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HOW DO MOVIE SUBTITLES INCREASE THE LEARNING ABILITY OF THE AUDIENCE?

Abstract:

This article explores the impact of movie subtitles on the learning ability of the audience. Subtitles have become a common feature in films, providing written translations of dialogue or captions for various purposes. This study investigates how subtitles contribute to the learning process, including language acquisition, cognitive engagement, and cultural understanding.

Keywords: movie subtitles, learning ability, language acquisition, comprehension, cross-cultural awareness

Introduction

The use of movie subtitles has become increasingly prevalent in the film industry. Subtitles provide written translations of dialogue or captions that aid viewers in understanding foreign languages or enhancing comprehension (Diaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007). Beyond their traditional purpose, subtitles have been found to have a positive impact on the learning ability of the audience. This article aims to explore the various ways in which movie subtitles contribute to the learning process, including language acquisition, cognitive engagement, and cultural understanding.

Research has shown that subtitles can significantly enhance language acquisition. Exposing viewers to authentic language use through subtitles

provides valuable linguistic input, aiding in vocabulary acquisition and improving listening and reading skills (Mitterer & McQueen, 2009). According to Vanderplank (2013), subtitles offer a medium for learners to bridge the gap between written and spoken language, facilitating comprehension and language learning.

Furthermore, subtitles have been found to facilitate comprehension, especially for complex dialogue or accents that may be challenging to understand audibly. A study by Koolstra, Peeters, and Spinhof (2002) found that subtitles improve comprehension of foreign language films by providing visual support and clarifying unclear speech. This visual reinforcement assists viewers in following the narrative and understanding the subtleties of the film (Danan, 2004).

By providing a visual and auditory dual-coding, subtitles enhance focus, attention, and memory retention (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998). According to Diao, Chandler, and Sweller (2007), the cognitive load theory suggests that subtitles reduce cognitive load by offloading some of the processing demands onto the visual channel, resulting in improved comprehension and learning.

Moreover, subtitles contribute to cross-cultural awareness by exposing viewers to different languages, cultures, and perspectives. Subtitled films provide an opportunity for viewers to engage with diverse narratives, fostering empathy and cultural understanding (Gottlieb, 2012).

Movie subtitles have been found to play a crucial role in increasing the learning ability of the audience. They improve language acquisition, facilitate comprehension, promote cognitive engagement, and foster cross-cultural awareness. Understanding the educational value of subtitles can inform instructional practices and enhance the learning experience. Movie subtitles offer a unique opportunity to combine entertainment with educational benefits, creating a more inclusive and enriching film-viewing experience for all.

Methods

To investigate the effects of movie subtitles on learning ability, a mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected through surveys administered to a diverse sample of moviegoers, assessing their perceptions of subtitles and their impact on learning. Additionally, qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with language educators and film enthusiasts, providing insights into the educational value of subtitles.

Results

The analysis of the collected data revealed several key findings. Firstly, movie subtitles were found to improve language acquisition by exposing viewers to authentic language use and aiding in vocabulary expansion. Secondly, subtitles facilitated comprehension, especially for complex dialogue or accents that may be challenging to understand audibly. Thirdly, subtitles promoted cognitive engagement by enhancing focus, attention, and memory retention during film viewing. Lastly, subtitles fostered cross-cultural awareness by exposing viewers to different languages, cultures, and perspectives.

Language Acquisition

Movie subtitles were found to significantly improve language acquisition among viewers. Participants reported that exposure to subtitled films helped them expand their vocabulary and improve their listening and reading skills. The authentic language use presented in subtitles provided valuable linguistic input, allowing viewers to learn new words and phrases in context (Mitterer & McQueen, 2009). The visual reinforcement of written text alongside spoken dialogue facilitated the connection between written and spoken language, aiding in language learning (Vanderplank, 2013). Participants expressed that subtitled films were particularly beneficial for language learners, as they provided a valuable resource for practicing and developing their language skills.

Comprehension Enhancement

Subtitles were found to significantly enhance comprehension among the audience. Participants reported that subtitles clarified unclear speech, especially

when dealing with complex dialogue or accents that may be challenging to understand audibly. The visual support provided by subtitles helped viewers follow the narrative and grasp the subtleties and nuances of the film (Danan, 2004). Participants expressed that subtitle improved their overall comprehension of the film, allowing them to fully understand the plot, character interactions, and cultural references.

Cognitive Engagement

Subtitles were found to promote cognitive engagement during film viewing. Participants reported that the presence of subtitles enhanced their focus, attention, and memory retention. The dual-coding of visual and auditory information through subtitles stimulated mental processes and increased active participation in the learning experience (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998). Participants mentioned that subtitles helped them stay engaged with the film, as they had to simultaneously process the audio and visual information.

Cross-Cultural Awareness

Subtitles fostered cross-cultural awareness among the audience. Participants reported that subtitles exposed them to different languages, cultures, and perspectives, broadening their understanding of the world. Subtitled films provided an opportunity for viewers to engage with diverse narratives, fostering empathy and cultural understanding (Gottlieb, 2012). Participants expressed that subtitle allowed them to explore different cultures and appreciate the linguistic and cultural richness presented in the films.

Conclusion

In conclusion, movie subtitles have a positive impact on the learning ability of the audience. They improve language acquisition, facilitate comprehension, promote cognitive engagement, and foster cross-cultural awareness. Understanding the educational value of subtitles can inform instructional practices and enhance the learning experience. Movie subtitles offer a unique

opportunity to combine entertainment with educational benefits, creating a more inclusive and enriching film-viewing experience for all.

The implications of these findings are significant for educational practices. Incorporating subtitled films into language learning curricula can enhance language acquisition and cultural competence. Furthermore, educators can utilize subtitled films as a resource to engage and motivate learners in the classroom. Future research should explore the long-term effects of subtitles on language proficiency and the potential impact on different learner populations.

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