

ENHANCING PRONUNCIATION SKILLS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLS) THROUGH ENGLISH FILMS.

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Abstract

This paper will explore the effective use of English-language films as a tool for improving the pronunciation skills of English Language Learners (ELLS). Obviously, engaging with authentic dialogues, diverse accents, and speech patterns in movies can make the learning process more enjoyable and interesting for the learners.

Specific strategies for using films, such as focused listening exercises, repetition of dialogue, and role-playing activities, as well as the advantages of visual aids in helping comprehension will be discussed. Moreover, the work will highlight the significance of choosing appropriate films that cater to different language levels and interests. Through this approach, ELLs can build confidence in their pronunciation while also gaining cultural insights and expanding their vocabulary.

Keywords

Pronunciation, films, authentic, dialogues, sound, stress, intonation, challenges.

INGLIZ FILMLARI ORQALI INGLIZ TILINI O'RGANAYOTGANLARNING (ITO') TALAFFUZ KO'NIKMALARINI YAXSHILASH.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini o'rganayotganlar (ITO') uchun talaffuz ko'nikmalarini yaxshilashda ingliz tilidagi filmlardan samarali foydalanish usullari ko'rib chiqiladi. Haqiqatan ham, filmlardagi autentik dialoglar, turli aksentlar va nutq uslublari bilan shug'ullanish o'qish jarayonini qiziqarli va zavqli qilishi mumkin.

Filmlardan foydalanish uchun aniq strategiyalar, masalan, diqqatni jamlash mashqlari, dialoglarni takrorlash va rol o'ynash mashqlari, shuningdek, tushunishni oshirishda vizual materiallarning afzalliklari muhokama qilinadi. Bundan tashqari, ushbu maqolada o'quvchilarning turli til bilish darajalari va qiziqishlarga mos keladigan filmlarni tanlashning ahamiyati ta'kidlanadi. Ushbu yondashuv orqali til o'rganuvchilar talaffuz qilish jarayonida ishonch bilan harakat qilishlari bilan birga madaniy tushunchalar olishlari va lug'at boyligini kengaytirishlari mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: Talaffuz, filmlar, autentik, dialoglar, ovoz, urg'u, intonatsiya, qiyinchiliklar.

УЛУЧШЕНИЕ НАВЫКОВ ПРОИЗНОШЕНИЯ УЧАЩИХСЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА (УАЯ) С ПОМОЩЬЮ АНГЛИЙСКИХ ФИЛЬМОВ.

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается эффективное использование англоязычных фильмов как инструмента для улучшения навыков произношения у изучающих английский язык. Очевидно, что взаимодействие с аутентичными диалогами, разнообразными акцентами и речевыми паттернами в фильмах может сделать процесс обучения увлекательным и интересным.

Будут обсуждены конкретные стратегии использования фильмов, такие как целенаправленные упражнения на прослушивание, повторение диалогов и ролевые игры, а также преимущества визуальных материалов для улучшения понимания. Кроме того, работа подчеркивает важность выбора подходящих фильмов, которые соответствуют различным уровням языка и интересам. С помощью данного подхода изучающих английский язык могут укрепить уверенность в своем произношении, а также получить культурные знания и расширить свой словарный запас.

Ключевые слова

Произношение, фильмы, аутентичные, диалоги, звук, ударение, интонация, проблемы.

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to communicate effectively in English is more important than ever for non-native speakers. For English Language Learners (ELLs), mastering pronunciation is a critical component of language acquisition that can significantly influence their confidence and overall communication skills. Conventional methods of teaching pronunciation often fail to engage students in classroom activities in a meaningful way and do not capture students' interest or demonstrate the practical application of pronunciation skills in real-life contexts. However, the integration of English-language films into the language learning process can be a dynamic and enjoyable alternative. Advocates of this approach state that movies allow for more interactive and engaging ways of learning and teaching English (Tafari, 2009).

Selecting appropriate films that align with learners' proficiency levels and interests is of great importance to maximize these benefits. Through this innovative approach, ELLs not only refine their pronunciation but also gain valuable cultural insights and expand their vocabulary bank, ultimately building greater confidence in their English-speaking abilities.

Literature review

There has been plenty of research regarding the significance of applying English films to teach learners pronunciation and an increasing number of educators have been utilizing this kind of materials in their teaching process.

Alolaywi (2023) also noted that nowadays non-native speakers of English tend to watch films for educational purposes as well as entertainment, implying that language acquisition can be fun at the same time.

Research by Tahir (2015) concluded that films help learn the language more quickly than any other means. In addition, they can improve language skills, in particular, listening and reading

skills, as well as the social relations of the learner and their awareness of native speakers' culture. Moreover, film subtitles can improve students' reading and writing skills.

Donaghy (2014) also believes that there is another compelling reason why films are a good choice for language educators to bring into their classrooms. Today, lots of students watch films and TV shows for some time to feel refreshed and entertain themselves, and therefore, they serve as an effective tool to teach learners in a motivating environment.

A study done by Nurhasanah (2020) on the effectiveness of English films to teach pronunciation also further supported the results of other research. He also agreed that the use of films motivates and raises learners' interest in acquiring pronunciation skills in a fun way, as the interviewees in the research showed better results after having been exposed to such authentic materials.

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Advantages of using films at classroom

According to Deny (2012), benefits of using films to improve pronunciation skills of learners can be as following:

- learners are more able to produce English sounds accurately, especially those who have difficulty uttering the speech sounds that do not exist in their L1 (first language);
- learners are more able to pronounce English words and phrases with correct stress patterns (considering that in English word stress is movable);
- learners start to distinguish falling and rising intonation while saying phrases and sentences.

I. Learning speech sounds

It is no wonder that there is a significant distinction between the speech sounds of English and those of other languages. In most cases, non-native speakers struggle to utter the English sounds, namely /θ/, /ð/, /r/, /h/, /i/, /ə/ as their language may not have equivalent sounds or phonemes. For instance, the sounds /θ/ (as in "thing") and /ð/ (as in "there") are relatively rare in the world's languages, causing many non-native speakers to substitute them with similar sounds from their own language, such as /t/, /d/, /s/, or even /z/. The English /r/ sound can also pose challenges to learners, as its pronunciation varies widely across different dialects and languages. Some languages might not have a rhotic sound at all, making it difficult for speakers to produce the English /r/ accurately.

The /h/ sound (as in "her") may be absent in some languages, causing speakers to either omit it or replace it with a different sound altogether.

The vowel sounds, particularly /i/ (as in "rich") and /ə/ (the schwa sound found in many unstressed syllables), can also be challenging.

Watching English films can offer great opportunities for non-native speakers to differentiate the sounds in their native language from the ones in English, allowing them to develop greater fluency and intelligibility in English.

Here are possible suggestions for learners:

- active listening (paying close attention to how the characters utter the words and phrases;

- repetition and imitation (pausing the movie when encountered mispronounced words and trying to read them aloud);
- practicing shadowing (selecting a particular scene from a film to mimic the film characters, speaking along with them)

The importance of the subtitles should also not be overlooked as they help connect the spoken words with their written forms, which reinforces understanding. Additionally, they help to clarify the pronunciation of some words that are difficult to grasp when spoken quickly, allowing learners to see these words exactly and acquire their pronunciation.

II. Learning word and phrase stress

There are a number of reasons why films can be a valuable tool to teach and practice correct stress patterns for educators. Exposure to films creates opportunity to actively engage with the authentic dialogues and analyze how sounds and words are stressed in natural speech. Most importantly, films offer contextual learning where learners are more capable of analyzing language in context and understanding how stress can change the meaning of words in different situations. Learners are also exposed to a variety of accents and dialects in films and thus better understand different stress patterns and pronunciations. Teachers can apply interactive activities or focused listening exercises which will help learners reinforce their understanding of word or phrase stress. For example, after watching a particular film, teacher can ask learners to create and perform their own role-playing activities or simply create dialogues based on what they have learned from the film. Such kind of simulation activities may help create real-life atmosphere which is impossible to find in the classroom. Teachers can also choose a particular scene from a film to do focused listening tasks where learners listen for specific stressed words or phrases. This technique will help better retention of stress patterns.

III. Learning the types of intonation

It is also noteworthy that films present opportunities to learn correct intonation of phrases and sentences. In English, falling and rising intonations are differentiated and learners should also take them into account in oral speech. Unable to differentiate them, speakers may encounter misunderstandings while expressing their feelings, emotions and intentions. Intonation plays an important role in our speech, as it shows our true purpose of speaking. For example, if someone says “You are leaving” with falling intonation, it means confirmation. In contrast, if somebody utters it with rising intonation, it definitely indicates that person is either surprised or asking for clarification. In this case, incorrect intonation may lead to misunderstanding between the speaker and the interlocutor.

By watching films in their original language—English—learners can observe the differences between falling and rising intonation and use them appropriately in their speech. Besides, films can provide visual context that enhances the understanding of intonation. Learners can observe how actors use facial expressions, gestures, and body language to complement their vocal intonation. For example, in the ‘Harry Potter’ series, one notable example of how gestures and body language complement intonation can be seen in the character of Professor Snape, particularly in ‘Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix. Professor Snape is teaching a class on potion-making. Harry, feeling frustrated, causes a mishap with his potion. Snape’s voice is low and dripping with sarcasm as he addresses Harry. Snape’s facial expressions, particularly his narrowed eyes and slight sneer, further emphasize his contempt for Harry’s mistakes. This combination of a cold stare and sarcastic intonation reinforces his disapproval.

Additionally, teachers can choose specific dialogues from films for detailed analysis. By breaking down conversations, learners can focus on how intonation affects meaning. For example, analyzing a conversation from 'Friends' where sarcasm is prevalent allows students to see how a simple statement like "Oh, really?" can have multiple meanings based on intonation. This analysis helps students recognize the role of pitch variation in conveying sarcasm or disbelief.

By selecting lines from the film and having students repeat and imitate them, language teachers can greatly benefit from English films. Intonation drills can serve as an excellent example of such activities. Overall, films offer countless benefits for both learners and teachers in terms of pronunciation acquisition.

Challenges to using them

Having said that, there are several challenges to this approach. First, it is the teachers' responsibility to select films whose level is suitable for learners. In English-language films, characters often speak quickly, which is utterly different from the listening tracks and videos found in textbooks, as these materials are usually designed to match the learners' level more closely. It would be beneficial to watch films with subtitles or to choose specially made films aimed at lower-level students. This way, teachers can help prevent misunderstandings or incorrect interpretations by learners.

Another possible challenge is related to colloquial language and slang. Since these materials are primarily designed for native speakers, they often include scenes where characters use informal language forms such as idioms, slangs, proverbs, and dialect words. This can make it difficult for non-native speakers to fully grasp the meaning. To mitigate this issue, teachers may pre-teach relevant vocabulary and expressions before watching the films. Additionally, providing context for these colloquial terms can enhance understanding.

Moreover, cultural references in films can pose another challenge. Many films include cultural nuances and references that may be unfamiliar to learners from different backgrounds. Teachers should consider discussing these cultural elements before or after viewing to enrich students' comprehension and appreciation of the film.

Finally, the length of films can also be a barrier. Full-length movies may be too long for a single class session, making it hard to maintain students' attention. Teachers might consider breaking the film into shorter segments or selecting specific scenes that align with their learning objectives.

In summary, while films can be a valuable resource for language learning, careful selection and preparation by teachers are essential to address the challenges posed by language speed, colloquial expressions, cultural references, and film length.

Conclusion

In conclusion, using movies as a tool for teaching pronunciation skills offers a dynamic and engaging way for learners to improve their spoken language abilities. The exposure to authentic speech patterns, intonation, and rhythm found in films can significantly enhance students' pronunciation. However, educators must navigate several challenges, including the rapid pace of dialogue, the prevalence of colloquial language and slang, cultural references, and the length of films.

To effectively address these challenges, teachers can implement targeted strategies such as selecting films appropriate for the learners' proficiency levels, incorporating subtitles, and pre-teaching relevant vocabulary and expressions. Additionally, discussing cultural nuances can enrich students' understanding and appreciation of the material. By breaking down films into



manageable segments, educators can maintain students' attention while ensuring that they benefit from the rich linguistic resources that movies provide.

Ultimately, with thoughtful planning and preparation, films can serve as an invaluable resource in language classrooms, fostering not only improved pronunciation skills but also a deeper cultural understanding and engagement with the language.

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