



USING CARTOONS AND ANIMATED FILMS IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR: AN IMRAD-BASED STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how English vocabulary and grammar can be taught more successfully in EFL courses using cartoons and animated movies. This study investigates the effects of employing a few sequences from Ballerina (2016) as a teaching tool rather than solely depending on textbooks and rule-based explanations. Two groups of college students participated in a quasi-experimental design. According to the findings, students who engaged in film-based learning activities showed more motivation, improved comprehension of grammar in context, and enhanced vocabulary recall. According to the results, when accompanied by organized classroom activities, animated movies may turn language sessions into interesting and relevant learning experiences..

Introduction

Grammar is difficult for many English language learners, not because it is impossible, but rather because it frequently seems unrelated to everyday situations. Students who memorize rules and word lists may perform better on tests, but they may not always be able to utilize the language with confidence. Teachers are inspired by this challenge to seek out more significant and captivating instructional strategies.

Using cartoons and animated movies is one promising tactic. Films, as opposed to traditional sources, show language in action: characters react to actual circumstances, communicate with emotion, and utilize grammar in everyday speech. Language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to intelligible information, which is language that is understandable but a little bit above their current level, according to Stephen Krashen (1985). With the help of visual context, animated movies offer just that kind of feedback.

Lev Vygotsky (1978) also highlighted the significance of contextual learning and social interaction. Students can learn from one another through the discussion, interpretation, and teamwork that films foster.

The inspirational tale of a little girl who aspires to work as a professional ballerina in Paris is told in the animated movie Ballerina. Everyday dialogue, emotional expressions, goal-setting language, and a variety of grammatical constructions, including conditionals, modal

verbs, and present and past tenses, are all featured in the movie. It provides abundant material for classroom exercises due to its motivational topic and understandable plot.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether, in comparison to traditional training, using animated flicks like *Ballerina* can enhance students' vocabulary acquisition and grammar comprehension.

Methods

Research Design

This research used a quasi-experimental design with two groups of intermediate-level university students ($N = 40$). One group (experimental) learned through film-based instruction, while the other group (control) followed textbook-based lessons.

Participants

Participants were undergraduate EFL students aged 18–21. Both groups had similar English proficiency levels based on placement testing results.

Procedure

The study lasted four weeks. The experimental group worked with selected scenes from *Ballerina* each week. Lessons followed three stages:

1. **Pre-viewing activities** – discussing themes, predicting events, introducing key vocabulary
2. **While-viewing tasks** – answering comprehension questions, identifying grammar structures
3. **Post-viewing activities** – role plays, dialogue reconstruction, grammar reflection tasks

Target grammar included:

- Present Simple and Present Continuous
- Past Simple
- Modal verbs (can, must, should)
- First Conditional

Vocabulary focused on themes such as ambition, training, performance, competition, failure, and success. The control group learned the same vocabulary and grammar topics using textbook exercises, explanations, and written practice.

Data Collection

Data were collected through:

- Pre- and post-tests
- Student motivation questionnaires
- Classroom observations

Results

The two groups' differences were evident from the results.

Grammar scores rose by 22% and vocabulary scores by 28% for the experimental group. The control group, in contrast, improved less, particularly when it came to using contextual grammar.

Eighty-five percent of students in the experimental group said in questionnaires that they found the lessons to be less stressful and more engaging. Many students claimed that by associating words with certain events or individuals, they were better able to recall the words.

Classroom observations also revealed greater participation and more spontaneous speaking during post-viewing discussions.

Discussion

According to the study's findings, animated movies can be more than just amusing additions to the classroom; with careful application, they can be effective language-learning resources. Students profited from hearing English used organically in context, which is consistent with Stephen Krashen's (1985) approach. Unfamiliar jargon was easier to understand without continual translation thanks to the storyline, tone of voice, and pictures. Students were exposed to vocabulary as part of a tale rather than as separate terms to memorize.

Lev Vygotsky's (1978) theory that learning is socially constructed is also shown in the study. Students analyzed the choices made by the characters, voiced their thoughts, and even played out conversation after seeing sequences from *Ballerina*. They spontaneously practiced grammatical structures through these exchanges. Grammar became a "tool to express meaning" rather than a "rule to memorize." An important observation was emotional engagement. Students connected with the main character's struggles and ambitions. When learners feel emotionally involved, they pay more attention. Emotional connection supports deeper cognitive processing and longer retention. Many students reported remembering expressions because they associated them with specific dramatic or inspiring scenes.

Grammar learning also improved because students saw structures functioning in real communication. For example, modal verbs were not introduced as abstract formulas but appeared in authentic encouragement ("You can do it") or advice ("You should practice more"). This contextual exposure likely helped students notice how grammar works in real conversations.

However, the role of the teacher remained crucial. Movies by themselves are insufficient. Students might only concentrate on the narrative rather than linguistic elements in the absence of structured reflection, discussion questions, and guided activities. Clear learning objectives and meticulous planning are necessary for effective integration.

Longer treatments, varying skill levels, or comparisons between live-action and animated movies could all be the subject of future research. However, this study shows that learning grammar and vocabulary may be made more organic, interesting, and relevant by mixing organized instruction with narrative.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates how animated movies like *Ballerina* can greatly aid in the development of grammar and vocabulary in EFL classes. Cartoons and movies improve motivation, contextual awareness, and communication skills when thoughtfully incorporated into lesson programs.

Animated movies can enhance textbooks rather than replace them by bringing language to life and assisting pupils in viewing English as a living, expressive medium rather than a collection of regulations

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