The Impact of Using Movie Clips on Students’ Vocabulary

Niloufar Zohdi
University of Technology, Malaysia

Abstract
New vocabularies learnt by students tend to be forgotten as they are implemented through wrong methods while course books and movies designed for learners are not the authentic sources for them and they seem artificial and not so relevant to everyday life. When watching latest/ current/ blockbuster, etc movie as a tool for learning students will remember the words, seen and heard audio visually and properly worked on, later in any situation. In the class a movie titled "Wedding planner" was used as the class material. The teacher prepared a vocabulary list of every ten minutes of the movie and presented it to the class during the ten minute of students’ watching the movie clip and explained the meaning after they had watched that part with their help, sometimes guessing the meaning from the context and sometimes form the co text. Comparing previewing activity and post viewing activity a significant growth in the learning of new words and expressions is clear which means the procedure worked well on this part. The students were also provided with movie subtitles. Therefore, they had a better understanding in listening part of the movie as they could see the words and sentences while watching the movie because subtitles can help comprehension of a second language in a regional accent. To conclude, students learn the vocabulary much better if they learn them in the process of watching a movie in the classroom with a teacher present to explain them and it is more likely that students remember the unknown and new words learned in the movie class.

Keywords: Movie clips, Vocabulary, Movie class
1. Introduction

The increase of movies in the market has provided teachers with many language learning tools that can have a great effect on language classrooms. Among the four second language skills taught in schools, speaking is associated with watching movies in the class. Movies not only change the class atmosphere, they also represent culture, and include many non-linguistic features such as psychological, social, economical, emotional ones. Thus, many studies have been done to make this tool more effective and fun. For instance, Qiang, Hai and Wolff (2008) have used English movies in language classrooms to teach business to Chinese students. Yasuyo Fukunaga (1998) facilitated his teaching of global issues with movies.

However, the memory span is an obstacle that makes listening the most difficult activity because students have to catch up with the fast pace of the information they receive from movie dialogues. Short term memory is restricted in the number of elements it can hold at the same time; Sweller (1988) presents a theory that deals with schemas, or combinations of elements, as the cognitive structures that form an individual's knowledge base. This memory span increases with language proficiency, however, in most language classes this is not taken into consideration, but the aim of this research is to use a movie as a different method and create language learning activities with them. When used effectively, authentic materials help bring the real world into the classroom and significantly enliven the ESL (English Second Language) class (Kelly, Kelly, Offner, Vorland, 2002).
2. **Review of literature**

Mayer’s cognitive theory of multimedia learning (2005) is based on three core assumptions:

1. **Dual Channel Assumption**: Humans possess separate information processing channels for visually represented material and auditory represented material. Information processing occurs in three general stages. Information enters our information processing system via either the visual or auditory processing channel. This is the input stage. The information is then processed separately but concurrently in working memory. Working memory can be thought of as RAM, where relevant sounds and pictures are selected and organized. Eventually the information from both channels are integrated and connected to other information already held in long term memory.

2. **Limited Capacity Assumption**: Humans are limited in the amount of information that can be processed in each channel at one time. People who are listening to any presentation can only hold a few images and a few sounds in working memory at one time. This has been researched extensively in the field of psychology and is often referred to as cognitive load theory. Although there is some individual variability, memory span tests have shown that average memory span is pretty small, from 5 to 7 “chunks” of information. Because of our severely limited cognitive processing capability, we are always making decisions about the allocation of our processing resources.

3. **Active Processing Assumption**: Humans actively engage in cognitive processing to construct coherent mental representations of their experiences. We are not like tape recorders. We don’t passively collect information. We are constantly selecting, organizing and integrating information with past knowledge. Active learning occurs when we apply cognitive processes to the incoming material.
Since movies involve two senses (visual and hearing) simultaneously, there are two theories of language learning which can appropriately support approaches used in language learning process.

In this section cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Mayer, 1997) will be examined. The theory draws on Baddeley's (1992) model of working memory, Sweller's (Chandler & Sweller, 1991; Sweller, Chandler, Tierney & Cooper, 1990) cognitive load theory, Paivio's (1986; Clark & Paivio, 1991) dual coding theory, Wittrock's (1989) generative theory, and Mayer's (1996) Select, coordinate and combine (SOI) model of meaningful learning. Based on the theory, the learner holds visual information analyzing system and a verbal information analyzing, such that auditory records goes into the verbal system whereas animation goes into the visual system.

Since the 1970s, learners experienced in using movie as a teaching device have implored its acceptance by others (Culkin, 1970; Maynard, 1969, 1971, 1977). Wegner (1977) was an innovator in employing this medium. His 1977 pamphlet explained different movie kinds and the way to employ them in the classroom. Many others have reported successfully using films in teaching a broad range of disciplines or topics, such as political science, American Studies, French, group dynamics, science, and anthropology (Bloom, 1995; Dubec, 1990; Foreman & Thatchenkery, 1996; Funderburk, 1978; Johnson & Iacobucci, 1995; Kranzdorf, 1980; Michaud, 1997; O'Meara, 1976; Ruby, 1976; Sanchez, 1976). Movie scenes can present a visual portrayal of abstract theories and concepts taught in organizational behavior and management courses. Inexperienced students will likely benefit from the use of film because of a greater feeling of reality. Showing concepts through different film scenes also shows the application of these concepts in different situations.

Vocabulary is the dominant constituent in learning a second language (Baccroft, 2004; Hunt & Beglar, 2005; Kim, 2008). Simply the way first languages are acquired via listening, speaking, imitating, and cooperating; second language students should also learn words in this setting (Liu, 1995). DiCarlo (as cited in Lin & Chen, 2007) recommended that films could help in the process of learning language because they offer conversation that suggests contextualized vocabulary (Seferoglu, 2008). Films
could inspire learners to take part in movie related activities because it contains authentic language forms and fun value (Stoller, 1988).

Vocabulary learning is one of the main constituents of emerging thriving communication and knowledge abilities, and has been viewed as an important part of language by both researchers and instructors. Many researchers improving vocabulary learning state that learning a word needs many chances with the word in diverse shapes (Horst, Cobb, & Meara, 1998; Nation, 1990; Schmidt, 2001). One of the most frequently conventional sights of vocabulary learning is that it happens with a range of progresses.

The focus of most instructor’s vocabulary teaching involves one chief method—inspiring students to grasp meaning from context. Present educational styles focus on related or indirect learning by turning to contextual signals (Duquette & Painchaud, 1996). Krashen admits that the best way to learn vocabulary is via reading and that other methods of teaching vocabulary are not successful. There is rising proof to propose, although, that implying the meaning of new word in context is a long and inclined to error responsibility, which individually is an incompetent method of becoming skilled at second language vocabulary (Raptis, 1997). Related acquisition is one method to learn verbal knowledge, but it might be unsuccesful or unproductive. Morrison (1996) quotes Haastrup, who states that second language studentws have to achieve a particular “starting level” before they are capable of employing effective implication processes.
3. Methodology

Methods and structures of case study, qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis have been used. A group of seven female intermediate students of the same level has been chosen for the process of three months movie class. The class was held three days a week.

In the class a movie titled "Wedding planner" was used as the class material. The teacher prepared a vocabulary list of every ten minutes of the movie and presented it to the class during the ten minute of students’ watching the movie clip and explained the meaning after they had watched that part with their help, sometimes guessing the meaning from the context and sometimes form the context.

The students were also provided with movie subtitles. Therefore, they had a better understanding in listening part of the movie as they could see the words and sentences while watching the movie because subtitles can help comprehension of a second language in a regional accent.

The movie was selected based on the students’ interest, determined by an opinion poll from the students at the beginning of the semester; the theme of the movie was about daily issues so all the learned materials could be used their everyday speeches. It focused on learning idiomatic and everyday expressions to help them deal with daily conversational situations, e.g. to have a toast, rehearsal dinner, reception party, arranged marriage and etc.

The movie had previously been examined by the researcher thoroughly and all the unknown and necessary key words and vocabulary, based on students’ input, were driven and listed. The researcher/teacher had watched the movie prior to the start of the semester and was prepared the vocabulary list from the movie script.

During each ten minute movie clips viewing, the researcher teacher compiled the used words on the whiteboard. After that each part was over the researcher explained meanings of the words and expressions by asking students to guess the meaning from the context and context.
When the researcher/teacher made sure that all words and expressions were fully understood and comprehended by the students, a discussion about what will happen in the movie afterwards about the scenes, plot, and characters of the movie so that the students could use the vocabulary they had just learned in a similar real-life situation, during which the researcher/teacher observed, monitored, and controlled their fluency and accuracy and the number of learned words they use in their conversations and sentences.

In each session, one or two movie clips, each part of the ten minutes movie clip followed by fifteen to twenty minutes of discussion, were shown and worked on depending on the other activities of the class and the course books. The movie is a full feature 103-minute Hollywood movie, and the movie clips were ten-minute-parts, while some parts were repeated in some cases on the need or demand of students. There were 10 movie clips that were shown in the class.

During a three-month period, the whole movie was shown to the class, and the vocabulary list was covered by the researcher/teacher. There were also discussions based on the movie extended to the daily life issues.

At the beginning of the course, a vocabulary previewing activity consisting of twenty-three multiple-choice ones from the words and expressions selected from the movie was given to students to see how many of the words in the movie are known to them. During the course, the whole process was observed by the researcher/teacher and field notes were taken.

At the end of the course, there was a post-viewing activity, the same as the previewing activity, to show whether they had learned the vocabulary or not and how much progress they have made. There was also a questionnaire at the end of the course to ask direct questions about whether or not students feel they have learned the vocabulary in this process as well as a general comprehension test to measure their general understanding of the movie.

The researcher used mostly qualitative methods combined with merely quantitative methods for collecting and analyzing data. The qualitative method was used to analyze the observation checklist, the questionnaire as well as the comprehension test, while quantitative method was used to analyze the previewing activity and the post-viewing activity results. The advantage of using descriptive statistics is that it changes raw data into frequency distribution. In this section, instrumentation, subjects, and data collection are discussed.
In the speaking tests the researcher was the teacher and examiner. Although the class was observed by other teachers and supervisors to be checked for homogeneity of teaching, the teacher, as a researcher felt the difference in the level of students' productivity by noticing their development in vocabulary usage and their fluency in speaking. To make it more comparable and comprehensible, the research used quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. Thomas & Nelson (1996) define quantitative research as ‘a procedure in which information is collected systematically about a set of cases’, aiming at estimating relationships between variables (Thomas, 1996). The advantages of quantitative method, according to Thomas (1996), are that they use explicit and objective methods of sampling, data collection and data analysis. With such a framework, quantitative methods are used commonly in the interpretation of results in this research. It enables the researcher to compare the results of previewing activity and post viewing activity and get solid numbers in conclusion as well as showing the results in bars and charts.

Data collection tools were: Movie, previewing activity and post viewing activity, questionnaire, observation and interview.

Qualitative method was used for data collection and analysis of student's level of speaking was reported both on previewing activity and post viewing activity. The number of correct answers in the previewing activity and post viewing activity were calculated and compared. The other ones were the questionnaire in which students directly expressed their feelings and opinions and the observation was used to explain the progress in the whole three month process.

Quantitative method was used to compare the previewing activity and the post viewing activity to observe the progress students made in learning vocabulary through watching movie clips. Quantification using numbers were used to present the quantitative descriptions.
4. Discussion

At the beginning of the course there was a previewing activity for students from the words which were to be worked on during the semester to see whether they know the meanings and how many of them are unknown so that we could work on them. According to table 1 on the previewing activity, 5 words were completely unknown to all 7 students, 8 words were unknown to 6 students, 3 words were unknown to 5 students, 4 words unknown to 4 students, 1 words unknown to 2 students and 1 word unknown to 1 student. It is obvious that between 16 to 20 words were unknown to most students. The test included twenty three multiple choice tests all directly from the movie about the daily words and expressions used in the movie. The test is a multiple choice test and there are four choices to each question. It was to ensure that the words, to be worked on were mostly unknown and unseen to the students to make the research results stronger and to enable the researcher to compare the difference it would make to teach the vocabulary through movie clips and to ensure the reliability of the results. The words were randomly selected from all ten parts of ten-minute-movie clips throughout the movie.

There were seven students in this intermediate class had a total of 26% correct answers and 73% wrong answers which means they did not almost know the meaning to most of the words and expressions.

![previewsing activity](image)

**Figure 1**: Previewing activity Result
The post viewing activity which is the same as the previewing activity was taken at the end of the semester. During the course, the movie was shown in clips. The process of showing movie was that a ten-minutes-movie was played for the students, then it was paused and the students were presented with a list of the words they have heard in that ten-minute-part. Meanings of the words were asked and students could mostly guess the meanings from the context and those words which were difficult to be guessed, were explained. All this was followed by fifteen to twenty minutes talk about the movie which could range from the plot, the actors, characters or the setting as well as over generalizing the topic to daily life. The related vocabulary was worked on and then there were discussions afterwards about the movie and the students had to use the words they had learned during the process.

After a three-month course, the students took the same test to observe the difference there was made about their knowledge of new and unknown words and whether they could remember them.

The post viewing activity results show a stunning 94.4 percent rise in the correct answers and only 5.6 percent of wrong answers. As it is obvious in figure 2 the post viewing activity, the correct column has raised significantly. According to table 2, 18 words were answered 100% correct in the post viewing activity.

![Post viewing activity](image)

Figure 2: Post viewing activity Result
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word expression</th>
<th>known</th>
<th>unknown</th>
<th>word expression</th>
<th>known</th>
<th>unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exquisite</td>
<td>1 st</td>
<td>6 st</td>
<td>13. finance’</td>
<td>1 st</td>
<td>6 st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Call of nature</td>
<td>6 st</td>
<td>1 st</td>
<td>14. Smug</td>
<td>2 st</td>
<td>5 st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flirt</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 st</td>
<td>15. Bottom line</td>
<td>1 st</td>
<td>6 st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Wedding announcement</td>
<td>3 st</td>
<td>4 st</td>
<td>17. To cut the guest list</td>
<td>1 st</td>
<td>6 st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To make a toast</td>
<td>2 st</td>
<td>5 st</td>
<td>18. To long for someone</td>
<td>3 st</td>
<td>4 st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Scrabble</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 st</td>
<td>22. To have cold feet</td>
<td>1 st</td>
<td>6 st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Quit</td>
<td>1 st</td>
<td>6 st</td>
<td>23. To dump someone</td>
<td>4 st</td>
<td>3 st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. You have earned it</td>
<td>1 st</td>
<td>6 st</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Previewing activity word analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word expression</th>
<th>correct</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
<th>word expression</th>
<th>correct</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exquisite</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13. finance’</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Call of nature</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14. Smug</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flirt</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15. Bottom line</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wedding planner</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16. Arranged marriage</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Wedding announcement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17. To cut the guest list</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To make a toast</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18. To long for someone</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I nailed it</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19. Bookie</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Concussion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20. Control freak</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dumpster</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21. Tux</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Scrabble</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22. To have cold feet</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Quit</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23. To dump someone</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. You have earned it</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Post viewing activity word analysis
In the questionnaire students are asked some questions about their feelings (questions 1, 9, 10) and experience of the course (questions 2, 3, 5, 11, 12) and how they find it working (questions 4, 6, 7, 8). In here the researcher talks about those related to phase one, examining whether using movie clips has effects on vocabulary learning. There are three choice answers ranging from 0 to 2. In answer choices 0 means students disagree with the given sentence and they have a different idea from it, 1 means their ideas are similar or close to the given sentence and 2 means they totally agree with the sentence and have the same opinion as the presented sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Answer 0 (Negative)</th>
<th>Answer 1 (Similar)</th>
<th>Answer 2 (Positive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject of the movie was interesting for me.</td>
<td>1 students</td>
<td>6 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could guess the meaning of the unknown vocabulary from the movie context.</td>
<td>4 students</td>
<td>3 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The new words I have learned from the movie are suitable and practical for everyday situations.</td>
<td>4 students</td>
<td>3 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After learning the new words I was</td>
<td>1 students</td>
<td>6 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
able to use them correctly in movie discussions afterwards.

| After watching the film I was able to use the grammatical points in the movie. | 4 Student | 3 students |
| The vocabulary I had learned from the movie helped me to improve my speaking in movie discussions. | | 7 students |
| Our teacher had a vital role in teaching the vocabulary and helping us understand them. | | |
| Our teacher had a vital role in controlling the movie discussions. | 1 students | 6 students |
| I felt more confident to participate in the discussions when I knew the necessary vocabulary. | 2 students | 5 students |
| I prefer watching movies with | 5 students | 2 students |
I learn more and understand movies better in the class than when I watch them elsewhere.

Learning vocabulary through movies helped me grasp the correct pronunciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 students</th>
<th>4 students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learn more and understand movies better in the class than when I watch them elsewhere.</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning vocabulary through movies helped me grasp the correct pronunciation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Questionnaire results

In the observation, held once a week during the three-month semester of winter, the teacher/researcher observed that students were eager to learn the new words and they were interested in watching the movie as well. No one was absent during the three month course for the movie sessions and learning the unknown words had increased their self confidence and satisfaction in English. All the observation checklists and field notes were almost similar in result.

In interview student one found two advantages in learning vocabulary through movies, student two liked the idea of learning and using them at the same time to fixate them in their minds, student three thought movie class in interesting, student four though had some suggestions for making the program more effective and creative, student five, on the other hand, really enjoyed the vibe and the atmosphere of the class and would prefer if there were more fun to this class, student six agreeing with the method used in the class has some constructive propositions as well and student seven found the class and the method most suitable for personal reasons.
5. Conclusion

After a three-month period of using movies as an authentic tool to enhance the vocabulary learning by playing the movie in ten-minute parts and listing the related vocabulary of each part in advance, students were able to remember the words clearly and even use them in the short discussions held after each movie part.

The results of the previewing and post viewing activities are evidence of the interviews and observations made by the teacher/researcher showing that most words were unknown to students, while students learned the words during the course and were satisfied with this new method of teaching vocabulary.

Most of the words were acquired through the suggested method and learners could easily remember the very first words they had learned at the beginning of the three-month course as the words were used in discussions held after each ten-minute part of the movie about the scenes and plot by the students and made the words stick to learners’ minds.

Based on the findings, one of the effective features was students’ productivity in the conversations and discussions. They tend to be more active in the discussions followed by a ten-minute movie view.

The next effective features were students’ ability to remember a great number of new words they had learned in period of three month and use them in sentences and produce conversation actively as well as growing a positive self confidence to initiate speaking.
The last effective feature was the positive effects of movies as an authentic learning/teaching material to improve the pronunciation.

The fun and friendly atmosphere of watching movies increases the self confidence of the students. Therefore, makes it easier for them to remember the vocabulary and use them in a free state of mind which makes the word be fixed in mind for a long time and includes it among the active vocabulary which comes to mind easily and quickly when needed.

Mixture of pictures, colours and sounds make everything stick to mind for a very long time or even forever which facilitates the learning process.

Saving the words for one and then in the discussions makes it really important in the fact that these words, no matter how difficult, strange or even long they are, can be remembered afterwards much easier than the words just seen in course books or merely heard somewhere.
References


Culkin, J.M. (1970). “*Teaching Creatively with Film*”. Citation Press: New York


Sweller, J. & Chandler, P. (1994). *Why some material is difficult to learn.* Cognition and Instruction, 12, 185-233
