



Article

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Movie Script-Based Learning: Best Practice to Improve Speaking Skills in EFL Classroom?

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Abstract

In communication, speaking acts as a productive skill that allows a person to convey ideas and meanings through voice articulation. In the context of English learning, it is important to find method/approach/technique that can stimulate students' interest in practicing speaking skills. Script from a movie offers advantages in improving speaking skills as they are able to capture students' attention and stimulate their curiosity. The aim of this paper is to assess the impact of employing movie scripts in the classroom to enhance students' speaking abilities. Fifty-eight English department students from a State Islamic University in Aceh participated in the study. They were divided into two groups: control (NUMS-None of Using Movie Script) and experimental (UMS-Using Movie Script). Prior to and subsequent to the treatment, they were screened. The students in the experimental group were assigned a task to create a video recording in groups of five characters from a movie at the conclusion of each meeting. They were also provided with a movie script and interactive instruction by the teachers. The results of the study suggest that there was a substantial difference between the pre-test and post-test. The mean difference of both post-tests was 65.9310 for the experimental group and 55.5862 for the control group. As the result, students' speaking ability improved after they learned how to use movie scripts properly, which enabled them to gain confidence, overcome the challenge of memorizing the script, easily organize ideas, and enrich their vocabulary stock. Accordingly, the mean score of the pre-test increased more than that of the post-test.

Keywords

Movie Script, Speaking Skills, EFL Classroom, Language Learning.

Introduction

Effective communication is one of the important skills that every individual must have. In communication, speaking acts as a productive skill that allows a person to convey ideas and meanings through voice articulation (Muntasir et al., 2022). Besides being the main means of transferring information, speaking is also a medium of expression of one's ideas, information, emotions and thoughts (Rahman, 2023). Therefore, mastery speaking skills in a foreign language like English, is essential to enhance effective interaction and understanding in various communication contexts (Salaberry & Burch, 2021; Yan, Lowell & Yang, 2024; Khoir, Jessenianta & Rohmana, 2024; Rohmiyati, Imron & Asiah, 2025; Bondarchuk et al., 2024; Mahdi, 2022).

In teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia, students' level of speaking proficiency is still relatively low (Renandya, Hamied & Nurkamto, 2018; Abrar et al., 2018; Diep et al., 2022). Based on a preliminary study conducted at one private university, it was found that many students experienced difficulties in speaking English. The main obstacles faced include fear of making mistakes, lack of initiative in articulating thoughts, and less varied teaching methods. The previous studies also showed that the speaking assignments given were still short and did not cover all aspects of English (Islam, Ahmad & Islam, 2022). Therefore, more interesting and effective teaching methods are needed to improve students' speaking skills (Fadhillah et al., 2024).

One method that can be applied in teaching speaking is the use of movie scripts (Abadia, 2012). A movie script is a form of narrative text that includes dialog and scene descriptions in a movie. This material provides various advantages, such as the presentation of interesting, authentic, and relevant content, as well as the use of contemporary culture of English (Hoinbala, 2022). In addition, movie scripts also offer models of idioms, grammar patterns, and cultural values that can help students in practicing English (Zhao, 2013; Tognozzi, 2023; Ibragimov, 2023). By using movie scripts, students can be more motivated to speak, express feelings, and understand the context of communication in English better.

Speaking as one of the productive skills that has several significant aspects that must be considered, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Annisa & Wariyati, 2023; Khoir et al., 2024; Ghafar & Raheem, 2023; Muntasir et al., 2022). Speaking is not just about putting words together, but also involves the production of correct grammatical structures, appropriate vocabulary choices, and the use of appropriate intonation and stress (Sitorus et al., 2022; Renandya & Nguyen, 2022). In face-to-face interactions, speaking serves as the main tool in establishing interpersonal communication, both in formal and informal situations (Yuzar et al., 2022). Therefore, students at certain level are expected to be able to master speaking skills to participate in contextualized social interactions.

In the context of English learning, it is important to find method/approach/technique that can stimulate students' interest in practicing speaking. Script from a movie and the movie itself offer advantages in improving speaking skills as they are able to capture students' attention and stimulate their curiosity (Wang, Do Dange & Izadpanah, 2024). Characters in movie scripts can provide authentic and natural models of communication, so students are more motivated to practice speaking in various situations (Smith, 2022). In addition, the use of movie scripts can also help students in understanding the patterns of social interaction in English, which in turn will increase their confidence in speaking (Kukleva, Tapaswi & Laptev, 2020).

The use of movie scripts in language learning is an innovative strategy that can improve students' speaking skills. According to Lambert (2021), through the adaptation of dialog and storyline from the movie, students are more active in practicing pronunciation, intonation and expression naturally. In addition, movie scripts provide an authentic context, thus increasing students' motivation to communicate effectively (Suleiman & Maniam, 2019). Hence, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of using movie scripts in improving students' speaking skills. Specifically, this study compares the speaking ability between the control class that uses conventional method and the experimental design class that applies movie script-based learning. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide new insights into more effective and engaging speaking teaching strategies for English learners.

Thus, based on this synthesis of previous studies and preliminary challenges, this study aims to answer the following questions: To what extent can movie scripts improve students' speaking ability? With the null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the use of movie script in teaching and students' speaking ability.

Method

The study recruited 58 EFL students studying at one state Islamic university in Aceh. They were chosen at random from among the similar level classrooms and they were divided into two classes. One of the classes was chosen at random as the control group, and the other as the experimental group. The experimental group that received the treatment was referred to as UMS, and another as NUMS. This study required two instruments: a pre-test and a post-test. A pretest was used to determine whether the two groups (UMS and NUMS) were on the same level or not. Then, a post-test was required to assess the experimental group's progress as a result of using the movie script, particularly when teaching speaking during instruction. This study employs a quantitative method, analyzing the pre- and post-tests of both the control and experimental groups (Rosmayanti, 2025). The data were gathered through tests (pre-test and post-test) based on Higgs and Clifford's (1982) Speaking Proficiency Ratings. To begin, both groups were asked to perform a speaking act as a pre-test. Following that, the experimental group received a movie script treatment for speaking, while the other group received traditional instruction. Finally, both groups of students participated in a post-test that included a performance.

At the start of the course, both groups that were taught by the same teacher took a pre-test. The course lasted five meetings. The control group (NUMS) received either the common syllabus-based teaching and learning process or no treatment. On the other hand, the experimental group (UMS) received the following instructions: on the first day, the students were divided into groups of five and given copies of the movie script "How to Train Your Dragon". While reading the movie script, they were asked to watch one of the film's introductory scenes and pay close attention to identify the characters, setting, plot, and story; this took about 20 minutes. The students then acted out in groups (each character/student). On the second day, students were given copies of the movie script "The Help" and asked to sit in groups of four. While reading the movie script, the participants held a discussion about the film using the script in their hands. The discussion lasted about 45 minutes; they had participated in classroom discussions, and some had facilitated discussions. This method encouraged them to become more comfortable speaking in front of others; they discussed everything about the movie, the title of which was "The Help," and they began asking each other what the movie was about, how the stories were running on the script, how the characters in the movie interacted, and so on. The researchers captured these activities, as if they were pretending to be movie experts, consisting of only the scriptwriter, director, and actors/actresses. These activities were organized to help them gain confidence in speaking. On the third meeting, after being given a script, the students performed one by one in front of the class, pretending to be the real character in the movie. On the fourth meeting, the students were asked to watch one of the film's introductory scenes in order to identify the characters, setting, plot, and story while paying close attention; this took about 10 minutes. The students then acted out in pairs (each character/student), which took approximately 70 minutes. The class began the previous meeting by passing out copies of the movie script "How to Train Your Dragon" to the students.

The researchers then asked the students to read the movie script as a group of five. While reading the movie script, the students were asked to watch one of the introductory scenes of the movie to identify the characters, setting, plot, and story by paying serious attention, and it took about 20 minutes. Next, the researchers asked the students to act out in groups (each character/each student), which served as a post-test. The post-test was recorded by a cameraman, making it easier for the researchers to assess the students' ability to speak at home; it took approximately 60 minutes.

Findings & Discussion

Prior to the implementation of the procedure in the experimental class, both groups underwent a pre-test to assess any significant differences between them. Data collection revealed that the means of the experimental and control groups were nearly identical. A T-test analysis was conducted to evaluate the differences, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. T-Test Analysis of Pre-test in Experimental Group, UMS, and Control Group, NUMS

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. 2-tailed
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	UMS - NUMS	-3.31034	11.16149	2.07264	-7.55595	.93526	-1.597	28	.121

Table 1 displays a P-value of around 0.12. The P-value is higher than 0.05. Apparently, the difference is not significant. As it turns out, there is no difference between the Experimental and Control groups. It demonstrates that two groups (Experimental and Control) are at the same level, with no significant difference between them. Following the five-meeting treatment, a post-test was administered. After collecting the data, it was discovered that the mean of the Experimental Group was higher than that of the Control Group (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Post-test Analysis of Experimental (UMS) and Control (NUMS) Groups

		Paired Samples Statistics			
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	UMS	65.9310	29	14.64321	2.71918
	NUMS	55.5862	29	12.44278	2.31057

To what extent can movie scripts improve students' speaking ability?

Table 3 compares the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group. It indicates that the experimental group's pre-test and post-test results differ significantly. Table 3 shows that the significance for two-tailed at the level of 0.05 is 0.000. The p-value is 0.000, less than 0.01. Thus, the difference is statistically significant. As a result, we conclude that using movie scripts has an impact on students' speaking skills.

Table 3. T-Test Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test of Experimental Group

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. 2- tailed
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	UMSPRE - UMSPOST	-1.40690E1	10.24322	1.90212	-17.96528	-10.17265	-7.396	28	.000

Table 4. T-Test Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test of Control Group (NUMS)

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. 2-tailed
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	NUMSpre - NUMSpost	-.41379	2.92181	.54257	-1.52519	.69760	-.763	28	.452

Table 5. T-Test Analysis of Post-tests in Experimental and Control group

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	UMS - NUMS	1.03448E1	12.28319	2.28093	5.67255	15.01710	4.535	28	.000

Further, Table 4 shows a two-tailed p-value of 0.452, which is higher than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference between the control group's pre-test and post-test results. After conducting an analysis of the post-tests of both the control (NUMS) and experimental (UMS) groups, it was determined that the use of movie scripts has a significant impact on the capability of students to communicate verbally.

The study's findings highlight significant differences in integrated English skills between the experimental group, which incorporated movie scripts into teaching materials, and the control group using traditional methods. Post-test data revealed a mean score of 65.9310 for the experimental group, compared to 55.5862 for the control group. This gap suggests that movie-based instruction enhances overall language proficiency, encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The integration of movie scripts likely facilitates a more holistic learning experience, where students engage with authentic dialogues and narratives that imitate real-world communication. For instance, analysing a film's script for character motivations could simultaneously build vocabulary (Mubarokah & Rizal, 2025), improve pronunciation through mimicry (Yudar, Aditomo & Silalahi, 2020), and encourage reflections (Blasco, Moreto & Pessini, 2018), thereby reinforcing multiple skills in tandem.

These results point to underlying motivational factors as a key driver of improved efficiency in the teaching and learning process. Traditional approaches often rely on decontextualized exercises from textbooks, which can lead to disengagement. In contrast, movie scripts provide a narrative context that makes language learning more immersive and relevant (Khoir, Jessenianta, & Rohmana, 2024). This aligns with educational theories emphasizing intrinsic motivation, where students are more likely to invest effort when activities resonate with their interests (Wang, Do Dange & Izadpanah, 2024). The data implies that such engagement not only elevates test scores but also streamlines skill acquisition, potentially allowing educators/teachers/instructors/lecturers to cover more ground in less time due to heightened student focus and participation.

Classroom observations further substantiate the motivational benefits of movie-based teaching. Students in the experimental group exhibited greater enthusiasm, perceiving learning as an enjoyable pursuit rather than an obligatory task. A critical element here is the selection of movies that align with students' preferences, as Goctu (2017) observes. By choosing films from genres like action, comedy, or drama that reflect learners' cultural or personal tastes, teachers can bridge the gap between entertainment and education (Walay, 2022). This relevance transforms abstract language concepts into concrete experiences, fostering a sense of ownership over the learning process.

The novelty of incorporating movies into the classroom also plays a pivotal role. Many students reported that this method was a welcome departure from routine textbook activities, making sessions feel fresh and exciting. For instance, Panjaitan and Hasibuan (2022) note that learners were more inclined to immerse themselves in real-life scenarios portrayed in films than in graded book exercises. For example, watching a scene from a movie like *Inception* could spark discussions on complex themes (the world we perceive as being real) and this movie is a very dense film, encouraging active listening and spontaneous speaking (Nolan, 2010; Baum & Thatcher, 2010). This shift from passive to active engagement is evident in students' willingness to observe and interpret audiovisual cues, which provide richer context than static texts. Moreover, movies cultivate a relaxing learning environment, which is essential for reducing anxiety often associated with language practice. Sari and Aminatun (2021) emphasize how films aid in vocabulary expansion and offer ample opportunities for English practice in a low-pressure setting. Students can absorb natural speech patterns, idioms, and cultural references organically, leading to better retention. In the treatment sessions, participants frequently paused films to discuss vocabulary or reenact dialogues, blending enjoyment with skill-building. This relaxed atmosphere not only boosts confidence but also encourages voluntary participation, such as group debates or creative writing extensions, synthesizing listening and productive skills seamlessly.

Further, the benefits extend to practical language gains that traditional methods often overlook. Vocabulary acquisition, for one, is significantly enhanced through contextual exposure (Suwanaroa & Polerk, 2020). Words and phrases in movie scripts are embedded in emotional and visual narratives, making them more memorable than isolated lists. Learners might encounter expressions like "piece of cake" in a comedic context, internalizing them through association rather than rote memorization. This approach also exposes students to varied accents, intonations, and conversational speeds, sharpening listening comprehension and fostering adaptability in real-world interactions (Aravopoulou, Stone & Weinzierl, 2017).

Practice opportunities are amplified as well, with integrated activities promoting collaborative and multifaceted skill use. Role-playing scenes from scripts encourages speaking fluency (Supriya, 2018), while writing alternative dialogues sharpens productive skills. Such tasks illustrate authentic language use, preparing students for everyday conversations or professional settings (Sadow, 2018). Research from the previous studies converges on the idea that this method sustains long-term engagement; students often extend their learning beyond the classroom by watching additional English films, reinforcing self-directed habits (Bora, 2021; Aravopoulou, Stone & Weinzierl, 2017; Yudar, Aditomo & Silalahi, 2020; Cameron, 1990). Furthermore, the audiovisual nature of movies supports diverse learning styles—visual learners benefit from imagery, auditory learners from soundtracks, and kinesthetic learners from interactive follow-ups—creating an inclusive environment that caters to individual needs. To conclude, all elements (from motivational to practical) reveal a compounding effect: enjoyment leads to more frequent practice, which in turn yields measurable improvements in integrated skills. This interplay is particularly evident in how movie script bridge cultural gaps, allowing non-native speakers to connect with English through universal storytelling, thereby reducing feelings of alienation and enhancing overall proficiency.

Addressing Concerns and Implementing Solutions

While the advantages are clear, potential concerns about using movie scripts as instructional material warrant attention. Primary issues include selecting suitable films that are age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and pedagogically aligned, as well as managing classroom dynamics to prevent activities from becoming disorganized or time-consuming. Poor choices could lead to distractions, while unstructured sessions might prioritize entertainment over learning objectives.

These challenges can be mitigated through targeted strategies, as suggested by Bosse and Pola (2017). Providing teachers with specialized training is crucial; workshops could focus on criteria for film selection, such as evaluating language complexity and thematic relevance, ensuring movies enhance rather than hinder goals. Teachers must also develop creativity in curating content, perhaps by previewing films and aligning them with curriculum standards and in organizing activities efficiently. For instance, structuring lessons with timed segments for viewing, discussion, and application prevents overruns, maintaining a balance between engagement and productivity.

Hence, in this case, trained educators can transform potential drawbacks into opportunities. By integrating pre-viewing vocabulary exercises, guided viewing questions, and post-viewing assessments, teachers ensure that movie-based lessons are both enjoyable and effective. This proactive approach not only addresses management concerns but also amplifies the motivational benefits, creating a virtuous cycle of engagement and achievement. Ultimately, the evidence from data, observations, and scholarly insights converges to support movie scripts as a powerful tool for integrated skills development, provided implementation is thoughtful and well-supported.

Conclusion

The use of movie scripts as authentic materials in learning to speak proved to have a significant positive impact on students' speaking skills. The analysis showed that students who learned with movie scripts experienced better speaking skill improvement compared to students who were taught using conventional methods. This indicates that movie scripts not only assist students in understanding language structure and more natural pronunciation, but also increase their confidence in communicating orally. Thus, it can be concluded that the integration of movie scripts in language learning is an effective strategy to improve students' speaking skills. In addition to providing a more authentic context for communication, this method also helps students develop better intonation, expression and speaking fluency. Therefore, teachers and practitioners are advised to consider using movie scripts as one of the alternatives in teaching speaking to create a more interactive and meaningful learning experience for students.

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