pilot study was conducted, and the test-retest method was applied to ensure the reliability of the instrument. The collected data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel through descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The findings revealed that students generally held positive attitudes toward watching English movies as a language-learning tool. The results indicated that movies contributed significantly to improving listening comprehension, pronunciation, grammar awareness, and exposure to authentic language use. The highest-rated linguistic item was related to listening comprehension, while the strongest psychological benefit was cultural understanding and awareness of English-speaking communities. Furthermore, students reported increased motivation, confidence, and reduced anxiety when using English. Overall, the study concludes that English movies represent an effective supplementary resource for enhancing EFL students' language skills and promoting learner engagement in the language-learning process.

Keywords: English Movies, EFL Students, Language Skills, Listening Comprehension, Audiovisual Learning.

المخلص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف أثر مشاهدة الأفلام الإنجليزية في تنمية المهارات اللغوية لدى دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) واعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي للكشف عن تصورات الطلبة تجاه دور الأفلام الإنجليزية في تعلم اللغة. شملت عينة الدراسة (36) طالبًا وطالبة من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية، جامعة صبراتة، ليبيا. وتم جمع البيانات باستخدام استبيان منظم يتكون من ثلاثة محاور رئيسية: البيانات الديموغرافية للمشاركين، وأثر مشاهدة الأفلام الإنجليزية في تنمية المهارات اللغوية، والفوائد النفسية والتحفيزية المرتبطة باستخدام الأفلام في تعلم اللغة. كما أجريت دراسة استطلاعية (Pilot Study) ، وتم تطبيق أسلوب الاختبار وإعادة الاختبار (Test-Retest) للتحقق من ثبات أداة الدراسة. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلبة يمتلكون اتجاهات إيجابية نحو استخدام الأفلام الإنجليزية في تعلم اللغة. كما بينت النتائج أن مشاهدة الأفلام تسهم في تحسين مهارات الاستماع والنطق وفهم القواعد اللغوية، بالإضافة إلى زيادة التعرض للغة الإنجليزية في سياقاتها الطبيعية. وأشارت النتائج أيضًا إلى أن الأفلام تعزز الدافعية والثقة بالنفس، وتقلل من القلق أثناء استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية، فضلاً عن دورها في تنمية الوعي الثقافي وفهم ثقافات المجتمعات الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الأفلام الإنجليزية تمثل وسيلة تعليمية فعالة يمكن توظيفها لدعم تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية وتحسين المهارات اللغوية لدى الطلبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأفلام الإنجليزية، دارسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، المهارات اللغوية، الفهم السمعي، التعلم السمعي البصري.

Introduction:

English is one of the most widely used languages in education, communication, and access to global knowledge. For EFL students, developing language skills requires continuous exposure to authentic language input. However, limited opportunities to interact with native speakers often make language learning challenging. Consequently, students increasingly rely on digital and audiovisual resources to support their language development [1]. Among these resources, English movies have gained considerable attention as an enjoyable and effective learning tool. Movies provide authentic conversations, natural pronunciation, contextualized vocabulary, and exposure to different cultural aspects of the language. Recent studies have reported that the use of English movies can contribute to vocabulary development, listening improvement, and overall linguistic competence among EFL learners [2]. Furthermore, watching movies can increase learners' motivation and engagement by presenting language in meaningful real-life situations. The combination of visual and auditory input enables students to better understand spoken language and improve their communication skills [3]. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of watching English movies on enhancing EFL students' language skills and explores students' perceptions of this learning practice.

Problem Statement:

Despite the widespread popularity of English movies among EFL learners, many students still experience difficulties in developing essential language skills, particularly listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and speaking fluency. Although movies provide authentic language exposure, their educational value is not always fully utilized by learners or integrated effectively into language-learning practices. Recent studies have highlighted the positive role of audiovisual materials in language learning; however, further investigation is needed to understand how watching English movies specifically contributes to enhancing EFL students' language skills in different educational contexts [4]. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the impact of watching English movies on enhancing EFL students' language skills and to explore students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of movies as a language-learning resource.

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant because it provides insights into the role of English movies as an accessible and motivating tool for language learning. The findings may help EFL students improve their language skills through authentic exposure to English. In addition, the study may assist teachers in integrating movies more effectively into classroom instruction and encourage educational institutions to utilize audiovisual resources that support language development. Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on technology-enhanced language learning and offers practical recommendations for improving English language teaching and learning.

Literature Review:

The use of English movies in language learning has attracted considerable attention among researchers because movies provide authentic language input and expose learners to natural

communication. Films offer opportunities for learners to encounter vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, and contextualized language in meaningful situations. A systematic review conducted by Sánchez-Auñón et al. found that films can positively influence learners' motivation, listening skills, vocabulary acquisition, and cultural awareness when integrated appropriately into EFL instruction [5].

Vocabulary development is one of the most frequently reported benefits of watching English movies. Research has shown that exposure to audiovisual materials helps learners acquire new lexical items through contextual clues and repeated encounters with words. The effectiveness of multimedia input in supporting vocabulary learning and long-term retention has also been confirmed in recent EFL studies [6]. Another important factor is the role of subtitles and on-screen texts. According to Wei and Fan, captions and subtitles facilitate vocabulary learning by helping learners connect spoken language with written forms, which improves comprehension and lexical retention [7].

In addition, audiovisual materials contribute to the development of pragmatic and communicative competence. Barón and Celaya reported that exposure to captioned and non-captioned videos can enhance learners' understanding of language use in social contexts and improve their pragmatic performance in English [8]. Within the Libyan context, recent studies have emphasized the importance of technological and autonomous learning resources in supporting English language development. Research conducted at Sirte University indicated that Libyan EFL students showed positive attitudes toward technology-assisted language learning and recognized its value in improving English proficiency [9]. Overall, previous studies suggest that English movies constitute an effective educational tool that can enhance vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, communicative competence, and learner motivation. Nevertheless, further investigation is needed to examine their impact on EFL students' language skills in different educational settings.

Material and methods:

This descriptive study was conducted among 36 EFL students enrolled in the Department of English Language, Faculty of Education, Sabratha University, Libya. Participants were selected according to the inclusion criterion of being officially registered students in the department and willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of three sections: socio-demographic characteristics, the impact of watching English movies on language skills, and students' attitudes toward watching English movies for language learning.

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted to assess the clarity and suitability of the questionnaire items. Furthermore, the test–retest method was applied to ensure the reliability of the instrument.

The collected data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, were used to summarize and interpret the participants' responses.

Results and discussion:

This section presents the findings of the study regarding the impact of watching English movies on enhancing EFL students' language skills. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The results are organized into three parts: participants' demographic characteristics, students' perceptions of the linguistic benefits of watching English movies, and their views on the psychological and motivational advantages associated with movie-based language learning.

Table (1): Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 36)

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 6 | 16.7 |
| | Female | 30 | 83.3 |
| Academic Level | Semester 1 | 3 | 8.3 |
| | Semester 2 | 2 | 5.6 |
| | Semester 3 | 4 | 11.1 |
| | Semester 4 | 4 | 11.1 |
| | Semester 5 | 4 | 11.1 |
| | Semester 6 | 5 | 13.9 |
| | Semester 7 | 7 | 19.4 |
| | Semester 8 | 7 | 19.4 |
| Exposure to English Movies | 1 | 1 | 2.8 |
| | 2 | 2 | 5.6 |
| | 3 | 8 | 22.2 |
| | 4 | 10 | 27.8 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|----|------|
| | 5 | 15 | 41.7 |
| Preferred Viewing Mode | 3 | 5 | 13.9 |
| | 4 | 22 | 61.1 |
| | 5 | 9 | 25.0 |

Table 1 shows that female students constituted the majority of the participants (83.3%), while male students represented only 16.7%. The highest proportions of respondents were from Semester 7 and Semester 8 (19.4% each). Most students reported frequent exposure to English movies, with 41.7% selecting the highest exposure level. Additionally, the majority preferred higher viewing-mode categories, particularly category 4 (61.1%). These findings indicate that the participants have substantial experience with English movies, making them appropriate respondents for investigating their impact on EFL language skills.

Table (2): Questionnaire Items by Study Dimensions

| Dimension A: Linguistic Benefits | Dimension B: Psychological and Motivational Benefits |
|---|--|
| A1 Understanding different accents and improving listening comprehension. | B6 Reducing anxiety and stress when speaking English. |
| A2 Improving listening comprehension through movie viewing. | B7 Increasing motivation to learn English. |
| A3 Acquiring natural pronunciation and intonation. | B8 Increasing confidence in using English expressions. |
| A4 Improving vocabulary retention. | B9 Understanding the culture of English-speaking countries. |
| A5 Understanding grammar in real-life contexts. | B10 Providing a stress-free and engaging learning environment. |

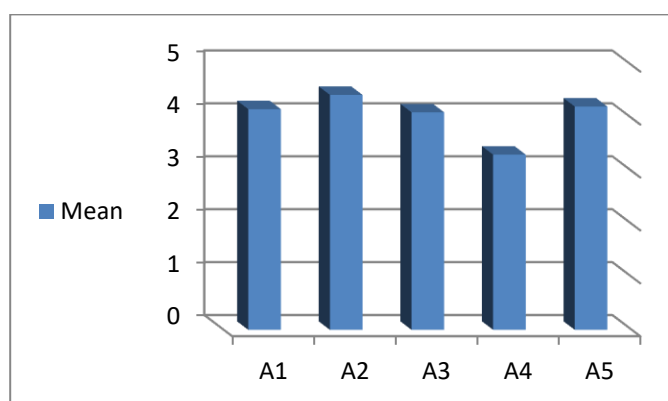


Figure (1): Mean Scores of Students' Responses to Dimension A (A1–A5)

Figure 1 presents students' responses to Dimension A concerning the linguistic benefits of watching English movies. Item A1 examined the role of movies in understanding different English accents and improving listening comprehension, A2 focused on the improvement of listening comprehension through movie viewing, A3 addressed the acquisition of natural pronunciation and intonation patterns, A4 investigated vocabulary retention, and A5 explored the contribution of movies to understanding grammar in real-life contexts. The results indicate a high level of agreement across all items, with an overall mean score of 4.05. The highest-rated item was A2 ($M = 4.44$), suggesting that students strongly believe that English movies improve their listening comprehension. This was followed by A5 ($M = 4.22$), A1 ($M = 4.17$), and A3 ($M = 4.11$). In contrast, A4 recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.31$), although it still reflected a moderate level of agreement. Overall, the findings suggest that English movies are particularly effective in enhancing listening comprehension, grammar awareness, pronunciation, and understanding of authentic language use among EFL students.

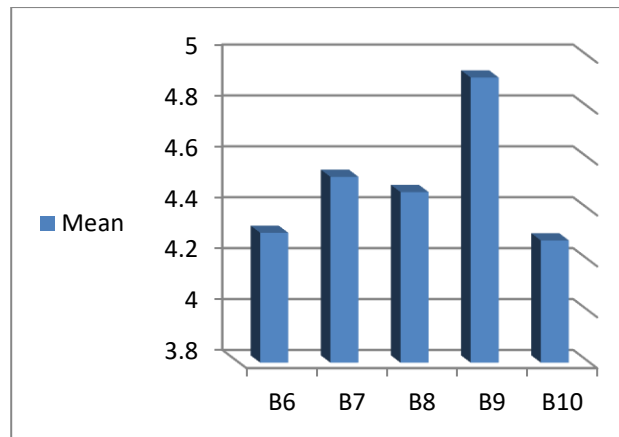


Figure (2): Mean Scores of Students' Perceptions of the Psychological and Motivational Benefits of Watching English Movies (B6–B10)

Figure 2 presents students' perceptions of the psychological and motivational benefits of watching English movies. Item B6 examined the role of movies in reducing anxiety and stress when speaking English in the classroom, B7 focused on increasing motivation to learn English compared with traditional materials, B8 addressed students' confidence in using expressions learned from movies, B9 explored the contribution of movies to understanding the culture of English-speaking countries, and B10 investigated the extent to which movies provide a stress-free and engaging learning environment. The results revealed a very high level of agreement across all items, with an overall mean score of 4.50. The highest-rated item was B9 ($M = 4.92$), indicating that students strongly believe that movies enhance their cultural understanding and awareness. This was followed by B7 ($M = 4.53$), B8 ($M = 4.47$), and B6 ($M = 4.31$). In contrast, B10 recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 4.28$), although it still reflected a very high level of agreement. Overall, the findings suggest that English movies make a significant contribution to students' motivation, confidence, cultural awareness, and positive learning experiences in EFL contexts.

Discussion:

The findings of this study suggest that watching English movies has a positive influence on EFL students' language development. Students reported high levels of agreement regarding the role of movies in improving listening comprehension, pronunciation, and grammar awareness. The highest score was associated with listening comprehension, which may be explained by the continuous exposure to authentic spoken English, natural accents, and real-life conversations. This finding is consistent with previous research that emphasizes the effectiveness of audiovisual input in enhancing listening skills and language acquisition [5,10].

Another important finding is the positive impact of movies on pronunciation and communicative competence. Students believed that movies helped them understand different accents and acquire more natural pronunciation patterns. A possible explanation is that movies provide learners with repeated exposure to authentic speech models that are often unavailable in traditional classroom settings. Similar conclusions have been reported in previous studies on multimedia-assisted language learning [8,11]. Although vocabulary learning received the lowest mean score among the linguistic items, participants still expressed positive attitudes toward its contribution to vocabulary development.

This may indicate that vocabulary acquisition through movies requires repeated exposure and active engagement with subtitles or contextual cues. Previous studies have similarly reported that vocabulary gains from audiovisual materials tend to occur gradually over time [7,12]. The psychological and motivational findings were particularly noteworthy. Students reported very high levels of motivation, confidence, and cultural awareness. The highest-rated item concerned understanding the culture of English-speaking countries, suggesting that movies provide valuable cultural insights in addition to language input. Furthermore, participants indicated that movies reduce anxiety and create a more enjoyable learning environment. These findings support the view that enjoyable learning experiences can increase learner engagement and encourage more active language use [5,9].

Overall, the results indicate that English movies represent a valuable educational resource that supports both linguistic and psychological aspects of language learning. Integrating carefully selected English movies into EFL instruction may therefore enhance students' motivation, cultural understanding, and language proficiency while creating a more engaging learning experience.

Conclusion:

This study examined the impact of watching English movies on enhancing EFL students' language skills. The findings revealed that students generally held positive perceptions regarding the educational value of English movies. Participants reported that movies contributed to improving listening comprehension, pronunciation, grammar awareness, and exposure to authentic language use. In addition, students recognized the motivational and psychological benefits of movie-based learning, particularly in increasing confidence, reducing anxiety, and enhancing cultural awareness. The results suggest that English movies can serve as an effective supplementary learning resource that supports both language development and learner engagement. Therefore, English language teachers are encouraged to integrate appropriate audiovisual materials into their instructional practices to create more authentic and motivating learning experiences. Future research may explore the long-term effects of movie-based learning on specific language skills using larger samples and different educational contexts.

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