

## International Program Students' Attitudes towards Using English Language Movies to Develop English Communication Skills

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate International Program students' attitudes towards using English language movies to develop their English communication skills. The participants included 128 undergraduate students who are studying in an International Program. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire. The results revealed that English movies are an effective tool for developing English communication skills. In addition, the differences in students' years of studying English, level of using English, and frequency of using English in everyday life affected their attitudes towards using English movies with English subtitles to develop their English communication skills.

**Keywords:** International program students, Attitude, English communication skills

### Introduction

Communication is an essential part of our everyday life. It is defined as the medium of sending and receiving information between people. Communication lets us express ourselves, our views, and our opinions. It plays a vital role in the personality of an individual. Nowadays, many people use English to communicate among themselves.

English is one of the most important languages in the world. It is spoken by many people all over the world, either as a first, second, or foreign language. In order to be able to communicate in English, there are four language skills that people should learn and practice: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All of these skills are necessary for learning English because all of these skills are related to each other.

At present, movies are one kind of media that can be used as an alternative technique for English teaching because they provide authentic conversations and accents of native

speakers. The students not only enjoy the movies, but they also improve their listening skills. Baltova (1994) mentioned that since movies combine motion and sound, they are powerful tools to catch viewers' attention and emotion and to motivate them to improve listening skills.

Thai students study English as a foreign language, and so they do not have many opportunities to use English often in their daily lives. They may not see much importance to studying English. As a result, most of them cannot understand English conversations when they have to listen and speak in English for their lessons. Consequently, when Thai people learn English, they often face difficulties in regard to listening skills. They might feel uncomfortable, tense, and bored when they do not understand someone speaking English, thus, causing them to avoid studying English. At this point, English movies may be a beneficial tool to encourage foreign language learners to improve their listening skills. Therefore, the researchers investigated on how Thai students who are learning English through English movies felt towards this way of learning.

### **Objective of the study**

To investigate International Program students' attitudes towards using English language movies to develop their listening skills

### **Materials and methods**

The details of the materials and methods used in this study are as follows:

#### **1. Participants**

The participants of this study included 128 International Program undergraduate students.

#### **2. Instrument**

The questionnaire for this study was adapted from Safran (2015) in an English version. It was piloted by having 46 students complete it, and the reliability value by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.938.

The questionnaire was written in English, and it was divided into three parts as follows:

##### **Part 1: Background of participants**

This part of the questionnaire asked about the background of the participants including their gender, year of study at the university, age, level of English language skills, and frequency of using English in daily life.

##### **Part 2: English movie watching behavior**

The second part of the questionnaire contained five questions designed to examine the students' English movie watching behaviors.

##### **Part 3: Attitudes of the participants towards watching English movies with English subtitles**

The last part of the questionnaire asked about the influence of English movies on the students' listening comprehension and their attitudes towards developing listening comprehension skills through English movies. This part was answered with a five-point Likert

scale ranging from: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

### **3. Data collection**

The questionnaire was distributed to first-year to fourth-year students of an International Program via Google form.

### **4. Data analysis**

The collected data was analyzed by using the SPSS program and Excel program. Frequencies, percentages, arithmetic means, and standard deviations were calculated. The average scores of the participants' attitudes were classified into five levels as follows:

- 4.21-5.00 = Strongly agree
- 3.41-4.20 = Agree
- 2.61-3.40 = Neutral
- 1.81-2.60 = Disagree
- 1.00-1.81 = Strongly disagree

## **Results and discussion**

The research findings of the study on learners' attitudes towards using English movies to improve listening skills are presented in three parts as follows:

### **1. Background of the participants**

This part of the questionnaire asked about the background of the participants including their gender, year of study, age, level of English language skills, and frequency of using English in daily life. According to the collected data, seventy-seven of the participants (60.20%) are females and fifty-one of the participants (39.80%) are males. Seventy-nine of the participants (61.20%) are first-year students, fourteen of the participants (10.90%) are second-year students, nineteen of the participants (14.70%) are third-year students, and seventeen of the participants (13.20%) are fourth-year students. Sixty-four of the participants (50.00%) are under 20 years old and the rest (50.00%) are more than 20 years old. Among the participants, 38.3% of them claimed that their English level is good, 29.70% of them said that their English level is fair, and 15.60% of them said that their English level is very good. Furthermore, 9.40% of them claimed that their English level is poor. Only 7.00% of them claimed that their English level is excellent. The results also revealed that 43.00% of the participants use English every day, followed by 18.80% who use English three to four times a week, 33.60% who use English one to two times a week, and 4.70% who never use English. The communication skills that they use the most frequently are listening skills (69.50%). They use writing skills the least frequently (48.40%). They claimed that they use speaking and reading skills at the same frequency (60.20%).

## 2. English movie watching behavior

This part of the questionnaire contained five questions designed to examine the participants' English movie watching behaviors. Most of the participants (93.00%) liked watching English movies, while 7.00% of them claimed that they did not like watching them. In addition, the results indicated that more than half of them (54.70%) watched English movies one to two times a week, while 24.20% of them watched English movies three to four times a week. The data indicated that 16.40% of them watched English movies every day, and some of them (4.70%) claimed that they have never watched an English movie. A total of 60.20% of the participants preferred watching English movies with Thai subtitles, while 35.20% of them preferred English subtitles and 4.70% of them preferred subtitles in another language. Almost half of the participants (48.40%) watched English movies for entertainment purposes. The results revealed that 32.00% of them watched English movies to develop their English communication skills. Some of them (5.50%) claimed that they watched English movies for inspiration, while 10.90% of them said that they watched English movies to learn more about history.

## 3. Attitudes towards watching English movies with English subtitles

According to Table 1, the research results indicated that most of the participants agreed that English movies can help them improve their listening skills ( $\bar{x} = 3.70$ , S.D. = .796)

**Table 1** The minimum, maximum, average, and standard deviation values of the attitudes of International Program students towards the development of English listening skills through English movies

Variable	min	max	n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Attitudes towards using English movies to improve listening skills	1.00	5.00	128	3.70	.796	Agree

When using the independent sample t-test to calculate whether the gender or age variables affected the attitudes towards the development of listening skills via watching English movies, the results indicated that there was no statistical significant difference between these two variables (Gender:  $p = .103$ ; Age:  $p = .901$ ).

**Table 2** Comparison between the participants' level of attitudes according to gender and age

Personal characteristics		Attitude			Statistical test	
		n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	t	p
Gender	1) Male	51	4.03	.665	2.704	.103
	2) Female	77	3.48	.805		
Age	1) 20 years old or under	64	3.41	.719	0.016	.901
	2) 21 years old or above	64	3.99	.770		

Remark \*\* $p < 0.01$

The researchers employed one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) to compare the following three nominal variables: year of study, level of English skills, and frequency of English use. In addition, one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) and differential analysis with Scheffé's multiple comparisons were used to compare the differences among these variables.

The results in Table 3 indicated that personal characteristics in regard to year of study at the university, level of using English, and frequency of using English in everyday life of the International Program learners resulted in different levels of attitudes at a statistical level of .01. Moreover, the results of the multiple comparisons indicated that the fourth-year International Program students have a higher attitude level than the third-year, second-year, and first-year students, respectively. The International Program students who have an excellent level of English skills have a higher attitude level than those with good, medium, and low English skills levels. The International Program students who use English every day have a higher attitude level than those who use English one to two times per week, three to four times per week, and not at all.

**Table 3** Comparison of the level of attitude with year of study, level of using English, and frequency of using English in everyday life of the International Program learners

Personal characteristics		Attitude			Statistical test		post hoc
		n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	F	p	
Year of study	1) 1 <sup>st</sup> year	79	3.41	.740	12.334**	.000	4 > 1, 2, 3
	2) 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	14	4.27	.602			
	3) 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	19	3.97	.755			
	4) 4 <sup>th</sup> year	16	4.31	.530			
Level of using English	1) Excellent	9	4.76	.268	14.118**	.000	1 > 3, 4, 5
	2) Very good	20	4.09	.764			
	3) Good	49	3.82	.725			
	4) Fair	38	3.29	.660			
	5) Poor	12	3.06	.440			
Frequency of using English in everyday life	1) Everyday	55	4.06	.745	8.907**	.000	1 > 2, 3, 4
	2) 3-4 times/ week	24	3.46	.770			
	3) 1-2 times/ week	43	3.50	.699			
	4) Never	6	2.85	.631			

Remark \*\*p < 0.01

The findings indicated that the first-year students of the International Program liked to watch English movies with Thai subtitles. Even though they watched English movies only one to two times a week, they agreed that English movies with Thai subtitles are a good tool to help them enhance their listening comprehension skills. The participants claimed that they had positive attitudes towards English movies and were aware of the benefits of watching them in terms of developing their listening skills. They claimed that English movies could help them

improve their English language in various areas such as developing vocabulary, understanding unfamiliar words, and correcting pronunciation. They also enjoyed improving their English comprehension skills through watching English movies. This finding is related to the studies of Ayu (2016), Kertsai (2014), Rashid and Jabbar (2017), Safranji (2015), Stewart and Pertusa (2004), and Worrawattananukul (2017), which determined that subtitles are beneficial for all proficiency levels of foreign language learners for building vocabulary, overall listening skills, and oral fluency, and for improving learning motivation and attitudes. Moreover, the actors in the movies and the language shown in the subtitles also help learners interpret the meaning of words, which can then assist them in understanding the language comprehensibly. In addition, the participants believed that English movies were not only entertaining, but also presented foreign culture. This supports the study of Turner (2004), which found that movies presented foreign cultures more effectively by illustrating history, social movements, and facets of culture.

The results of this study also showed that the fourth-year students have the highest level in regard to their attitudes towards using English movies to develop their English communication skills. This might come from their frequency of using English in their daily lives. Moreover, watching English movies can make English learning fun and encourage them to practice more English, thus, affecting their attitudes towards using English movies to develop their English communication skills.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, using English movies to develop the undergraduate students' English communication skills should be based on their years of studying English, their English language level, and their frequency of using English in their daily lives. English movies with subtitles are a suitable instrument that can help students learn more vocabulary and understand the dialogues in the movies. Most of the participants would like to develop their English communication skills through watching English movies.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made as follows:

1. Researchers should study with other groups of participants by employing the qualitative methodology in order to get in-depth information.
2. Research in the future should study the influence of other kinds of media to develop students' English language communication skills.

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