

Developing EFL learners' vocabulary watching movies with subtitles

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Annotation: Learning new vocabulary comprises a significant factor for success within language learning since without the adequate knowledge of words and their meaning, learners are not able to use the target language efficiently. Furthermore, if vocabulary is not learned and applied in a way that gives students exposure to language in a real target language environment, it is likely to be forgotten. In this sense, learners of the modern era benefit from the increased availability of various multimedia and technological resources, which promotes learners' spontaneous vocabulary acquisition. Specifically, watching movies with subtitles can help students become more familiar with real-world communication vocabulary. Because of this, prior research has confirmed that watching movies with subtitles does, in fact, improve vocabulary development and has identified a number of advantages of doing so.

Key words: movies, subtitles, vocabulary, teaching, learner.

Introduction.

Communication in the target language is impossible without words to convey a greater variety of meanings, no matter how well a student learns grammar or how proficiently they master the language's sounds. Since most language learners want to become proficient communicators and readers, they must first acquire a sufficient vocabulary and learn how to use it correctly. Grammar is limited to a small number of possible meanings, but words can express nearly anything. Furthermore, since learners frequently need to reach a threshold level of target vocabulary in order to communicate fluently or comprehend authentic texts, the size of their vocabulary can typically be used to assess their language proficiency. [1]

Main part.

First of all, new vocabulary learned through textbooks and the audio CDs tends to be forgotten if it is not acquired and used through the right methods. In this regards, Prensky [2] states that “students have changed radically and that today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach”. He also adds that these young people, the digital natives, are growing up in an environment surrounded by multimedia, thus they prefer learning vocabulary in rich and natural experiences. Since it is quite challenging for teachers to provide learners such opportunities, the educational system is demanding for innovative teaching tools and strategies that will provide learners with large amounts of inputs in genuine target language environment.

As the result of increasing of technology, language learning, especially vocabulary has vastly improved in the recent years. The advantages of technology has played a great role in providing learners authentic materials with a range of vocabulary exposure. Such as, TV, Computers, DVDs, MP3s, mobile phones, video sites. As a result, one of the best resources for helping learners in the modern era acquire vocabulary on their own is audio-visual content, especially movies.

On the other hand, the evolution of technology has provided a vast number of opportunities to learn vocabulary into the everyday especially younger’s, that are becoming more and more technologically literate. They are surrounded by English on daily basis, through internet and technologies such as smartphones, tablets, media-players, TVs and computers. Moreover, some appliances offer learners a vast number of online apps and platforms where they can watch a great number of foreign subtitled movies, thus being exposed to language content other than their native.

Watching subtitled movies to learn vocabulary is not a new tool in the field of foreign language learning, as numerous researchers have investigated the usefulness of subtitled videos in and out of the classroom.

Many authors have investigated students' vocabulary improvement when watching videos at home and found that those who watched movies with subtitles outperformed those who watched movies without subtitles. (Kossstra and Beentjes', as cited in Harji et. al, 2010).[3]

Neuman and Koskinen discovered that exposing their subjects to English videos with subtitles significantly improved their vocabulary.

Furthermore, Koskinen et al. reported that subtitled movies have an effect on non-native English speakers' incidental vocabulary acquisition.[5]

Yuksel and Tanriverdi (2009) searched that when learners are exposed to subtitled movies rather than movies without subtitles, they make more progress. To summarize, the findings of the aforementioned studies, as well as the majority of recent studies, support the use of subtitled movies in learning new vocabulary.

Many learning theories, including Mayer's cognitive theory, advocate for the use of subtitled movies to improve learners' vocabulary. According to Davey (2015), Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning assumes "two separate channels (auditory and visual) for processing information; there is limited channel capacity; and learning is an active process of filtering, selecting, organizing, and integrating information."

Movies, as one example of such audio-visual channels, with the assistance of subtitles provide learners with a vast amount of vocabulary that must first be noticed and then processed.

subtitled movies encourage learners to notice unfamiliar vocabulary, which is the first step in the acquisition process[6]. Wesche and Paribakht [7] add that new vocabulary is usually noticed when it is required for text comprehension, but that vocabulary can be fully acquired if it is encountered frequently and in different forms.

According to Lévesque[8], for successful vocabulary acquisition, learners must be given texts with approximately 98% known words and less unknown words that must be repeated in various contexts. Furthermore, other researchers agree that the frequent occurrence of written words aids vocabulary acquisition, but they are unsure of the exact number of required word encounters and that most language learners decipher these unknown words from context. Danan [9] adds that the same word repetition provided by subtitles aids in vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, Thornbury [10] emphasizes that "unlike learning grammar, which is a system with many rules, vocabulary is a subject of recalling," so presenting learners with the same words on a regular basis leads to incidental vocabulary gains without the learners' conscious effort.

Subtitled films promote visual information in a realistic and natural language that is "spoken at a normal conversational speed as well as varieties of language from various ages, genders, and socio-cultural backgrounds". The authentic environment presented by the movies allows learners to grasp a wide range of vocabulary, and clues from the text help learners understand the meaning of unknown words, resulting in incidental vocabulary acquisition.

The view of Read[11], words must be encountered in various semantic and syntactic contexts, and as such, movies with audio-visual components provide a rich source for incidental vocabulary learning, which helps learners retain vocabulary for a longer period of time. Subtitled movies have the advantage of providing real context, as well as repetition opportunities for words, with language at normal speed and a combination of audio and visual stimulation, verbal and nonverbal communication, which will undoubtedly benefit the learner's vocabulary acquisition. Given their importance in ELT, the effectiveness of subtitled movies in fostering vocabulary acquisition is one of the features that requires further investigation.

Conclusion.

To conclude, learning new vocabulary, as a difficult task for most language learners, plays an important role in language learning and, in particular, in improving communication skills. On the other hand,

increased access to various multimedia and technology resources, including subtitled movies, provides learners with a plethora of opportunities to expand their vocabulary.

Many scholars have recognized the value of subtitles in assisting students with the process of vocabulary acquisition. As a result, much research has been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of watching subtitled movies in vocabulary acquisition.

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