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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FILM REVIEW IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract:

This study highlighted the effectiveness of film review in enhancing English speaking skills among students at the tertiary level. The population involved was 30 students from an Essential Communication Skills class at Universiti Malaysia Sabah. There were two parts of film review carried out for this study, namely, Part 1: Individual Film Review Presentation and Part 2: Group Discussion and 2 weeks prior, the teacher-researcher provided materials such as examples of vocabularies, grammars, phrases and sentences students could use to describe film genres, characters, themes, recommendations and criticisms in their film review. For Part 1 of the film review, in groups of 5, individual students orally presented the review of their chosen film whilst showing their power point slides whereas for Part 2, they gave ideas and opinions on the best film of those presented by their group members. The objective of this study was to identify students' perceptions on the effectiveness of film review in enhancing their English-speaking skills. To accomplish that objective, this study employed a survey research design and the instrument utilised in the data collection was an online questionnaire comprising 10 questions on students' perceptions on English film watching and review which was administered to 30 respondents. The data was then analysed using a google form spreadsheet

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and presented in pie charts and bar graphs. The findings depicted that students perceived that film review enhanced their English-speaking skills in the aspects of motivation and confidence in speaking simple English and applying appropriate English grammars, vocabularies, pronunciation, intonation, and conversational phrases in expressing ideas and opinions. They also opined that English subtitles in films and guidance from educators in reviewing films contributed positively to the development of their English-speaking acquisition as well as deduced that film review was an effective English learning tool. These positive findings hence signalled that the teaching and learning of English through films should be sustained in the future. It is recommended that future studies include larger numbers of respondents and interviews of students and teachers to obtain more holistic findings on the film review effectiveness towards students' English-speaking competency. Other interesting topics to be studied are the challenges encountered by both learners and educators in the teaching and learning of English through films and ways to overcome them.

Keywords:

Film Review, English Speaking Skills, Individual Film Review Presentation, Group Discussion

Introduction

English is indisputably one of the most important languages to be mastered nowadays in the light of education. English educators have been employing various tools to strengthen students' English oral skills and English film is among the prevalent ones to attain that objective. Films or movies have not only been deemed as an enjoyable source of entertainment but also a beneficial resort for language acquisition (Ismaili, 2013) including in the teaching and learning of English; the lingua franca (Pustika & Wiedarti, 2019). Several studies reflected that learners' interest and motivation in learning English were greatly drawn and positively affected when the language was taught through films (Xhemaili, 2013; Khan 2016; Madiyoh & Putro, 2018; Parmawati & Inayah; 2019). Apart from that, via films, learners' anxiety of learning English could also be diminished (Nath, Mohamad & Yamat, 2017). Looking at those positive effects, it is well understood why films have been widely used as a tool to teach English to learners across different levels - primary, secondary and tertiary.

Aside from reading, writing and listening skills, speaking skills are the crucial ones to acquire if one is aiming to be proficient in English as speaking skills are the essential skills needed for communication (Liando, Sahetaphy & Maru, 2018). Learners were postulated to be able to elevate their English speaking skills by learning the natural and authentic English vocabularies (Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020), English pronunciation and intonation (Rayasa, 2018), English daily conversations (Kabooaha, 2016) and the informal English encompasses slang words and phrases, idioms and colloquial phrases (Thammineni, 2016; Rayasa, 2018) through films. Besides, some studies revealed that the use of English subtitles in English films helped students brush up their English speaking ability (Nath et al., 2017; Liando et al., 2018).

Since many past studies had proven that films increased students' English speaking skills, this study came with the purpose to support the notion. This study main objective was to identify students' perceptions on the effectiveness of film review in elevating their English speaking skills and to accomplish that objective, the researcher adopted a survey research design and an online questionnaire as the research instrument in the data collection which consists of 10 questions related to students' perceptions on English film watching and review. The film review in this study was dissected into two parts. The first part involved the process of students reviewing the significant elements of their opted film in written and oral forms (point-form slides and oral presentation respectively) on what they wanted the audience to know. The significant elements of the film are the plot encompasses the genre and basic story, the main characters' identity and how they developed in the film, the film themes and student's opinion towards the film as well as other elements important to the film such as moral values, music and special effects. For the second part, students were required to provide perspectives or point of views regarding which film among the ones presented by their peers was the best and why.

Literature Review

Definitions of English Speaking Skills

Speaking as defined by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com (2021) is "the action of conveying information or expressing one's feelings in speech". On another note, Parmawati & Inayah (2019) in their study defined speaking as the language skill that revolves around verbal interactions where information is produced, sent and received precisely and swiftly. They further opined that the aspects of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation must be paid heed on by the speaker in the oral interactions.

Another definition of speaking connoted by Liando et al. (2018) is, it is a productive skill which cannot be segregated from pronunciation as it motivates learners to study the English sounds. Other than that, Dionar & Adnan (2018) defined speaking as "the ability to express something orally, coherently, fluently and appropriately in given a meaningful context to serve both transactional and interactional purpose using correct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary and adopting the pragmatic and discourse rules of the spoken language".

It can be deduced that English speaking skills constitute not only the production of information but also the phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics of English language in overall.

The Significance of English Speaking Skills in English Language Acquisition

As aforementioned in the previous section, speaking skills are fundamental in communicating a language. The researcher agrees with the statements by Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) in their study that "we speak everyday more than we write" and "speaking is regarded as the first step to confirm who knows or does not know a language" as those implied how significant English speaking is in the English language acquisition. In the context of education, educators often find it is challenging to teach English speaking skills which is in line with

what Bashir, Azeem & Dogar (2011) connoted that speaking is “more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words”.

Bashir et al. (2011) further highlighted that there are three aspects of knowledge that involve speaking which are required for language learners to recognize, namely; mechanics, functions and social and cultural rules and norms. Mechanics comprise language pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary where learners need to know how to use the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation. Functions meanwhile cover the language transaction and interaction features. In that aspect, it is essential to discern when to apply message lucidity in transaction or information exchange and when to emphasize interaction or relationship building more than precise understanding of the language. Turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers and relative roles of participants on the next hand, are the ones constituted in social and cultural rules and norms. They revolve around the speakers, circumstances involved, the topic and the rationale of the language speaking.

Looking at those areas expounded by Bashir et al. (2011), it is indeed challenging for teachers to teach and help students develop their English speaking skills effectively. To address such challenges, a plethora of English teaching tools have been adopted by educators and one of them is through film.

Studies Related to Films in Enhancing Learners' English Speaking Skills

Many studies on the influence and effects of films in reinforcing learners' English speaking skills have been conducted and ultimately garnered positive findings. Amongst them is the study by Simamora & Oktaviani (2020) where their finding was, by watching English films, students' communicative abilities in terms of vocabularies, were enhanced. They also learned the natural English expressions and sentences conveyed by the actors through films. Hidayatullah (2018) meanwhile in his three-cycled method (teacher's observation, students' activity and pronunciation test) research portrayed that learners' English pronunciation was enriched when they watched English films. Likewise results were also illustrated by Rayasa (2018) in his two-cycled action research (pre- and post-tests) where learners' pronunciation skills were developed in learning English using films.

Additionally, Parmawati & Inayah (2019) in their study through their instruments of observations, tests and questionnaires figured out that by watching English films, learners' English speaking abilities in terms of grammar, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary as well as the affective sides - self-confidence and motivation were improved. Also, Kaboocha (2016) pointed out that when students were taught English using films, they were able to “learn how native speakers initiate and sustain a conversational exchange, negotiate meaning, and nonverbal communication” and alongside that, their interactional skills were also boosted. Another corroborated finding was generated in a study carried out by Madiyoh & Putro (2018) in which students' engagement, enthusiasm, interests and motivation in speaking the language were increased when they were exposed to the real English language, new terms, phrases, and expressions and full context of English through original English short films.

The Use of Film Review in English Teaching and Learning

The definition of film according to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2021) is "a series of moving pictures recorded with sound that tells a story, watched at a cinema or on a television or other device". Review, meanwhile, is defined as "a report in a newspaper or magazine, or on the internet, television or radio, in which somebody gives their opinion of a book, play, film, product, etc." (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2021). In this study, film review is referred to as the process of individual students giving opinions about a film they chose (Part 1: Individual Film Review Presentation) and communicating the best film of all presented by their peers (Part 2: Group Discussion) supported with reasons and examples. Prior to reviewing their chosen film, they have to watch its full-length version for a better comprehension of the film's content.

It can be inferred from the past studies that the use of films in teaching and learning English is definitely not uncommon in the world of education. Watching films are considered as an effective resort for educators to instill motivation in students to learn English due to its enjoyable nature (Ismaili, 2013) and an easy and a realistic method to develop students' communication skills (Rao, 2019). Furthermore, Wang (2009), Khan (2015), Kabooaha (2016) and Keser & Acar (2017) in their studies reflected that educators' intervention in aiding students to select films with relevant themes according to their proficiency levels and guiding them to express their thoughts on the films contributed to the positive progress of learners' communication skills. This is in line with the method of this study where the teacher-researcher guided the students first on matters related to film review before they individually presented their film review and later on discussing which film was the best among all by communicating their ideas and opinions on their peers' film reviews.

Methodology

Research Design and Instrument

The type of quantitative approach used in this study was a survey research design and the research instrument employed in the data collection was an online questionnaire encompasses 10 questions on students' perceptions on English film watching and review. The online questionnaire was administered to 30 respondents and after they had completed answering all the questions, the data was then analysed using a google form spreadsheet and presented in the form of pie charts and bar graphs.

Research Participants

There were 30 respondents involved in this study. They were undergraduate students in their first year, second semester from an Essential Communication Skills class at Universiti Malaysia Sabah who obtained Band 2 (limited users of English) and Band 3 (modest users of English) in their previous Malaysian University Entrance Test (MUET). A fortnight prior to the implementation of the study, the teacher-researcher taught the 30 students topics related to film review which include genres of films, characters, themes, recommendations, criticisms, film review-related vocabularies, pronunciation, grammar, listening, reading, writing and speaking exercises as well as showed them examples of film review presentations and group discussions done by previous students as guides. They were clustered into groups

of 5 and briefed on the film review instructions including a suggested list of films with meaningful themes that they could choose one from. The film review presentation and group discussion were done virtually via Google Meet as the pandemic did not allow face-to-face implementation.

Film Review Methods

Part 1: Individual Film Review Presentation

Individual students reviewed different English films of their choice in groups of 5. Films selected were ensured contain relevant themes and messages. Students presented the film they chose; why they chose the film; and what they wanted the audience to know about the film. To introduce the film, each student presented a 1-minute video clip showing important elements of the plot, character or film theme where an edited film trailer was used. The slide presentation covered the plot (the genre and basic story), the main character(s) qualities (their identity and personality and how they developed in the film) and themes and opinion. Students also presented moral values, music and special effects which they considered meaningful to the film. Each spoke approximately 3-5 minutes and used 3 to 4 Power Point slides with a maximum of 12 main point words per slide during the presentation. Students faced their audience to speak (in this study, they faced their camera as the film review was done online), knew their topic and did not read from the slides. Students explained and gave examples and quotations to support their main points in order to speak for 3-5 minutes.

Part 2: Group Discussion

During the review presentations, students had taken notes on their peers' films and formed their own ideas or opinions. Students then provided a perspective or point of view in the group discussion regarding which film they thought the best and why. In the group discussion, it was made clear to the students that giving opinions is more important than reaching a consensus. The discussion duration per group was between 5-10 minutes.

Findings

The pie charts and bar graphs below show the findings yielded from the online questionnaire:

30 responses

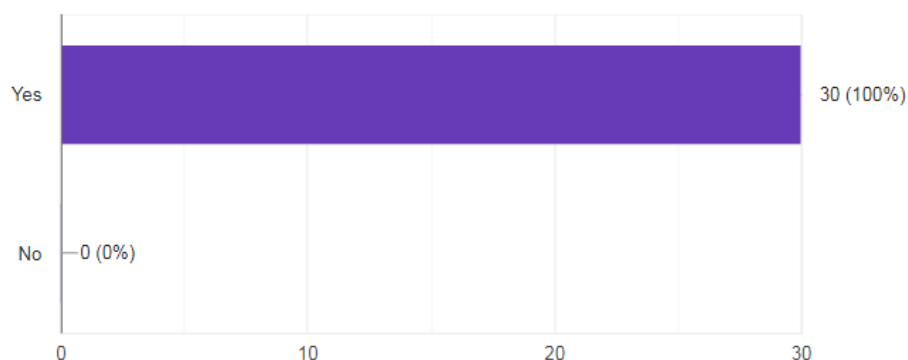


Figure 1: English Films are an Enjoyable Source to Learn English

In Figure 1, for the first question on whether the respondents regarded English films as an enjoyable source to learn English, it is noted that all 30 students (100%) reckoned so. None of them opposed the notion.

Students' Preference in Whether to Watch English Films with or without English Subtitles and Reasons	
With English Subtitles (chosen by 29 respondents)	Without English Subtitles (chosen by 1 respondent)
1. To be clear on what is going on in the film.	1. To focus on the entire film scenes.
2. To learn the correct pronunciation and usage of English words.	
3. To understand the content of the film.	
4. To learn new vocabularies.	
5. For better listening.	
6. To learn English from the subtitles.	
7. To catch what the characters said.	
8. To improve vocabularies.	
9. To understand the plot of the film.	
10. To understand unfamiliar words.	
11. To learn English vocabularies.	
12. To learn correct spellings.	
13. To improve vocabulary and listening skills.	
14. To enhance listening ability.	
15. To understand the film better.	
16. To comprehend the use of English words.	
17. To understand the accents when spoken in a fast manner.	
18. To understand the meaning of difficult words.	
19. To enhance English vocabulary and spelling.	
20. To understand the film.	
21. To comprehend the film.	
22. Student answered 'Yes' without reason(s)	
23. To find the right English words.	
24. To know the correct pronunciation and understand the meaning of the words used.	
25. To be more fluent in English.	

26. To expand new vocabularies.	
27. To improve English speaking skills.	
28. To better understand English words.	
29. To understand the film well.	

Figure 2: Watching English Films with or without English Subtitles

In relation to students' preference to watch English films whether with or without English subtitles and the reasons for their preference, it is understood from Figure 2 that 29 of them favoured to watch English subtitled films due to various reasons which were, it enabled them to learn new vocabularies, enhance listening skills, comprehend the film meaning, content and context, improve speaking skills, learn correct spellings and pronunciation, learn and understand unfamiliar words and accents, know the appropriate usage of words, for better fluency, and to learn English in general. Only one out of 30 did not favour English subtitled films for wanting to concentrate on the entire film scenes.

**Figure 3: Watching English Films Improves Students' English Speaking Skills**

Figure 3 reflects that all 30 students agreed that watching English films improved their English-speaking skills. Of 30, 26 (86.7%) opined that they were able to learn correct English pronunciation and intonation from watching films. A majority of the respondents: 96.7% (29 of 30 students) agreed that watching English films enabled them to learn new English vocabularies. Meanwhile 22 of 30 students thought that by watching English films, they were able to learn correct conversational English phrases and sentences. Lastly, 21 students discoursed that they could learn the natural flow of English from English films. No students against the notion that watching English films improved English speaking skills.

30 responses

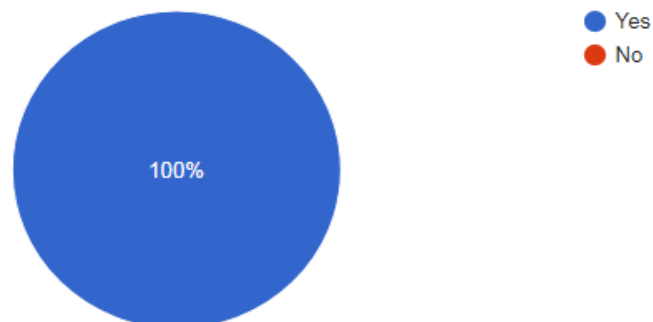


Figure 4: Film Review is a Fun Method to Enhance English Speaking Skills

As represented in Figure 4, for the question on whether respondents opined that film review was a fun method to enhance English speaking skills, all 30 students gave a positive response and none disagreed.

30 responses

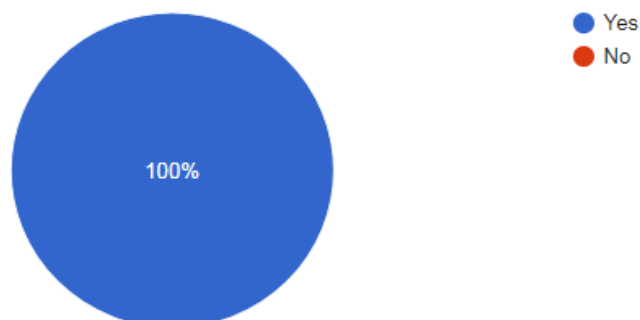


Figure 5: Applicability of Film Review Vocabularies, Pronunciation, Intonation, Phrases and Sentences Learned

It is illustrated in Figure 5 that all 30 students (100%) found that the film review vocabularies, pronunciation, intonation, phrases and sentences they had learned 2 weeks prior were applicable in presenting their film review for both Part 1: Individual Film Review Presentation and Part 2: Group Discussion. None of the sample viewed that the learned film review materials were unpractical.

30 responses

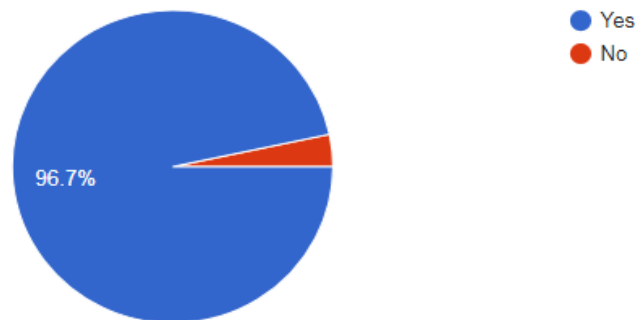


Figure 6: Speaking Simple English Confidently in Presenting Individual Film Review and Giving Opinions on Best Film in Group Discussion

As portrayed in Figure 6, 96.7% of the respondents (29 of 30) stated that they felt confident in speaking simple English in presenting their individual film review and giving opinions on the best film from all those presented by their peers in group discussion. Only 1 of 30 students (3.3%) denoted otherwise.

30 responses

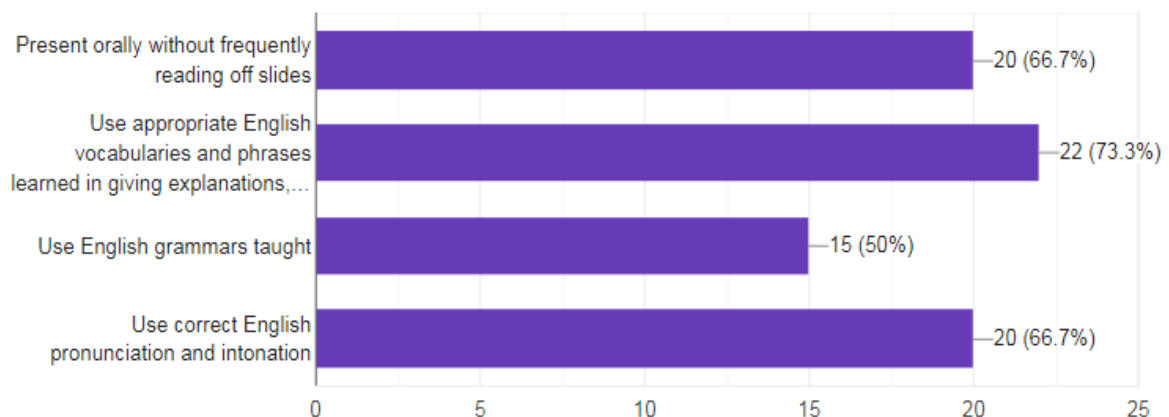


Figure 7: English Speaking Skills Enhancement through Film Review (Part 1: Individual Film Review Presentation)

Figure 7 demonstrates that all 30 students opined that presenting film review enhanced their English speaking skills by which 20 of them (66.7%) stated that they could present orally without frequently reading off slides, 22 respondents (73.3%) mentioned that they were able to use appropriate English vocabularies and phrases learned in giving explanations, examples and quotations from the film, 15 students (50%) construed that they could practice the English grammars taught and 20 of 30 students (66.7%) interpreted that presenting film review enabled them to use correct English pronunciation and intonation. Students were also given an option to state “No” with reasons if they thought film review presentation did not enhance their English-speaking skill but none of them opted so.

30 responses

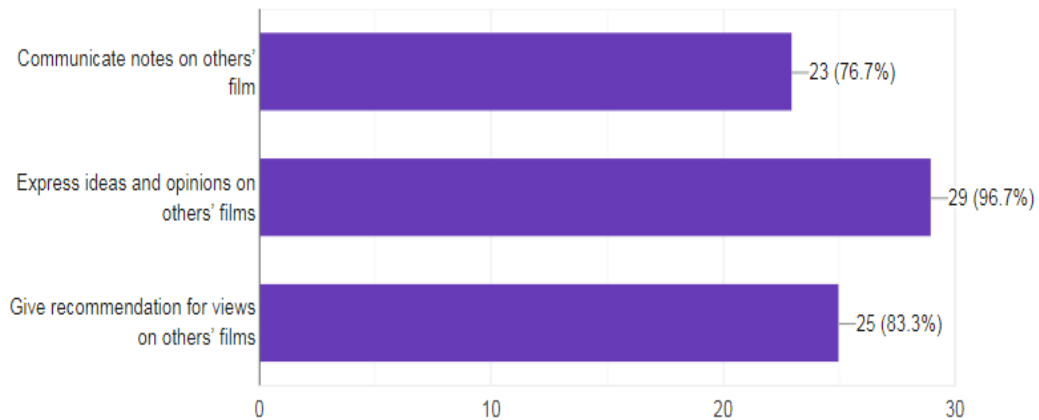


Figure 8: English Speaking Skills Enhancement through Film Review (Part 2: Group Discussion)

It can be deduced from Figure 8 that all 30 students answered 'yes' to the question of whether the activity of giving ideas and opinions on best film among those presented by their peers in group discussion contributed to the enhancement of their English-speaking skills. Of 30, 23 students (76.7%) agreed that their speaking skills were improved in the aspect of communicating notes on others' films, 29 respondents (96.7%) implied that they developed the skills of expressing ideas and opinions on others' films and 25 participants (83.3%) mentioned that their speaking abilities were elevated in terms of giving recommendation for views on others' films. None of the students connoted that group discussion did not increase their English-speaking abilities.

30 responses

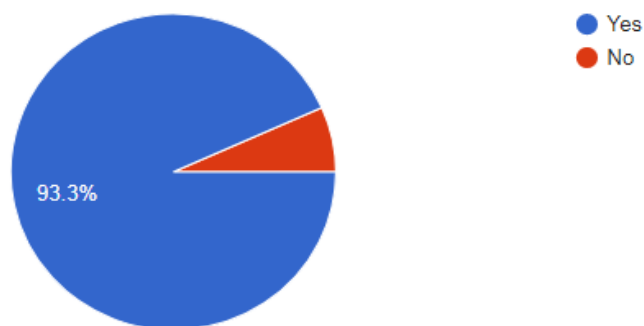


Figure 9: Motivation to Speak English More after Film Review

It is depicted in Figure 9 that after film review, a majority of the students which is 93.3% (28 of 30) felt motivated to speak English more. Only 2 students (6.7%) did not opine so.

30 responses

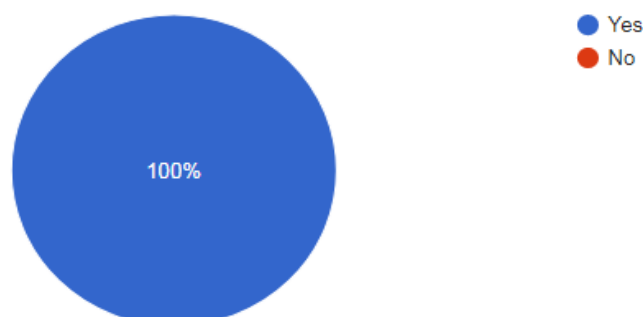


Figure 10: Film Review is an Effective Learning Tool to Improve English Speaking Skills

As displayed in Figure 10, all 30 students (100%) agreed that film review was an effective learning tool to improve their English-speaking skills. None of them suggested otherwise.

Discussion

The findings conveyed that based on students' perceptions, film review was effective in enhancing their English-speaking skills in a number of aspects. Of those, the enjoyable nature of films played a significant role in motivating them to learn English in accordance with the findings by Ismaili (2013), Khan (2016) and Nath et al. (2017) that films were a pleasurable resource to acquire English language and a great aid to develop a conducive learning environment. The respondents also preferred to watch English subtitled films to the non-subtitled ones as watching English films with subtitles enabled them to improve their English speaking skills in terms of acquiring new vocabularies, getting to know the correct English spellings and pronunciation, learning the natural flow of speaking English, learning and understanding unfamiliar words and accents, bettering listening skills as well as comprehending the film's overall content (Thammineni, 2016; Nath et al., 2017; Liando et al., 2018). The students in this study perceived that reviewing film was a fun method to enhance their English-speaking skills and boosted their motivation to speak English. This is relatable to a statement by Khan (2016) that learning English through films which could act as a motivator, was enjoyable and entertaining.

Other than that, the outcome proved that film review notes, exercises and examples of vocabularies, pronunciation, intonation, phrases and sentences provided and taught by the teacher-researcher prior to the film review implementation were helpful in students' film review presentation and discussion thus contributing to the improvement of their English-speaking competency. This discovery supports the notion by Wang (2009), Khan (2015), Kabooaha (2016), Keser & Acar (2017) and Parmawati & Inayah (2019) that guidance from educators played a vital role in developing learners' communication skills effectively through films. In addition, almost all respondents stated that they were confident in speaking simple English when reviewing films which corresponds with the finding by Wang (2009) that the use of most useful and simplest English in learning English through films could also build confidence to speak English.

Since the film review constituted two parts (Individual Film Review Presentation and Group Discussion), the researcher posed two separate questions for each part to identify which English-speaking skills aspects were improved in students' views. Positive results were then yielded from both questions as all 30 students (100%) agreed that for Part 1, their speaking skills were enhanced in terms of presenting orally without frequently referring to their presentation slides, putting into practice what they had learned related to film review in giving explanations, examples and quotations from their chosen film, applying correct English grammars and learning appropriate English pronunciation and intonation. In Part 2, the respondents orated that their English-speaking skills were enhanced in the aspects of communicating their notes, expressing their views and opinions and giving recommendation for views on their peers' films. These findings are parallel to what had been pointed out by Wang (2009), Kaboooha (2016), Thammineni, 2016 and Keser & Acar (2017) that through watching English films and communicative activities about the films afterwards, students' interactional skills were positively impacted and strengthened. It was also encountered in the findings that after doing their film review, students felt motivated to speak English more which is in accordance with the findings by Kaboooha (2016), Nath et al., (2017) and Madiyoh & Putro (2018) that English films activities increased learners' motivation and confidence to speak more English. All in all, taking into account the discussed myriad of English-speaking aspects enhanced through film review, it was proven that film review was indubitably an efficient learning tool in elevating students' English-speaking skills.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, the findings gained from this study have given insights into students' perspectives that film review which was opined as a fun and enjoyable way of learning spoken English possessed positive impacts on students' English speaking skills affectively in terms of their motivation and confidence in communicating in English and linguistically in the aspects of pronunciation, grammar, intonation, vocabulary, conversational phrases encompass communicating views, ideas and recommendations and ways of speaking English naturally.

In addition to the past studies, this study represented how film review was conducted and its relations to students' English-speaking skills. Since positive relations and implications have been constantly drawn from studies, it is hoped that English teaching and learning through films will be sustained in the future. Furthermore, the aids from educators and educational institutions in providing and teaching learners the right materials, interactive drills and proper techniques of film review play a pivotal role in enhancing students' English-speaking skills especially those of low English proficiency.

It is recommended that future studies include larger numbers of respondents and interviews of students and teachers to obtain more holistic findings on the film review effectiveness towards students' English-speaking competency. Other interesting topics to be studied are the challenges encountered by both learners and educators in the teaching and learning of English through films and ways to overcome them.

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