

THE EFFICACY OF ENGLISH MOVIES IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION

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Abstract

This study investigates the efficacy of English movies as an audiovisual pedagogical tool to enhance the pronunciation skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Employing a pre-experimental research design, the study involved 14 third-semester students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests focusing on suprasegmental pronunciation features, supplemented by a post-intervention questionnaire to evaluate students' perceptions. Quantitative analysis revealed a highly significant improvement in pronunciation accuracy following the intervention, with mean scores increasing from 35.0 to 63.28 ($p < .05$). Questionnaire data corroborated these empirical gains, indicating that learners found the authentic audiovisual input highly engaging and effective in lowering their affective filter, which in turn boosted their speaking confidence and facilitated the imitation of native pronunciation. Despite these significant overall improvements, the study noted that 42% of the participants still faced challenges in distinguishing phonetically similar words. The findings conclude that while English movies serve as a highly effective and motivating medium for developing macro-level pronunciation skills, integrating explicit phonetic instruction may be necessary to address micro-level phonemic discrimination. These insights provide valuable implications for designing authentic, media-integrated pronunciation curricula in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Teaching, pronunciation, English movies.

BACKGROUND

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, phonological competence is increasingly recognized as the cornerstone of communicative intelligibility. While effective communication relies on a coordinated development of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Gui & Ismail, 2024), pronunciation holds a primary role; grammatical accuracy and lexical richness are often rendered ineffective if the speaker's message is phonologically unintelligible (Fraser, 2020). Clear and accurate pronunciation enables learners to convey precise meanings, negotiate intercultural interactions confidently, and mitigate communication breakdowns (Walker et al., 2021). Consequently, pronunciation must transcend its traditional

status as a secondary, drill-based skill and be situated at the core of communicative language teaching.

Despite its critical importance, pronunciation remains one of the most challenging areas for EFL learners, particularly at the tertiary level. Many university students continue to struggle with both segmental sounds and suprasegmental features, such as sentence stress, intonation patterns, and connected speech (Antaris & Omolu, 2019; Mappewali et al., 2025). These persistent difficulties often stem from a lack of exposure to authentic phonetic models and a heavy reliance on decontextualized mechanical drilling in traditional classrooms. Mispronunciations and inaccurate prosody not only obscure

meaning but also elevate learners' affective filters, resulting in diminished speaking confidence. This highlights an urgent pedagogical need for instructional approaches that provide comprehensible, contextualized phonological input while simultaneously engaging learners effectively.

The integration of audiovisual materials, specifically English-language movies, offers a robust theoretical solution to this pedagogical challenge. Unlike static audio recordings, movies provide authentic, rich linguistic input embedded within natural communicative contexts. They offer crucial paralinguistic cues—such as facial expressions, lip movements, and emotional context—that scaffold the cognitive processing of phonetic structures. Previous studies have indicated the potential of movie-based instruction and audiovisual input with subtitles in enhancing general pronunciation mastery among secondary school students (Nigrum, 2018; Rayasa, 2018). The dynamic combination of visual context and native-speaker modeling facilitates a deeper cognitive connection between sound production and meaning.

However, a significant gap remains in the current literature. While existing studies broadly acknowledge the benefits of audiovisual media, there is a paucity of empirical research specifically investigating how authentic movie input affects targeted *suprasegmental* features (e.g., emotion-driven intonation, syllable stress, and diction) among tertiary-level EFL learners. Furthermore, few studies have concurrently examined the objective phonetic gains alongside the learners' subjective perceptions and psychological responses to the medium. Relying solely on objective test scores provides an incomplete picture of how audiovisual tools influence learner autonomy and confidence.

To bridge this gap, this study aims to investigate the efficacy of English movies as a pedagogical tool for teaching pronunciation to tertiary EFL learners.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) Does the integration of English movies significantly improve the suprasegmental pronunciation skills of third-semester students? and (2) What are the students' pedagogical and psychological perceptions of utilizing English movies as a pronunciation-enhancing medium? The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence and practical implications for designing authentic, media-integrated phonological curricula in higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Movies, also known as films, are audiovisual works created for entertainment, education, or communication. They consist of moving images recorded and presented at a specific speed, usually accompanied by dialogue, music, and sound effects (Pavithra & Gandhimathi, 2024; Sondakh et al., 2021). According to Tomlinson et al. (2003), audiovisual media such as movies can motivate and engage students in language learning in an interesting and interactive way. Movies can also provide authentic contexts that help students understand how language is used in everyday situations.

Movie Genre

Movie genres are categories used to group films according to their themes, storytelling styles, and target audiences. They help viewers select films that match their interests and enable filmmakers to reach specific audiences. The following are several common movie genres.

Action films are characterized by fast-paced scenes, exciting stunts, and intense physical activity. They often include heroes and villains who race against time while engaging in shootings, fights, explosions, and chases (Pratista, 2008:14). As a result, these films create tension through conflicts between the protagonist and antagonist.

In contrast, comedy films aim to make audiences laugh through humorous situations, witty dialogue, and exaggerated

actions or characters. They usually contain light drama and often end happily (Oktavianus, 2015:4). Therefore, their primary purpose is to entertain audiences and create a sense of joy.

Drama films, on the other hand, focus on realistic characters and situations. They often explore themes such as love, loss, and personal struggles. Through emotional stories and detailed character development, dramas encourage audiences to respond deeply to the experiences portrayed (Oktavianus, 2015:4).

Unlike dramas, horror films aim to create fear, suspense, and shock. They may include frightening images, supernatural elements, and unexpected plot twists (Pratista, 2008:48). Horror films often take place in dark settings accompanied by frightening music and commonly feature paranormal events, monsters, or psychological terror.

Similarly, thriller films are built around suspenseful and gripping stories. They often involve crime, espionage, or psychological tension. For example, a thriller may portray an ordinary person who faces an unexpected and dangerous situation, such as becoming wrongly involved in a criminal case (Pratista, 2008:57). This genre frequently uses plot twists, surprising revelations, and fast-paced action. Moreover, thrillers can be combined with other genres, including drama, action, crime, politics, and science fiction.

Fantasy films differ from horror films because they generally emphasize magic, mythology, and imaginary worlds. They may feature magical creatures, epic quests, and themes of heroism and adventure. In addition, these films often show beautiful and unusual natural settings, such as rainforests, mountains, deserts, oceans, and remote islands (Oktavianus, 2015:6).

Another popular genre is the musical film, which uses songs and dances as important parts of the story. Musical films may also include elements of drama,

romance, or comedy. According to Pratista (2008:51), they mainly target families, teenagers, and children. These films often present light stories about romance, success, popularity, and everyday experiences.

Finally, animation films use techniques such as hand-drawn animation, computer-generated imagery, and stop-motion animation (Hushain et al., 2023). Because of their visual flexibility, they can be enjoyed by people of all ages and may explore a wide range of genres and themes.

The Advantages of English Movies

Watching English-language movies has several benefits. They help students practice listening and speaking, improve pronunciation, and increase vocabulary.

First, movies help students practice listening. By watching English movies, students hear conversations spoken by native speakers. Rokni and Azzam (2014:721) explain that students' listening skills improved more when they watched movies with English subtitles than when they watched movies without subtitles. Movies also expose students to natural and informal English, including slang and expressions that are not often found in textbooks or dictionaries.

Second, movies help students improve their speaking skills. Listening to native speakers can improve fluency and help students understand how words are connected in sentences. Kanean (2013:155) argues that students can improve their speaking abilities by imitating actors when English-language films are used in EFL classes. Through movie dialogues, students can learn to connect words more naturally.

Third, movies can improve pronunciation. Many learners find English pronunciation difficult. According to Pratiwi (2010:140), English movies significantly improve learners' understanding of pronunciation. Before watching English movies, students often have difficulty with English stress patterns.

Fourth, movies can increase vocabulary. While watching English movies, students encounter new words and phrases. They can learn their meanings from the movie's context and translate them into Indonesian. Aldita (2021) states that watching English movies provides many benefits and helps improve students' English skills. Therefore, using English movies in education can improve students' language competence and fluency.

The Disadvantages of English Movies

First, watching movies can take a long time and may make students bored. It can also reduce the time available for other activities, such as writing and discussions. Mirvan (2013:65) states that students may become bored when watching a movie until the end because it can take more than an hour. As a result, students may have less time to complete other classroom tasks.

Second, students may focus more on the actors than on the learning objectives. Students may pay special attention to their favorite actors and actresses instead of the lesson. Ying and Zhang (2012:1011) state that movie performers can distract students and cause them to lose sight of the film's purpose. Consequently, students may have difficulty concentrating on their assigned tasks.

Third, students may imitate negative behavior shown by actors or actresses. According to Sargent (2005:350), many Hollywood actors and actresses are shown smoking in movies. Students may also imitate other inappropriate scenes, such as fighting, adult content, and smoking.

Pronunciation

English pronunciation can be challenging for some learners, so students need appropriate media to help them practice their pronunciation effectively. Pronunciation plays a vital role in spoken English communication. Harmer (2015:183) states that a mispronunciation will have a different understanding. This makes us

realize that English pronunciation needs to be improved because it is crucial to have English pronunciation.

Features of pronunciation refer to the characteristics or components of spoken language that influence speech's clarity, intelligibility, and expressiveness. These features encompass various aspects of speech production, including phonemes, stress, intonation, rhythm, pitch, fluency, and articulation. According to Kelly (2000), it is often helpful to decompose it into its individual components to understand how something functions.

Pronunciation in English is generally divided into several main sound elements or components. The following are the types or key elements of pronunciation:

- a. Suprasegmental features refer to aspects of speech that extend beyond individual speech sounds (phonemes) and involve elements such as stress, intonation, pitch, and timing.
- b. Stress it is a suprasegmental feature that can significantly affect the meaning and interpretation of spoken language. In stressed syllables, there is typically greater force or prominence in the articulation, resulting in pitch, duration, and volume changes compared to unstressed syllables.
- c. Intonation, Jones Jones (1958:59) states that when speaking, the voice's pitch—that is, the musical note generated by the vocal cords—changes continuously. In general, intonation can be divided into the following categories: (1) a rising intonation is when the pitch of the voice gradually increases; (2) a falling intonation begins as the pitch gradually decreases; (3) a drop in pitch followed by a rise is known as dipping intonation, and (4) the pitch of speaking intonation increases and falls.
- d. Phoneme the unique sounds that make up a language are called phonemes. Even though people's articulation of sounds varies slightly, each sound's production

can nonetheless be characterized with a certain degree of accuracy.

- e. Consonant, a consonant is a speaking sound made when the vocal tract's airflow is blocked or restricted. Consonants are created via various articulatory configurations, including the lips, tongue, teeth, palate, and other vocal apparatus parts, in contrast to vowels generated with a comparatively open vocal tract.
- f. Vowel is a sound created when air flows freely. This indicates that vowel sounds are produced without the mouth becoming constricted. The vowel sound is divided into two types.

Teaching Pronunciation

Teaching is a process of conveying information to students. According to Cohen (2008), teaching is helping others learn to do specific tasks, which many people regularly engage in. Teaching pronunciation is essential for young Indonesian learners because it helps English students pronounce words correctly. Moreover, teachers play several crucial functions when teaching English pronunciation.

- a. The teachers' role in teaching pronunciation includes the following:
 - (1) To help the students hear, the teacher should assist students in recognizing and understanding the sounds. In this phase, the teacher explains the different sound categories, as each language has unique pronunciation features.
 - (2) When helping students produce sounds, the teacher should guide them in imitating new sounds. If students cannot replicate a sound, the teacher can provide instructions or indications to help them produce the sound correctly.
 - (3) When providing feedback, a teacher should monitor and pay attention to the student's participation, pronunciation skills, and performance throughout the learning

process, offering constructive feedback to improve their abilities.

- (4) Devising activities is crucial. The teacher must design appropriate activities to teach pronunciation and consider various factors to ensure the teaching and learning process is conducted efficiently.
- b. The student's role in learning English pronunciation. Students do not need to engage in many activities during the teaching and learning. Instead, they should focus on the material and respond to the content the teacher explains, making sure they are attentive and engaged in the lesson.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher used a quantitative approach to analyze the data. The researcher applied a pre-experimental research design, which, according to Sugiyono (2014:109), includes only one group or class that is given a pre-test and a post-test. This one-group pre-test and post-test design was carried out on one group without a control group or comparison, involving a pre-test and a post-test to measure students' pronunciation ability. Also, the research used a questionnaire to learn about students' perceptions of learning English using movies to enhance pronunciation ability.

The research was conducted at the English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Universitas Muhammdiyah Palu. The population of this research is third-semester students who have already passed the pronunciation Class, which consists of one class with fourteen students enrolled.

The sample is a subset of the study's target population. Because of the small number of participants, the researcher used the total sample technique; thus, this research's sampling consists of 14 students.

This study's independent variable is English movies, which are expected to influence the dependent variable. The

dependent variable is pronunciation, as the outcome is measured and potentially affected by the independent variable, English movies.

The researcher needed an instrument. He used tests and questionnaires as instruments. The test was divided into pre-test and post-test. The students were given the test to figure out their pronunciation ability. This research divided the test into two categories: pre-test and post-test. The purpose of the pre-test was to assess the students' initial ability in pronunciation skills, while the post-test aimed to evaluate any improvements in their pronunciation after the treatment. A questionnaire of fifteen statements was designed to investigate students' perceptions of the role of English pronunciation in language learning, including statements about their movie-watching habits.

The research computed the individual scores of the students' pre-test and post-test, and then the researcher calculated students' mean scores for both the pre-test and post-test; the individual score was obtained using the formula provided by Sudijono (2007:305):

$$\text{Students' score} = \frac{\text{obtained score}}{\text{maximum score}} \times 100$$

After calculating the individual scores, the researcher counted the mean scores for both the pre-test and post-test using the formula by Sudijono (2012:82):

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:

M = Mean (Average score of all students)
 $\sum x$ = The total scores of all of the students
 N = The number of students

Then, the researcher computed the Mean Deviation (Md). The formulation was taken from Sudijono (2012:305). It is as follows:

$$Md = \frac{\sum d}{n}$$

Where:

Md = Mean deviation between pre-test and post-test

$\sum d$ = The summary of deviation

n = The number of students

After counting the pre-test and post-test mean deviation, the researcher calculated the Sum of Square Deviation ($\sum x^2 d$). The formulation was taken from Arikunto (2010:349). It is as follows:

$$\sum x^2 d = \sum d^2 - \frac{(\sum d)^2}{n}$$

Where: $\sum x^2 d$ = The sum of square

$\sum d^2$ = The sum of deviation

n = The number of students

Finally, the researcher computed the t_{counted} value using the following formulation from Arikunto (2010:349). It is proposed to know whether the students' pre-test and post-test values differed significantly. It was formulated as follows:

$$t = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 d}{n(n-1)}}}$$

Where:

t = The value of t_{counted}

Md = The mean deviation of pre-test and post-test

$\sum x^2 d$ = The sum of the square deviation

n = The number of students

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this study are divided into two primary sections: the quantitative results derived from the pronunciation tests (pre-test and post-test) and the qualitative data obtained from the students'

questionnaires regarding their perceptions of the intervention.

The Impact of English Movies on Students' Pronunciation Skills

To evaluate the efficacy of English movies as a pedagogical tool for pronunciation, students underwent a six-week intervention focusing on suprasegmental features, including intonation, sentence stress, syllable stress, diction, and fluency. Pronunciation proficiency was measured before and after the intervention.

The quantitative analysis indicates a substantial improvement in students' pronunciation skills following the treatment. The pre-test results revealed a low baseline of pronunciation accuracy, with a mean score of 35.0. Following the audiovisual intervention, the post-test mean score increased significantly to 63.28. Statistical analysis using a paired-samples t-test confirmed that this improvement was highly significant, $t(13) = 6.30$, $p < .05$ (where $t_{counted} = 6.30 > t_{table} = 1.77$). These results empirically demonstrate that the integration of English movies into the pronunciation curriculum effectively enhanced the pronunciation accuracy of third-semester English education students.

Students' Perceptions of Movie-Based Pronunciation Learning

Quantitative data from the post-intervention questionnaire provided insights into students' learning experiences and perceptions. The results strongly support the test findings, indicating a highly positive reception to the audiovisual method.

All participants acknowledged the effectiveness of the method, with 64.29% strongly agreeing and 35.71% agreeing that watching English movies significantly improved their pronunciation skills. Furthermore, 100% of the students agreed that movies served as an effective medium for acquiring and understanding the pronunciation of unfamiliar vocabulary. The

audiovisual input also positively impacted their mechanical and psychological speaking aspects: 78.57% of respondents reported that it was easier to imitate native pronunciation after observing it in a cinematic context, and 71.43% experienced increased confidence when speaking English. Finally, a majority (64.29%) found the movie-based approach to be inherently enjoyable, highlighting its value in creating a natural and engaging learning environment.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to ascertain the effectiveness of English movies in improving students' pronunciation skills and to explore their perceptions of this medium. The significant increase in the mean scores from the pre-test (35.0) to the post-test (63.28) provides compelling evidence that movies are a highly effective instructional tool for teaching phonetics and suprasegmental features. This finding strongly aligns with previous studies asserting that audiovisual media can significantly enhance speaking and pronunciation skills in EFL contexts by providing engaging and comprehensible input (Kalean, 2013; Mirvan, 2013; Rayasa, 2018).

The success of this intervention can be attributed to the nature of audiovisual media, which exposes learners to authentic, context-rich linguistic input (Rokni & Azzam, 2014). Unlike traditional rote repetition, movies present language as it is naturally used by native speakers, incorporating critical paralinguistic cues such as facial expressions, lip movements, and emotional context. During the treatment, focusing on specific elements, such as intonation for expressing emotions and syllable stressing, allowed students to contextualize the sounds they heard. As Kelly (2000) suggests, effective pronunciation teaching must move beyond isolated sounds to include suprasegmental features within meaningful contexts. This aligns with the questionnaire findings, where

78.57% of students found it easier to imitate pronunciation after watching the movies. The dynamic visual reinforcement aids in the cognitive processing of phonetic structures, effectively bridging the gap between passive listening and active production (Ying & Zhang, 2012).

Furthermore, the integration of movies successfully lowered the students' affective filter. The questionnaire data revealed that learning through movies fostered a fun, natural environment (64.29%) and significantly boosted speaking confidence (71.43%). When students are engaged in a narrative, anxiety levels drop, leading to a higher willingness to participate in post-viewing conversational exercises. The fact that 100% of the respondents found movies effective for understanding new, unencountered words suggest that the surrounding cinematic context provides sufficient scaffolding for learners to deduce not only meaning but also correct phonetic articulation. This corroborates findings that integrating popular multimedia formats can significantly increase learner motivation and reduce language anxiety in pronunciation practice (Ilyas & Kaniadewi, 2023).

Overall, this study confirms the premise that incorporating authentic audiovisual materials like English movies moves pronunciation practice away from mechanical drilling and toward meaningful, contextualized communication (Fraser, 2020; Walker et al., 2021). This approach not only yields measurable academic improvements but also cultivates learner autonomy, motivation, and confidence in oral English production.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of English movies significantly enhances the pronunciation skills of EFL learners, specifically in mastering suprasegmental features. The empirical

evidence demonstrates that audiovisual input effectively bridges the gap between phonetic theory and practical speaking ability. Furthermore, the pedagogical approach garnered highly positive student perceptions. Learners reported increased confidence, heightened motivation, and greater ease in imitating native pronunciation, which can be attributed to the contextualized and authentic nature of the cinematic input.

Despite these overall benefits, the study identified a specific challenge: a notable portion of the students (42%) still experienced difficulties in distinguishing phonetically similar words. This indicates that while movies are highly effective for improving overall fluency and macro-level pronunciation (such as intonation and stress), targeted, explicit phonetic instruction may still be necessary to aid learners in micro-level phonemic discrimination. Overall, English movies serve as an engaging, effective, and psychologically supportive medium for pronunciation development.

Suggestion

While this study provides valuable insights into audiovisual-based pronunciation learning, several limitations must be acknowledged to guide future investigations. First, the relatively small sample size restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should replicate this experimental design using larger and more diverse participant cohorts across different proficiency levels. Second, the selection of cinematic materials is critical. Future research should meticulously curate movie selections to ensure a tighter alignment with the specific phonological targets of the assessment.

Additionally, future researchers are encouraged to refine the assessment instruments to capture a more robust and nuanced evaluation of both segmental and suprasegmental improvements. Moving forward, educators and researchers should

consider developing integrated instructional designs where audiovisual materials, classroom activities, and testing mechanisms are seamlessly aligned. Finally, addressing students' difficulties in recognizing phonetically similar words offers a promising avenue for future research. Subsequent studies could explore a blended approach, combining the authentic input of English movies with explicit phonetic discrimination exercises to maximize comprehensive pronunciation mastery.

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