



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY  
AND COUNSELLING  
(IJEPC)

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**PILOT TESTING FOR FEASIBILITY IN THE STUDY OF  
INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH MOVIES TOWARDS ESL  
LEARNERS' SPEAKING CONFIDENCE AT TERTIARY LEVEL**

Nurul Hidayah Awang Asim<sup>1\*</sup>, Wardatul Akmam Din<sup>2</sup>, Kamsilawati Kamlun<sup>3</sup>, Suyansah Swanto<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia

Email: hidayahawangasim@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia

Email: wardadin@ums.edu.my

<sup>3</sup> Centre for Promotion of Knowledge and Literature, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia

Email: kamsi@ums.edu.my

<sup>4</sup> Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia

Email: suyansah@ums.edu.my

\* Corresponding Author

**Article Info:**

**Article history:**

Received date: 15.09.2022

Revised date: 10.10.2022

Accepted date: 30.11.2022

Published date: 15.12.2022

**To cite this document:**

Awang Asim, N. H., Din, W. A., Kamlun, K., & Swanto, S. (2022). Pilot Testing For Feasibility In The Study Of Influence Of English Movies Towards Esl Learners' Speaking Confidence At Tertiary Level. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 7 (48), 241-248.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.748017

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**Abstract:**

In order to evaluate the methods for participant recruitment, the usability of the survey questionnaire, and the data collection processes, a pilot test was carried out prior to conducting a study on the impact of English-language films on ESL learners' speaking confidence in tertiary level education. The study's frameworks were adapted from Imitation Theory and Comprehensible Input Theory in order to categorise and list different elements that affected students' speaking confidence. Before beginning the main research study on the impact of English movies, the authors described the pilot testing procedures and feasibility issues explored, as well as the improvements made to the instrument and methodology, in an effort to add to the body of research in this area and to strengthen teaching methods.

**Keywords:**

Pilot Study, Feasibility, English Movies, ESL Learner, Speaking Confidence

## Introduction

According to Maarof et al. (2015), there has recently been an increase in worry about the English language proficiency of Malaysian ESL students. Even though Malaysian ESL students have taken 11 to 13 years of formal language instruction in classrooms, their speaking ability is still far from ideal (Rusli et. al., 2018). Speaking in front of classmates is the biggest challenge students face when it comes to speaking confidently; they are afraid of making mistakes and "losing face" in front of their teacher and peers. Although many students are proficient in the English language, they find it difficult to communicate in the language. Speaking in front of a crowd calls for courage, internal drive, and external stimuli.

## Background of Pilot Study

A smaller feasibility study known as a "pilot study" is used to test several components of the approaches intended for a bigger, more thorough, or confirmatory research. A pilot study's main objective is not to provide answers to specific research questions, but rather to stop researchers from beginning a large-scale study before they are sufficiently familiar with the suggested methodology (Lowe, 2019). A pilot study is a small-scale version of a planned study that is carried out with a small group of participants who are similar to those who will be recruited later in the larger scale study, according to the definition provided by Doody et. Al. (2015). By conducting a pilot study, the researcher will be able to identify any challenges and potential flaws in the evaluation methods during the research and come up with a solution before the actual study can be carried out. This pilot study was essentially conducted to find out what works, what does not, and what needs to be changed about the method and techniques employed in the actual study.

This pilot study utilized a survey questionnaire to examine how English-language movies actually impact tertiary-level ESL learners' speaking confidence. A survey was designed and distributed to 20 Malaysian university students. The questionnaire was administered over the course of three days and was translated into both Bahasa Malaysian and English to provide the students with bilingual options. It is also crucial to note that the survey was conducted in Google Form format and that data will be gathered online in accordance with the limitations and "new norms" brought about by Covid-19 pandemic.

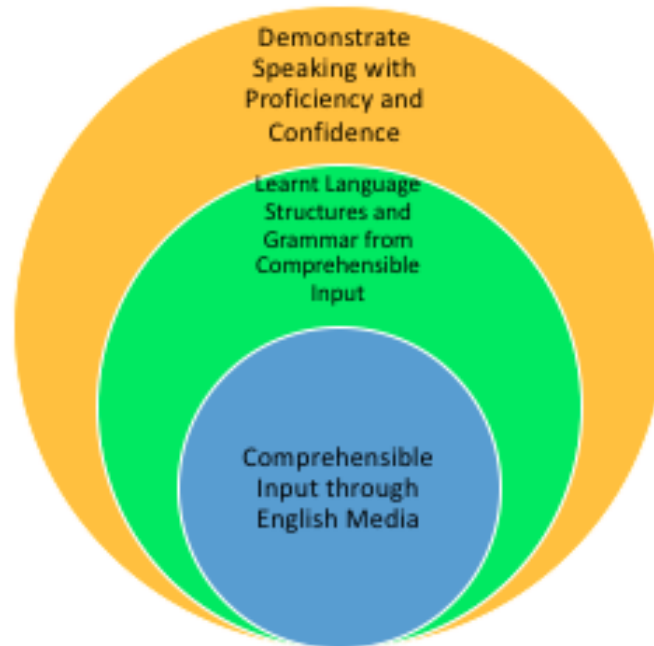
## Theories and Models

Regardless of the fact that there are many theories and models that are pertinent to this research, two important theories and models that are regarded as feasible theories serve as a foundation for the this study to place data in context and plan what will occur, before it actually occurs.

### *Krashen's Comprehensible Input*

As shown by the theory of Krashen's Comprehensible Input, the researcher of this study believes that using English movies as a medium for learning speaking confidence can develop an ESL learner's speaking confidence at the tertiary level. Krashen (1982) believed that "comprehensible input" could result in acquisition in his Input Hypothesis, according to Liu (2015). The theory is predicated on two main tenets. First, speech would develop naturally as a result of acquisition through understandable input and successfully developing competence, as opposed to being taught. Second, if a language learner receives enough understandable input, the grammar structures of a second language are also automatically taught to them.

Zen et al., (2015) further claims that Krashen believes the language spoken through an input serves as an enrichment of language input, particularly for ESL learners. They are also naturally at ease, with no anxiety or poor self-esteem when it comes to receiving comprehensible input. By utilizing English movies as this study suggests, we can encourage language development in not only the confidence of their speaking skills, but also inherently the speaking proficiency of ESL learners as well. Comprehensible input that takes the shape of a dialogue or oral discourse in an English movie can offer opportunities for ESL learners of tertiary level to practice their conversational skills with learnt verbal cues and appropriate grammar that they acquire from the input whether in social settings or with their peers in the classroom, as portrayed in the figure below. Krashen's Comprehensible Input is a theory that furthers this study's goal of translating the existing relationship between English-language films and ESL learners' development in terms of speaking confidence. This study suggests that English movies have a significant influence and can significantly improve ESL learners' speaking confidence and fluency.



**Figure 1: Krashen's Comprehensible Input Applied in Developing Speaking Confidence through English Movies**

### ***Imitation Theory by Skinner***

Weiten (2004) cites Skinner's supposition that environmental factors influence language development. As a behaviourist, Skinner emphasised the importance of conditioning, reinforcement, and imitation in the learning of new languages. In learning and language therapy, repetition and imitation are two of the earliest techniques for teaching a language. The idea that learning occurs as a result of repeated exposure to a particular stimulus is advanced by behaviourism, which maintains that the environment affects human behaviour, in accordance with Saidi (2017). In order to help language learners establish functional communication in daily life, repetition, imitation, and drilling are very popular among language teachers and students, at least for vocabulary knowledge and proper pronunciation. This

hypothesis is therefore appropriate to back up the study's assertion that watching English language movies can help ESL students build their speaking confidence through repetition and imitation of oral discourse.

### Methods

The pilot study done for this research is helpful in identifying practical problems with the methodology and for determining whether the suggested methodologies and instruments involving English movies could produce a significant result toward a positive correlation. To determine the viability of the survey questionnaires and interviews used in this study, a pilot study was conducted by the end of July, 2022. It was done through a survey questionnaire that was distributed to 20 participants. The table below shows the timeline that this pilot study carried on:

**Table 1.0: Timeline Of Pilot Study To Test The Procedure And Instruments Used For The Study**

| Week        | Progress                              | Notes                     |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Preparation | Participants selected for pilot study | Carried out by researcher |
| 1           | Survey questionnaire phase            | Conducted by researcher   |
| 2           | Survey data collection                | Conducted by researcher   |

### Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire will include columns for participants to complete their required demographic information, which will be kept confidential along with all other survey data. It will also give a succinct summary of the study's goals and the participants' consent. Participants in the study will rate their responses on a Likert scale, using the options "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree" to indicate how they feel about the statements in the questionnaire. Sections A and B of the survey questionnaire, which is composed of 30 statements for respondents to rate, are each designed to address the research questions. Each of Sections A and B's 15 questions addresses one of the following four research questions: RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4. Below is a more detailed explanation of the survey questionnaire's divisions and the research questions they aim to address:

#### Section A

The foundation of Section A is provided by Research Questions 1 and 2. The 15 statements in section A seek to determine whether English-language movies can help ESL students gain speaking confidence as well as finding out which elements of English-language film that can do so.

#### Section B

15 statements are included in Section B that address Research Questions 3 and 4. The statements in this section discuss the most and least popular categories of English language movies that tertiary level ESL students watch as a means of boosting their speaking proficiency.

**Table 2.0: Survey And Interview Questions Of The Pilot Study**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What aspect of English movies do you think is most helpful in terms of helping you to speak more confidently?</li> <li>2. Do you think learning through English movies can help you speak better and more confidently?</li> <li>3. Do you feel a boost in your speaking confidence if you observe and imitate conversations in English movies?</li> <li>4. Do you enjoy communicating in English?</li> </ol> | <p>RQ1: Does English movies have an effect on ESL learners' speaking confidence.</p>   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What types of English movies do you least prefer to learn from out of all?</li> <li>6. In your opinion, what is the best type of English movies to learn from in terms of trying to gain speaking confidence?</li> </ol>   | <p>RQ2: What are the most preferred types of English movies that ESL learners in tertiary level enjoy as a tool to improve their speaking confidence.</p>    |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. What are the challenges that you face when conversing in English?</li> <li>8. Do you face speaking anxiety when you have to present orally in the classroom?</li> <li>9. Which skill of the English language do you think is the most difficult?</li> <li>10. Do you face any challenges that you face when using English movies to try to acquire your speaking confidence? If so, what is it?</li> </ol>   | <p>RQ3: What are the challenges that ESL learners face when English movie is utilized to improve their speaking confidence.</p>                              |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Would you suggest learning from English movies to acquire speaking confidence to all of your peers? If so, why?</li> <li>12. What do you think is the best way or most suggested way to acquire speaking confidence from English movies?</li> </ol>   | <p>RQ4: What are the suggestions to overcome the challenges that ESL learners face when English movies is utilized to improve their speaking confidence.</p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 13. In your opinion, what can help you ease the process of acquiring your speaking confidence when you use English movies? |  |
|--|--|

### ***Research Procedures***

The researcher is responsible for administering pilot study and actual study for both the survey questionnaire and conducting interviews in order to answer the research questions. The study is to be done with 200 ESL learners in universities in Malaysia. Before carrying out the actual study, a pilot study is carried out to test the feasibility and identify flaws of the research instruments, if any. As mentioned earlier the pilot study will be a smaller scale of the study involving survey questionnaires to 20 participants and 2 participants who will be interviewed. Afterwards, in the first phase of the actual study, a survey questionnaire consisting of 13 items measuring the influence of English movies towards tertiary level ESL learners' speaking confidence will be administered to the participants online through Google Form platform. The questionnaire will take less than 15 minutes to complete. The data collected will then be analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 23.

Then, the researcher will choose 6 participants out of the 200 participants from the first phase who meet the relevant criteria and carry out a second phase of interview. For the interviews, the respondents will be contacted through online discussion platforms like Google Meet and Discord whereby the conversation will be taped. The interviews will be audio-recorded with consent and transcribed for data analysis purposes in the actual study.

### **Areas for Improvements Found Based on Results of Pilot Study**

#### ***Revising Questionnaire Instrument***

The pilot group was not asked for formal feedback on the survey's structure or methodology, but participants did offer suggestions for how to make the instrument better. A few questions were rearranged under personal, cultural, and contextual variables as a result of the pilot. The survey's body was revised to improve clarity and ease of completion by simplifying questions whenever possible.

#### ***Time Allocated for Survey Completion***

The 30 survey questions could be answered in less than 30 minutes, according to the survey's instructions. Although in the pilot study, it took less than 15 minutes on average to finish the survey. According to Cook, et al. (2006), the length of a survey has an impact on response rates; for university students, thirteen minutes or less is the desirable time limit (Fan & Yan, 2010). In a survey, students said they would be more likely to respond "if it is perceived to take less than 10 minutes to complete" and less likely to respond "if it is perceived to take more than 30 minutes to complete," according to research by Koskey, et al. (2015). The main study's survey instructions were modified to reflect that it could be finished in roughly ten minutes after the researchers determined that an average completion time of ten minutes would result in an acceptable response rate from the targeted student population.



### ***Limited Number of Data Acquired from Survey Questionnaire***

The main objectives of this pilot study were to evaluate the technical and navigating aspects of the online survey process as well as the instrument itself, as well as to determine whether it would be feasible to successfully recruit participants for the study. Prior to the main investigation, the pilot offered a chance to enhance our research procedures. The data and findings were produced from just one university because the pilot sample was limited to two online distance learning institution due to Covid-19 regulations of online learning. The size of the pilot findings may be constrained by this factor. Nevertheless, the study's conditions are more consistent with regard to the study's faculty, course requirements, and institutional components when it concentrates on a single institution than when it studies multiple student groups across institutions, which lessens the risks to internal validity (Robichaud, 2016).

### **Conclusion**

The main study on how English movies affect ESL learners' speaking confidence in tertiary level students was largely shaped by the pilot study on the feasibility of the research process and use of Skinner's Imitation Theory (1995) and Krashen's Comprehensible Input (1982) as the organising framework. The intended processes for participant selection and as well as the questionnaire's user - friendliness were all put to the test. Given the uncertainty surrounding the feasibility of the study's larger scope, the participants' positive reactions and generally helpful feedback during the pilot were a significant outcome.

Eventually, the pilot showed that the online survey questionnaire was useful for gathering data, supporting the researchers' commitment to transparency in all facets of learning and research. Finally, it was clear from the pilot that the comprehensible input model and imitation theory are useful frameworks for organising the factors affecting ESL learners' confidence in speaking in an open and online learning context. This article adds to the body of knowledge on pilot studies, emphasises the importance of pilot testing for improving research study design, and helps establish best practises for open and distance learning (Fraser et. Al., 2018).

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to acknowledge Global Academic Excellence (M) Sdn Bhd, who granted the Publication Grant Scheme for this project.

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