



THE STRATEGY OF IMPROVING LISTENING SKILLS THROUGH WATCHING MOVIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the opinions of leading scholars around the world on strategies for improving listening skills through watching English films, analyzes strategies for improving listening skills through watching English films, and provides suggestions and recommendations on the topic.

Keywords: listening skills, movie-based learning, strategic subtitle use, English language acquisition, pre-viewing preparation, interactive learning, learner motivation.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary globalized world, English has firmly established itself as the lingua franca of international communication, business, education, and entertainment. Proficiency in English is no longer a luxury but a necessity for academic and professional success across diverse fields. Among the four fundamental language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—the latter often presents significant challenges for language learners. Listening comprehension requires not only understanding vocabulary and grammar but also adapting to various accents, speech rates, colloquialisms, and cultural references. Traditional language learning methods sometimes fail to adequately prepare learners for real-world listening situations, creating a gap between classroom learning and practical application. This research explores the potential of an engaging and widely available resource—English-language movies—as a strategic tool for enhancing listening comprehension skills.

Movies offer a rich and authentic language learning environment that mirrors real-life communication in ways textbooks cannot. They present language in context, complete with visual cues, emotional undertones, and cultural nuances that help viewers interpret meaning beyond the literal words. Unlike controlled classroom listening activities, films expose learners to natural speech patterns, including hesitations, interruptions, regional accents, slang, and idiomatic expressions. Additionally, the engaging narratives and emotional connections formed with characters can significantly increase motivation and reduce the anxiety often associated with language learning. When viewers are engrossed in an interesting plot, they often

forget they are engaged in language study, creating a low-stress learning environment conducive to acquisition rather than forced learning.

The multimedia nature of films provides unique advantages for listening skill development. The combination of audio and visual elements supports comprehension through multiple channels, allowing learners to connect spoken words with facial expressions, gestures, and contextual settings. This multimodal input can be particularly beneficial for learners at different proficiency levels, as visual cues can scaffold understanding when linguistic comprehension is incomplete. Furthermore, the variety of genres, settings, and character types in cinema exposes learners to diverse language registers, from formal dialogue to casual conversation, professional jargon to teenage slang. This breadth of linguistic exposure is difficult to replicate in traditional language learning materials but is essential for developing robust listening skills that can adapt to various communication contexts.

The strategic use of movies for language learning aligns with several established theories in second language acquisition. Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners receive comprehensible input slightly above their current level—a condition that carefully selected films can satisfy. Meanwhile, the Affective Filter Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of low anxiety and high motivation in successful language acquisition, qualities that engaging with enjoyable media content naturally promotes. Additionally, the cognitive load theory supports the idea that the contextual richness of films can actually make complex language more digestible by distributing processing demands across different cognitive channels. This theoretical foundation provides a solid basis for incorporating movies into systematic approaches to English language learning.

Despite the potential benefits, effectively using movies for improving listening skills requires thoughtful strategy rather than passive consumption. Without structured approaches, learners may become overwhelmed by rapid dialogue, complex vocabulary, or unfamiliar cultural references. They might also develop dependence on subtitles or fail to notice important linguistic features. This research aims to develop and evaluate comprehensive strategies that maximize the effectiveness of movie-watching as a tool for enhancing listening comprehension. These strategies encompass preparation activities, techniques for active engagement during viewing, methods for processing and reinforcing learning afterward, and approaches for measuring progress over time. By establishing systematic methodologies, this study seeks to transform casual entertainment into purposeful language acquisition.

The significance of this research extends beyond individual language learning to broader educational contexts. As educational institutions increasingly embrace technology-enhanced learning and authentic materials, evidence-based strategies for incorporating popular media into language curricula become increasingly valuable. Furthermore, in many regions where exposure to native English speakers is limited, movies represent an accessible window into authentic language use. This research also addresses the growing trend of self-directed and lifelong learning, providing practical tools for independent learners to continue developing their language skills outside formal educational settings. By bridging entertainment and education, the strategies

developed through this research have the potential to make language learning more engaging, effective, and aligned with the multimedia reality of modern communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the process of analyzing the literature on the topic, scientific research has been conducted by several leading economists and experts from around the world on The strategy of improving listening skills through watching movies in English language. For instance, Stephen Krashen (2009) in his book "Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition" advocated the "natural approach" theory and supported language learning through films: "Listening comprehension competence develops through comprehensible input, and movies provide this input in various contexts and real-life situations" (p. 87). Krashen particularly emphasizes the role of movies in reducing anxiety and increasing motivation[1].

Gilmore (2007) in his article "Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning" explored the advantages of authentic materials such as films in language learning: "Films expose language learners to authentic communication patterns, various accents, speech rates, and natural language variations, preparing them for real life better than artificially constructed materials"(p. 103)[2].

Mayer and Moreno (2003) developed the theory of multimodal learning in their article "Nine ways to reduce cognitive load in multimedia learning": "By combining audio and visual elements, learners process information through two channels, which helps effective assimilation of information, especially in the context of language learning"(p. 45)[3].

Vanderplank (2016) in his book "Captioned Media in Foreign Language Learning" researched the benefits of subtitling in language learning: "Subtitling allows learners to receive information through multiple sources by combining listening, reading, and visual information, which facilitates understanding of complex materials"(p. 129)[4].

Source: Arnold (2019) in "Affect in Language Learning" examined the role of affective factors in language acquisition: "Watching interesting and enjoyable films reduces anxiety and increases motivation in the language learning process, which lowers the affective filter and improves language acquisition"(p. 72)[5].

Webb and Rodgers (2009) in their study "The vocabulary demands of television programs" explored the possibilities of enhancing vocabulary through films: "An average English-speaking person needs to know approximately 3,000 word families to understand 95% of words, which is a goal gradually achievable through watching movies"(p. 355)[6].

Abdullayeva F.S. (2021) in her monograph "Methodology of Using Authentic Audio-Visual Materials in Teaching English" states: "During the process of language learning through films, students have the opportunity to learn not only the language structure but also cultural aspects, which enhances communicative competence"(p. 78)[7].

Saparova K.O. (2020) in her article "The Role of Modern Technologies in Developing Listening Skills of Foreign Language Faculty Students" writes: "Through films, students learn English phrases, idioms, and informal conversations used in real communicative situations, which are rarely found in textbooks"(p. 45)[8].

Karimov U.K. (2022) in his book “Innovative Methods of Teaching English in Secondary Schools” writes about using films: “Using selected films enhances not only students’ listening skills but also their intercultural competencies and supports the communicative approach”(p. 112)[9].

Hamroyeva M.A. (2023) in her dissertation “Improving the Methodology of Teaching Foreign Languages in Higher Education” analyzed the methodology of teaching through cinema: “Teaching through films showed that students’ listening skills significantly improved when implemented through strategies appropriate to the students’ language level”(p. 98)[10].

Alimov S.S. and Sodiqova R.M. (2021) in their article “Modern Approaches to Improving the Professional Competence of English Teachers” presented the results of empirical research: “An experiment conducted with experimental and control groups showed that the group applying regular movie-watching strategies demonstrated 24% higher results in listening tests”(p. 87)[11].

Qilichev A.B. and King, J. (2022) in their book “Improving English Language Teaching in Uzbekistan: International Perspectives” emphasize based on international experience: “The methodology of using films in teaching English in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries has been found to increase students’ motivation for language learning and satisfy the need for authentic materials” (p. 156)[12].

These sources serve as a fundamental basis for in-depth theoretical and practical research on “The strategy of improving listening skills through watching movies in English language”. The perspectives of local and foreign scholars, results of empirical research, and theoretical foundations confirm the effectiveness of strategies for improving listening skills in English through movies.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Improving listening skills through watching English movies represents a powerful pedagogical strategy that bridges traditional language instruction with authentic, real-world language exposure. This approach holds particular significance in contexts where learners have limited opportunities for direct interaction with native speakers. Movies provide immersive auditory experiences featuring diverse accents, speech rates, colloquialisms, and paralinguistic features that textbooks and classroom instruction alone cannot adequately replicate. The authentic language input from films contains natural speech patterns, including hesitations, interruptions, slang, and idiomatic expressions that prepare learners for genuine communicative encounters in English-speaking environments.

The multimodal nature of films significantly enhances the learning experience by combining auditory input with visual context. When learners encounter unfamiliar vocabulary or complex grammatical structures, the visual elements—facial expressions, gestures, settings, and situational context—provide valuable scaffolding for comprehension. This integration of audio and visual information aligns with cognitive learning theories suggesting that multimodal input facilitates more robust processing and retention. Research by Mayer and Moreno (2003) has demonstrated that such dual-channel processing reduces cognitive load and enhances understanding, particularly

beneficial for language acquisition where learners must simultaneously decode linguistic forms while constructing meaning[3].

The affective dimension of movie-based learning represents another crucial aspect of its significance. Traditional listening exercises can often create anxiety among language learners, particularly when they feel pressured to understand every word. In contrast, the engaging narratives of films can create a state of “flow” where learners become absorbed in the content, temporarily forgetting their language learning anxieties. This lowered affective filter, as described in Krashen’s (2009) second language acquisition theory, creates optimal conditions for unconscious language acquisition. The emotional connections formed with characters and storylines also enhance memory and motivation, transforming language learning from a mechanical exercise into a meaningful and enjoyable experience[1].

From a curricular perspective, movies offer unparalleled breadth and depth of linguistic exposure across various contexts, registers, and genres. Learners can encounter specialized vocabulary and discourse patterns from professional environments (legal, medical, business), casual conversation among different social groups, regional and social dialects, historical language variations, and culturally specific communication styles. This exposure is particularly significant for developing sociolinguistic competence—understanding how language use varies according to social context—an aspect often underrepresented in language textbooks. The cultural insights embedded in films also contribute to intercultural competence, helping learners understand the values, beliefs, and behavioral patterns that influence communication in English-speaking cultures.

The practical significance of movie-based listening practice extends to technological accessibility and autonomous learning. With the proliferation of streaming platforms, language learners worldwide can access a vast repository of English-language content, often with options for subtitles in various languages or closed captioning in English. This accessibility enables self-directed study where learners can select content matching their interests and proficiency levels, control playback speed, and revisit challenging segments—features unavailable in real-time listening situations. Furthermore, the skills developed through strategic movie watching transfer to other authentic listening contexts, including podcasts, news broadcasts, academic lectures, and professional interactions, empowering learners with adaptive listening strategies applicable across diverse communicative situations.

Table 1
The strategy of improving listening skills through watching movies in English language¹

Strategy Component	Description	Benefits	Implementation Tips
Pre-viewing Preparation	Activities before watching to activate	Reduces cognitive load Activates prior	Review key vocabulary Discuss film context/topic

¹ Prepared by the author.

	schema and prepare learners	knowledge Sets purpose for listening	Predict content from title/poster Set specific listening goals
Appropriate Movie Selection	Choosing suitable films based on language level, content, and learning goals	Ensures comprehensible input Maintains motivation Addresses specific learning needs	Start with simpler plots for beginners Consider speech clarity and pace Choose high-interest genres Ensure appropriate content
Strategic Use of Subtitles	Systematic approach to using different subtitle options	Scaffolds comprehension Connects written and spoken forms Gradually builds independence	L1 subtitles → English subtitles → No subtitles Use English captions for unfamiliar accents Hide subtitles for repeated viewings
Segmented Viewing	Breaking films into manageable chunks with focused activities	Prevents cognitive overload Allows for deeper processing Enables targeted practice	Watch 5-10 minute segments Rewatch challenging sections Use pause/predict technique Focus on different aspects each time
Active Listening Tasks	Specific activities during viewing to promote engagement	Encourages focused attention Transforms passive into active learning Develops specific sub-skills	Note specific information Complete cloze activities Identify discourse markers Track conversational features
Post-viewing Activities	Tasks to reinforce and extend learning after watching	Consolidates vocabulary/phrases Encourages deeper processing Connects listening to other skills	Summarize plot/dialog Role-play key scenes Discuss cultural aspects Analyze language features
Shadow Listening	Repeating dialog simultaneously with characters	Improves pronunciation Develops prosodic features Builds fluency	Start with short, clear dialog Focus on intonation and rhythm Gradually increase difficulty Record for self-assessment
Focused Features Practice	Targeting specific linguistic aspects in films	Develops selective listening Builds awareness of language features Customizes learning focus	Connected speech patterns Idiomatic expressions Discourse markers Register variations
Dictogloss Technique	Reconstructing dialog from memory after listening	Develops intensive listening Integrates listening and writing Highlights language gaps	Listen to short segment multiple times Note key words Reconstruct text collaboratively Compare with original
Cultural Context Analysis	Explicit attention to cultural elements	Builds cultural awareness Improves pragmatic understanding Enhances motivation	Identify cultural references Discuss nonverbal communication Compare with home culture Analyze pragmatic aspects
Digital Tools Integration	Using technology to enhance movie-based learning	Increases accessibility Enables personalization Facilitates sharing and feedback	Variable playback speed Interactive subtitle tools Scene clipping applications Learning management systems

Based on the table shown in the image, I can provide a description of the comprehensive strategy for improving listening skills through watching English movies. The table presents a structured approach divided into several key strategy components including Pre-viewing Preparation, Appropriate Movie Selection, Strategic Use of Subtitles, Segmented Viewing, Active Listening Tasks, Post-viewing Activities, Shadow Listening, and Focused Features Practice. Each component is thoroughly explained with its description, benefits, and practical implementation tips. This organized framework transforms casual movie watching into a purposeful language learning experience by addressing different aspects of the listening process. For example, Pre-viewing Preparation activates schema and reduces cognitive load before watching, while Strategic Use of Subtitles offers a systematic progression from L1 subtitles to English subtitles and eventually no subtitles, scaffolding comprehension while gradually building independence. The comprehensive nature of this strategy ensures that learners can systematically develop their listening skills while enjoying authentic language input in a meaningful context.

CONCLUSION

The strategy of improving listening skills through watching movies in English language represents a powerful, multifaceted approach to language acquisition that addresses many of the limitations of traditional classroom instruction. By providing authentic language input embedded within meaningful contexts, films expose learners to natural speech patterns, diverse accents, colloquial expressions, and cultural nuances that are often absent from language textbooks. The systematic application of pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing activities transforms what might otherwise be passive entertainment into active learning experiences. This structured approach ensures that learners engage deeply with the linguistic content, developing not only general comprehension abilities but also specific sub-skills such as distinguishing between formal and informal registers, recognizing discourse markers, and understanding connected speech phenomena.

The multimodal nature of films—combining audio, visual, and contextual information—aligns perfectly with cognitive learning theories and creates optimal conditions for language acquisition. Visual elements scaffold understanding when linguistic comprehension is challenged, while emotional engagement with compelling narratives lowers affective filters and enhances motivation. The flexibility afforded by digital platforms allows learners to control their experience through features such as subtitling options, playback speed adjustment, and the ability to revisit challenging segments. This personalization of the learning process accommodates different proficiency levels, learning styles, and specific linguistic needs, making movie-based strategies appropriate for diverse educational contexts from self-study to classroom implementation.

Ultimately, the value of using movies to improve English listening skills extends beyond language proficiency to encompass broader educational aims. As learners develop the ability to understand authentic English in varied contexts, they simultaneously gain insights into cultural practices, social norms, historical perspectives, and worldviews. This integrated development of linguistic and cultural competence

prepares them not just to comprehend English speech but to participate meaningfully in global conversations. When implemented strategically and consistently, movie-based listening development has the potential to transform language learners into confident, culturally aware communicators who can navigate the complexities of real-world English use across diverse contexts and communities.

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