



## Thai EFL Learners' Attitude toward Learning English by Watching Movies

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine Thai EFL learners' attitudes toward learning English by watching movies. This study follows a convenient sampling method where 100 Thai samples who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) were recruited to answer online questionnaires posted on the researchers' Facebook. The questionnaires were made up of two sections, which were closed-ended and opened-ended questions. There were divided into four parts based on the research questions. Descriptive statistical analysis was applied in this study in order to calculate percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation. The results showed that the participants in this study mostly watched English movies simultaneously with English subtitles with the frequency of twice a week. In addition, Thai learners strongly believe that listening skills come first, followed by speaking skills, and reading and writing skills disagree with improving learning in English by watching movies. While watching, they could learn some new vocabulary and practice their pronunciation themselves. Consequently, positive attitudes were shown by the participants as they enjoyed watching English movies to improve their listening skills and English pronunciation. Moreover, this activity supported language acquisition of new vocabulary, phrases, idioms, and slang. Therefore, it is hoped that this present study will be suitable for EFL learners.

**Keywords:** Thai EFL learners, English movies, motivation, attitudes toward English learning, language skills

### 1. Introduction

Watching English movies is viewed as one of the most effective ways to practice English skills (Seutrong, 2015, Tahir, 2015 & Kobooha, 2016). One of the reasons is that watching movies is regarded as a self-learning approach that is considered as enjoyable and relaxing activity. In addition, movies can be watched at home with a relaxing experience (Goctu, 2017). While watching English movies, different features of the English language, such as grammar and new vocabulary are likely to be picked up at the same time. Several studies have shown that movies can become a vital element of the curriculum due to their major impact on the development of basic language abilities such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Baratta & Jones, 2008, Martín & Jaén, 2009, Ismaili, 2013, Rokni & Ataee, 2014 and Yaseen & Shakir, 2015).

When it comes the situations where English is learned in classrooms, Kobooha (2016) studies the use of movies in an EFL classroom with the aim of investigating attitudes of learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). This research pointed out that it is so effective for using movies in EFL classes as it helps to improve students' language skills in the area of listening, and vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, the results also indicated that implementing movies in EFL classrooms could promote engagement among students, foster learning-oriented interaction and provide a more active learning atmosphere.

In addition, Tahir (2015) who researched the impact of using movies on learning English language at The University of Halabja pointed out that integration of movies into language teaching in the EFL classroom had become very useful and beneficial for learning new languages. Finally, this research concluded that most learners realized the usefulness of watching English movies since it could help them develop their English skills effectively. Aside from that, Seutrong (2015) also strongly expressed that watching movies support listening skills.

Watching movies could support better comprehension of the learners through visual stimuli. Movies give images that are accessed through sound, sight, and kinesthetic senses together with text. The most imperative reason is to receive textual information all together with visually presented information which helps comprehension.



Movies are being used, and learners tend to be passive listeners as to when they are sitting back and listening to the movies for 2-3 hours straight. It is commonly known that active listening is more beneficial to improve English language learners' listening skills. Some learners listen to the movies carefully, pausing the movies and watching them again at the same time as reading subtitles to study vocabulary. This engagement is active listening which is a desirable quality. Accordingly, the objective of this study is given in the following section.

## 2. Objectives

- 1) To examine Thai EFL learners' attitude toward learning English by watching movies
- 2) To investigate three communication skills by watching movies

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1 Population and sample

The population in this study was Thai EFL learners who had Facebook accounts, and 100 samples of the study were randomly selected from this population in order to examine their attitude toward watching English language movies to improve their English skills. The reasons why EFL learners were included in this study was Thai EFL learners were Thai people who learn English.

### 3.2 Instrument

This study covers two forms of research: quantitative research and qualitative research. The first part is quantitative research; data were collected using a questionnaire with 4 parts. The first part was designed to investigate the respondents' backgrounds, such as genders, ages, education levels, frequency of using English in daily life, and proficiency in English skills. The second part investigated their daily life behavior, such as the genres of movies that they like, the amount of time spent watching movies, and the English skills they acquire while watching English language movies. The third part was designed to find out their attitude toward using English movies to improve English skills. This part used a five-point Likert scale to measure attitudes and provide respondents an option to be neutral with many choices without becoming overwhelmed. The respondent were required to choose among 5= Strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree. The final section of the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions.

### 3.3 Data analysis

This study employed descriptive statistical approach. Data were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel tools to find out frequency, percentage, mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), and standard deviation (S.D). Data from the last part, including open-ended questions, were analyzed by simple content analysis of ideas.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results

The results in this present study showed that the samples mainly were females aged between 20 and 30 years. They were undergraduate students and graduated with bachelor's degrees. The samples watched English movies twice a week. Their English proficiency was fair, and the genre of movies they preferred was dramatic. Most participants preferred English subtitles. They sometimes watched movie once again in order to practice their pronunciation. They occasionally took notes on new vocabulary while watching the movies.

The results suggested that the participants were motivated to learn English by two ways: people around them and the movies. The participants had a positive attitude toward improving their English because they admired and observed those who spoke the language well. They also felt motivated to learn English because of their favorite characters, such as Harry Potter and Toy Story. The participants admitted that watching movies in English obviously helped them improve their English skills, especially listening.

**Table 1** English language Learner attitudes towards English language movies for skills development

Statement	Level of agreement					Mean	S.D.	Mean of agreement
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	$\bar{X}$		
1. I enjoy watching movies in English.	62 (62%)	34 (34%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	4.53	0.69	Strongly agree
2. I like learning English when I watch English movies.	60 (60%)	37 (37%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	4.55	0.64	Strongly agree
3. I like to practice learning English when I have time.	50 (50%)	40 (40%)	6 (6%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4.34	0.84	Strongly agree
4. I think watching English movies can improve my listening skill.	65 (65%)	32 (32%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	4.59	0.67	Strongly agree
5. I think watching English movies can improve my speaking skill.	21 (21%)	20 (20%)	22 (22%)	28 (28%)	9 (9%)	3.16	1.29	Neutral
6. I think watching English movies can improve my reading skill.	3 (3%)	12 (12%)	18 (18%)	43 (43%)	24 (24%)	2.27	1.05	Disagree
7. I think watching English movies can improve my writing skill.	3 (3%)	12 (12%)	18 (18%)	37 (37%)	30 (30%)	2.21	1.09	Disagree
8. I think learning English by watching English movies can support my pronunciation.	28 (28%)	51 (51%)	15 (15%)	5 (5%)	1 (1%)	4	0.85	Agree
9. I think learning English by watching English movies can help me understand traditions and culture more.	32 (32%)	45 (45%)	17 (17%)	5 (5%)	1 (1%)	4.02	0.89	Agree
10. I think English movies help me understand more vocabulary, phrases, idioms, and slang.	9 (9%)	20 (20%)	44 (44%)	19 (19%)	8 (8%)	3.03	1.04	Neutral
11. I understand the events and situations in the movies and I like to use new phrases and words in my daily life.	22 (22%)	38 (38%)	29 (29%)	8 (8%)	3 (3%)	3.68	1	Agree
12. I think English movies are an important tool for learning English.	47 (47%)	45 (45%)	7 (7%)	0 -	1 (1%)	4.37	0.71	Strongly agree
13. I think English language subtitles provide support for English language learners.	46 (46%)	39 (39%)	10 (10%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	4.25	0.87	Strongly agree
<b>Total</b>						<b>3.77</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 1 shows that the majority of the participants enjoyed watching movies in English. When they watched English movies, they could practice listening to English. The participants felt that English-speaking movies could help improve pronunciation and help them learn more about western and native

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English traditions and culture. They also felt that it also allowed them to understand vocabulary, phrases, idioms, and slang better. They understood the events and situations in the movies, and they liked to use new phrases in their daily life. However, most participants answered that watching movies could not help them improve their English speaking, reading, and writing skills.

#### 4.2 Discussion

Most respondents had a positive attitude toward using movies to improve their English skills. They also felt that it also helped them to understand vocabulary, phrases, idioms, and slang better. They understood the events and situations in the movies, and they liked to use new phrases in their daily life. They thought that English movies were essential tools for learning English, and the subtitles supported English learners. Findings are consistent with motivation theories in various essences.

First of all, the results of research revealed that the kind of motivation that impacted samples the most was intrinsic motivation. They wanted to improve their English skills by themselves without being forced by others. According to Maslow (1970), intrinsic motivation is a kind of superior motivation because it strengthens effort and persistence. To make an English study environment; taking note of new vocabulary, listening to a favorite song, and watching movies or cartoons can improve intrinsic motivation for successful language learning.

However, most participants only watched English-speaking movies approximately twice a week. This frequency is considered to be rather low in order to improve English skills. Nevertheless, the participants were not asked how long they had been learning English from movies, but it is also important to note that time spent watching English language movies should be considered a factor in the study because a lack of consistency may conceal actual outcomes. Nonetheless, the results of this study were consistent with the theory of language learning motivation of Gardner and Lambert (1972) who pointed out that motivation was essential for second language acquisition. Those who can learn English themselves, they have a higher chance to achieve language skills.

Compared with other works that focus on a similar topic, the findings were reasonably aligned with the works of many authors, such as Seutrong (2015), Kabocha (2016) and Tahir (2015). For Seutrong (2015), learners' attitudes toward using English language movies with Thai and English subtitles were studied to improve listening comprehension skills. As such, it was found that that English language movies could help improve English listening skills. When learners watch English-speaking movies more than once, their level of familiarity with this area increases. However, there are some differences in the way that presented the findings because Seutrong (2015) focused more on comparing subtitles and listening skills, but this work focuses on the dialogues in the movies with or without subtitles and listening skills, and the findings were slightly different in terms of conclusions. It was found that various English skills, such as, writing, reading and speaking skills, were improved a little bit, but the participants' listening skills were improved the most.

Nevertheless, the participants actually experienced real conversations so subtitles were found to be helpful. At the same time, Thai subtitles also provided them with support but to a lesser extent. This finding was rather different from Seutrong (2015), who concluded that both English and Thai subtitles were equally essential. It was concluded that Thai subtitles were more beneficial to understand the detail of the dialogues better than English subtitles.

Along the same line as Kabocha (2016), EFL learners and teachers' attitudes toward implementing English language movies was investigated in their classrooms. It was concluded that English language movies increased learners' motivation. Both learners and teachers thought movies were an effective tool for learning English in many areas, such as vocabulary, fluency and pronunciation. This was consistent with a research study suggesting that English-language films have boosted motivation and served as an effective tool for enhancing English language abilities, particularly in listening skills.

Tahir (2015) investigated that watching movies in English had a significant impact on learners to learn English. Tahir's finding is similar to this current research in that learners who watched movies in English were self-motivated. They had a positive attitude that movies in English helped them improve in



English, either more or less. Kabocha (2016) and Tahir (2015) found that learners developed listening skills the most. For other skill like speaking and reading, both of samples felt that skills in these areas were also improved but to a lesser extent, as speaking skill was likely to be better only in learners who tried to repeat or speak out conversations from the movies. However, reading skills were improved when English language learners tried to understand the structures of the sentences from the subtitles.

This research could benefit various parties, such as those who plan or create English lessons or courses and those who try to find an effective way to improve their English skills. Furthermore, schools can assign students to watch movies teachers recommend during school breaks. This will help them to acquire listening skills and allow them to expose to suitable content. Integrating movies into lessons also allows learners to be exposed to actual dialogs and vocabulary daily used by native speakers, which are different from what they learn from class. Finally, using English movies to improve listening skills is cost-effective because students do not have to pay extra for additional English courses to improve their skills. English-language movies of various genres are available online, and many are free to watch. In terms of culture, movies embrace cultural aspects that we probably did not know. Each viewer's perspectives can vary when watching movies. The story or characters in each movie provide us a unique viewpoint not offered by anyone else as well as knowledge of things we previously were unaware of.

## 5. Conclusion

Regarding the objectives of the study, the findings could provide insightful details concerning learners' attitudes towards learning English through movies. In terms of movies watching behavior, the results found that the respondents watched English speaking movies twice a week. They preferred watching them with English subtitles. They sometimes watched the same movies more than one time to practice their pronunciation. They occasionally took notes on new vocabulary while watching the movie.

In terms of their motivation, the respondents were motivated to learn English by the surrounding individuals and movies. The respondents were inspired to learn English by their inherent goal to become as proficient in the language as their idols, as well as by their intrinsic motivation to become like their favorite fictional characters from Harry Potter, Toy Story, and other online games.

In terms of their attitude, the samples had a positive attitude toward watching movies to improve their English skill. It helped them to become better in English, especially in listening skills. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents did not believe that watching movies might help them get better in speaking, reading, and writing English. However, the samples felt that English-speaking movies could help improve their pronunciation and help them learn more about western and native English traditions and culture. Not only these, but they also thought that it also helped them to understand vocabulary, phrases, idioms, and slang better. They understood the events and situations in the movies and liked to use new phrases in their daily life. They thought that English movies were an essential tool for learning English, and subtitles could support English learners.

In regard to the recommendations of this research paper, the future research in the field could apply other pedagogical or assessment methods such as pre-and post-tests to assess learners' performance after watching English speaking movies. In addition, more research papers could go insight into the impact of different accents in English movies toward learners' comprehension. Studying English movies in this direction will help learners to be familiarized with different English accents. Future research can also examine whether or not the improvement of listening skills can result in the improvement of other English skills, such as speaking or reading. Some respondents indicated that they also practiced pronunciation while watching English language movies. Listening skills should be assumed to lead to the development of other skills. Moreover, future research papers should investigate whether or not different genres of movies have an influent on learners' English listening skills.

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