"…AND ACTION!" – DEVELOPING SKILLS WITH THE HELP OF FILMS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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The present paper investigates a relevant issue in the area of language teaching, namely, the development of skills with the help of feature films in the EFL classroom. A research questions is attempted to answer as follows: Which skills can be developed with the help of feature films? In order to facilitate finding answers to this question, a qualitative research study was carried out. One particular film – namely, "Mickey Blue Eyes" – was broadcast to a group of sixteen intermediate-level, seventeen-year-old students at a secondary school in the centre of Budapest with the purpose of developing their skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Students were observed during nine consecutive English lessons and they were also asked to fill in a qualitative questionnaire. The findings demonstrate that all the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing are possible to develop with one single feature film.

Every age bears different characteristics, each has its own favourites, its own magic. In the past, students used to spend their free time climbing up trees, reading stories, collecting stamps, or playing hide-and-seek in the open air. Today, an increasing number of children grows up in front of the computer or the television; computer games, films, cartoons, and series have become an integral part of their everyday lives. Although a lot of people – parents, teachers and a great number of experts (Elkind, 2010; Kósa, 2004; Postman, 1996; Varga, 1999; Winn, 1981; Zrinszky, 2002) – consider it harmful, even the end of civilization, this is an issue one cannot ignore. Therefore, teachers should not reject these media; on the contrary, we should make use of them in our lessons.

In the present paper, I would like to focus on the television medium; within that I would like to concentrate on the use of feature films in the EFL classroom. Thus, I formulated a research question as follows: Which skills can be developed with the help of feature films? My hypothesis is that films are suitable for everything – one can develop all the four skills with the help of one single feature film. Therefore, I would like to investigate one particular feature film and use it for various purposes within the field of skills development. The present paper begins with an overview of the relevant literature in the area, which is followed by a description and

justification of the process of designing the research and the methods that were used. After this, the results of the analysis are summarized and discussed, and the paper ends in drawing conclusions from the study.

Review of Literature
Films in the EFL Classroom

When it comes to broadcasting films at school, it usually reminds teachers – as well as students – of "not learning"; movies are considered "trivial entertainment, a peripheral audio-visual aid, not part of serious study" (Braddock, 1996:4). According to these teachers, films should only be used as an afternoon entertainment; they are merely good for filling the lesson when everybody is tired. The serious problem with this opinion is that it assumes students to be "passive viewers" in the lesson (Braddock, 1996). However, when used appropriately, broadcasting a movie in an English lesson is never merely a passive process.

According to most trainers, educators, experts (King, 2002; Kusumarasdyati, 2004; Mekheimer, 2011; Rammal, 2005), and even students, the use of films in the EFL classroom has numerous advantages as films are the best tools for developing listening skills. A great number of experts, university professors, teachers, and teacher trainers have investigated this area and conducted a lot of research (Cross, 2011; King, 2002; Mekheimer, 2011; Rammal, 2005; Stempelski, 2000) in this field providing language pedagogy with a wide range of interesting data, results, and materials as well. The vast majority agrees that films are worth using in a language learning environment. Nowadays, this widely held belief already counts as a cliché among EFL learners and teachers, as some general truth that does not have to be proven. Nevertheless, even these people are not always really aware of the exact benefits of films; it is not an easy task to tell what it is actually that makes films such an essential material in a language lesson. Therefore, in the next paragraph, the merits of this multimedia resource are summarized and fortified with arguments of experts and researchers.

The Advantages of Films in the EFL Classroom

There is no doubt that films "*provide more pedagogical options and are a rich resource of intrinsically motivating materials for learners*" (King, 2002:1). Firstly, the most important and popular advantage of foreign films in the EFL classroom is their authenticity. Language is presented in everyday conversational settings, "*in real life contexts rather than artificial situations*" (King, 2002:2). Moreover, films also provide a good opportunity to get to know other dialects of English different from the Standard – colloquial English, slang, or reduced speech (King, 2002). Furthermore, children can also gain knowledge about the different segments of speech such as stress, accent, or intonation. Another important advantage of this medium is that it is also an excellent tool "*for displaying the ways people live and behave in a foreign culture*" (Braddock, 1996:3). A further benefit of foreign films is that they do not only present authentic linguistic material but they also provide students with paralinguistic features such as facial expressions and gestures from which they can also benefit in communicative situations (King, 2002; Kusumarasdyati, 2004; Rammal, 2005). However, there is a further benefit of the film medium that is not very commonly communicated; on the contrary, this is something that people against films

344

believe this medium lacks, namely, imagination. Nevertheless, it is demonstrated that films "*to a large extent [assist] in stimulating the imaginative capability of the young minds*" (Kusumarasdyati, 2004:4). Finally, the most obvious fact about films in the classroom is that they "*offer […] a nice big motivating push*" (Louw, n.d.:1). When used appropriately, the watching of English films in an EFL classroom can result in a "*special experience of real feelings of accomplishment when [students] understand what is going on in a situation where native speakers use English*" (Rammal, 2005:5).

Research Design and Method
Rationale for Research

As we can see, there has been a great number of researchers, experts, and educators investigating the effects of the television medium on children and adolescents and the use of television programmes in the EFL classroom. The findings include the motivation of students, the authenticity of the language encountered, the chance of listening to dialects different from the Standard, inspecting a different culture, and gaining knowledge about the paralinguistic and suprasegmental features of the language. However, as far as skills development is concerned, we can see from the above findings that research has mostly concentrated on the receptive skills – especially listening. Nevertheless, my hypothesis is that films are good for everything – they are not only suitable for developing receptive skills, but they are also excellent tools for the improvement of the productive skills. Therefore, in the present study, I would like to investigate all the four skills.

Approach

The present paper aims at finding answers to the above mentioned research question and verifying or refuting the hypothesis that films are suitable for improving all the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Resulting from the breadth of this topic and me being the only instrument of collecting and analysing data, it is clear that a quantitative study would not have been possible in this case. Consequently, I decided to carry out a qualitative research study relying on my personal observations and exhausting such benefits as the easy access to the individuals being observed, the richness of the information gained from the procedure, the possibility of spending "*significant amounts of time in the environment of those being studied*" and the preference of words instead of numbers when it comes to analysing data (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:8). Therefore, one particular film was chosen and used throughout the whole research, whereas the opportunities hidden in this single film were attempted to exploit.

Methods of Data Collection

In the present paper, students' skills development is measured in order to answer the above mentioned research question and find out whether my hypothesis – namely, that a feature film can be an excellent tool for aiding the development of all four skills – is true or not. As the most appropriate way of measuring students' abilities is letting them perform certain activities and assessing them based on that, in the present research it is students' performance on the given tasks that counts as data. Therefore, the main tool of collecting relevant data was observation. As I was the only instrument for

collecting information, my method of data collection was "*participant observation*", *which means that "a researcher may interact with participants and become part of their community*" (Driscoll, 2011:160). Thus, sixteen students were observed by me while teaching them during nine consecutive English lessons at a secondary school carrying out different tasks before, while, and after the whole film-viewing procedure. I always noted down what I had observed immediately after the lessons based on a self-made data-gathering worksheet concentrating on students' skills development in order to find answers to my research question.

Apart from collecting data from observation, students also filled in a qualitative questionnaire with open-ended questions – thus enabling a freedom of response – at the end of the film-viewing sessions sharing some information about their own preferences and personal opinions about their own development. On the one hand, this qualitative questionnaire aimed at getting feedback from students about the whole movie watching process and finding out whether they enjoyed watching this film, thus enabling to draw conclusions regarding their motivation. On the other hand, the questionnaire was supposed to facilitate answering my research question since there were questions about what skills students think watching films can be useful for or in which skills students feel improvement.

Setting, Participants

The present research was carried out in a secondary school of fine arts located in the centre of Budapest, Hungary. The participants of the research were a group of sixteen eleventh-graders, four boys and twelve girls, whom I was teaching during my teaching practice in the autumn semester of the year 2012. The group was homogenous from several points-of-view: They had been admitted to this group based on a placement test at the beginning of the first year, so they were at the same level, namely, intermediate. Moreover, as they attended this particular school of fine arts, they had a special interest in arts such as painting, photography, fancy-leather goods, glaziery, or textile manufacture. Besides, they belonged to the same age group, that of seventeen-year-olds.

Materials

Going through the basic steps of selecting the appropriate movie based on the selection criteria according to Braddock (1996), King (2002), and Voller and Widdows (1993), I chose the film "Mickey Blue Eyes" from the year of 1999, starring Hugh Grant and James Caan, directed by Kelly Makin. This film is a comedy and is about a British auctioneer, Michael, who wants to marry the daughter of a mobster and who therefore gets involved in the mafia business. Regarding this film is a comedy, no wonder that Michael finds himself in numerous absurd but at the same time entertaining situations– at least for the viewers.

Procedures

1. *Previewing section.* In the previewing section – which lasted two forty-five-minute-long sessions – the focus was on "introducing the movie and preteaching the key vocabulary", "*helping the learners build the appropriate schemata to facilitate comprehension*" (Kusumarasdyati, 2004:5) as well as "*[acquainting] students with the material that they are going to view and [facilitating] easier and better comprehension*" (Rammal, 2005:6). As far as the development of skills is concerned, the focus in this section was on writing and speaking. At first, students were divided into groups of four and were asked to write different stories, but in an unusual way: The two main characters of the film "Mickey Blue Eyes" were introduced to them and the first sentence from their story was given. After this, they were asked to pick different genres such as 'horror', 'science fiction', 'soup opera', and 'fantasy' according to which they had to write the story. They even got further characters from the film as well as several words to include in their stories, too. The emphasis of this exercise was on writing – within that, a product approach was adapted, "*i.e. an approach which values the construction of the end-product as the main thing to be focused on (rather than the process of writing itself)*" (Harmer, 2007:325). Therefore, little emphasis was laid on such concepts as grammar, spelling, or punctuation – the focus was on coherence and cohesion instead. This type of writing can be considered creative writing since it requires imagination on the one hand, as well as cooperative writing on the other hand. Thus, speaking was also in the centre of the previewing section as students needed to negotiate verbally while writing the stories within their groups as well as they told their stories to their peers afterwards, developing their strategic and discourse competence through using conversational strategies. Furthermore, they also expressed their main ideas about the topics of the movie – including gaining a new family through marriage, art, art galleries, auctions as well as students' expectations about the real outcome of the plot – besides, the key vocabulary of the film was also discussed. Therefore, the speaking events in the previewing section were mostly interactive and unplanned and they had a transactional function (Harmer, 2007).

2. *While-viewing section.* Whereas in the previewing section the focus was mainly on the productive skills, in the while-viewing section – which lasted four forty-five-minute-long lessons – the emphasis was laid on the receptive skills. Students were listening to the film and reading the subtitles while watching it, which can be considered a combination of extensive and intensive listening and reading procedures since it was aimed at students' "general language improvement" whereas some "pleasure" was present as well; besides, it was also "teacher-chosen and directed" and aimed at improving "*specific receptive skills such as reading [and listening] for gist*" (Harmer, 2007:283). The while-viewing section consisted mainly of general listening comprehension tasks measuring students' general understanding of the plot as well as some tasks focusing on vocabulary. The worksheets were usually handed out beforehand so that students were able to read through the questions before answering them. When answering the comprehension questions, speaking was in the centre as the majority of the exercises were done in "buzz groups" (Harmer, 2007:350).

In the first section, students were asked to name the main characters of the story and then answered general listening comprehension questions connected to the main plot. The aim of these questions was to develop students' skill of listening for gist as well as to clarify what they had just saw, thus aiding their further understanding of the movie. At the end of

section one, students read a quotation from the movie – a dialogue explaining how the mafia "works" – that they had to analyse and discuss, thus developing their skills of reading for detailed comprehension and reading for inference (Harmer, 2007), which aimed at aiding their understanding of the continuation of the film. After this, students were encouraged to predict in buzz groups how the story would continue, which aimed at developing their general oral fluency, prediction skills as well as their use of conversational strategies.

The second section opened with a vocabulary question – What does 'orphan' mean? – and the discussion of a quotation aimed at developing the skill of reading for inference. Then students discussed a quotation from the film, thus practising conversational strategies and expressing personal opinions. This was followed by questions aimed at listening for gist (e.g., "Did Gina kill Johnny on purpose? What happened exactly?") and listening for specific information (e.g., "What is the name of the auction house where Michael works?"). The section ended with another quotation in order to help students understand a certain term – money laundering – thus practising reading for detailed comprehension.

The third section consisted of some general listening comprehension questions as well as a summary of a ten-minute-long part from the movie as it had to be left out from the listening process due to lack of time. The purpose of this reading part was, on the one hand, to save time in the lesson and, on the other hand, to inform students about what happened in the film meanwhile, thus developing their reading for gist.

Before section four, the key vocabulary of the next part of the film was discussed in order to develop students' vocabulary and aid comprehension. Then, the section closed with general comprehension questions as well as two quotations. The quotations aimed at reading for detailed comprehension since their content was crucial for understanding the forthcoming actions and they therefore aided students' comprehension of the plot.

The fifth section included comprehension questions promoting listening for gist and listening for specific information as well as the discussion of a quotation from the wedding speech that aimed at reading for inference. The section was closed with another quotation that can be seen as an explanation of the outcome of the movie, thus helping students get a clear picture about the plot.

3. *Post-viewing section.* After finishing the watching of the film, the focus was mainly on speaking, reading, and writing in the post-viewing section, which lasted three forty-five-minute-long lessons. The first lesson of the post-viewing section consisted mainly of discussions about the film and about film reviews, whereas the function of the speaking events was the same as in the previewing section. Students told their opinion about the movie – what parts they liked and what they did not – which was followed by reading and discussing instructions about how to write a movie review. This lesson aimed at oral fluency, conversational strategies as well as reading for specific information.

The second lesson of the post-viewing section concentrated mainly on reading sample reviews as students' task was to analyse reviews and define certain parts of them based on the instructions they read. This process contributed to their extension of genre-specific knowledge and to the development of the specific skill of scanning as well as oral fluency since the task was carried out in buzz groups.

In the last part of this section, the focus was on "*building the writing habit*" (Harmer, 2007:329), which was again a cooperative process focusing partly on the end product – students wrote movie reviews in groups of three.

348

However, as a process approach was advocated to writing this time, it was the writing process itself which was in the centre – more emphasis was laid on the organisation and vocabulary as students had been taught the necessary steps that should be taken when writing a film review and they had already read some sample reviews. This process promoted a "genre approach" as well since students had to write a certain type of text in a specific genre, while having the appropriate "*knowledge of the topic*" and being taught "*the conventions and style of the genre*" (Harmer, 2007:327). As a closure of the film-watching sessions, students were asked to fill in the qualitative questionnaires.

Methods of Data Analysis

After gathering ample information from the observations and the survey, the analysis of everything that I have gathered was carried out. Firstly, I read through, made sense of, and reflected on the notes I took immediately after the lessons and the written responses students gave to my survey questions. Secondly, I divided the data into categories according to the four skills, which were also further divided into other groups. Being a visual type of learner myself, I used the colour-coding method for grouping the information which refers to the underlining of certain parts of a written text with different colours, each representing a different topic – skill in this case.

Quality of Research

Although having a great number of benefits as described above in the Approach section, qualitative research has some drawbacks concerning validity, reliability and generalizability. Given the uniqueness of the situation that the research is conducted in, it is extremely hard to replicate qualitative research as it investigates participants in a context that is special and that is constantly changing. Therefore, it "*has been argued that single qualitative studies cannot provide grounds for generalising across cases*" (Woods & Pratt, 2006:19). Furthermore, there is a risk of providing own judgements instead of objective facts (Woods & Pratt, 2006). Nevertheless, this is the only way to examine entirely how participants behave and interact in certain situations. Therefore, I attempted to make my research valid and reliable through the careful choice of exercises and activities while watching the film, laying emphasis on both face validity and content validity when preparing tasks, making instructions as clear as possible and trying to restrict my observations to what I can see and separate it from what I think is going on.

Limitations

Conducting the research in a public educational institution, I had to cope with several kinds of limitations during the film-watching process. Firstly, I had to take the course syllabus into consideration when deciding when and how long to do my film-project, which was not an easy task. Nevertheless, I still managed to find the right place and time for my research, which then had to be discussed and agreed upon with my mentor teacher. However, as the group I was teaching had to achieve the school-leaving certificate at the end of the school-year, there were plenty of materials that had to be taught to prepare them for the school-leaving examination. Therefore, I did not have much time to spend on my study – I had to keep it as short as possible. As a

consequence of this, it was not possible to test a wide range tasks and task types, although I had a number of interesting ideas to try out.

Results and Discussion

After collecting the data, the analysis of the collected information was carried out. Using the colour-coding method, I managed to identify seven categories around which I was able to group my notes and the students' answers. The categories are the following: listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, level of difficulty, and behaviour/feelings/attitudes. The first four categories are connected to the four skills; therefore, they are in the centre of the present study investigating skills development. However, the last three categories – vocabulary, level of difficulty, behaviour/feelings/attitudes – cannot be neglected either as they have a strong connection to all four skills. Vocabulary might be considered to be above all the other categories as it is crucial in every part of the language learning process – when reading or writing as well as listening and speaking. Besides, all these processes have a certain 'level of difficulty'. Moreover, students' feelings and attitudes manifest themselves in their behaviour and their listening, speaking, reading, or writing activities. As a consequence of this, it can be clearly seen that these groups of statements connected to 'vocabulary', 'level of difficulty', and 'behaviour/feelings/attitudes' are not equal to the categories of skills. Therefore, in the present research they are going to be embedded in the other four categories and analysed and discussed accordingly. At the beginning, the collected data and the results of the analysis are presented in four groups, namely, based on the four skills. After this, the research question – namely, which skills can be developed with the help of films – is investigated and attempted to answer along with testing my hypothesis.

Listening

1. *The data*. Since the whole process of film watching means mainly listening to what characters say, there were plenty of occasions when students could be observed engaging in a listening activity. However, the process of listening is not observable as our thought processes are invisible – therefore, only students' behaviour and reactions could be observed and noted down as well as their answers to the listening comprehension questions. My observation notes consisted mainly of commenting on students' reactions to certain scenes of the film and noting whether they understood what was going on.

In the previewing section as well as in the post-viewing section, the focus was not on listening. However, the while-viewing section was mostly dedicated to this skill. While watching the film, students were constantly smiling and laughing. When it came to the discussions between the viewing sections, students could answer the listening comprehension questions quite well. In the first three viewing sections, students answered the comprehension questions checking their overall understanding with ease – there were only minor misunderstandings connected to the details, but the main plot was clear. Understanding the last two sections was more difficult for all of them; however, after the discussions, most of them managed to make intelligent guesses about the unknown parts.

Upon asking for the development of which skills watching films is good for, 14 out of 15 students answered that is was listening – along with other

350

skills as well. When asked whether they found understanding the film difficult, 4 students said that it was difficult, 6 students stated that it was "not very" difficult or "medium", and 5 students stated that the film was not difficult to understand. 11 students commented that the exercises and discussions helped them to understand the plot. 9 students stated that they felt some improvement in their listening skills, one of them wrote that it was their vocabulary which improved, another student felt improvement in their pronunciation.

2. *Results of the analysis, discussion*. As there were several limitations to conducting the present research concerning time constraints, it is impossible to draw far-reaching conclusions from this single study. However, it is possible to judge the development of which abilities the listening process was suitable for, whether there was a possibility of improvement in it, and to what results it has lead.

The benefits of using films could be clearly experienced during the research as this film provided authentic language, visual support, and cultural context indeed; moreover, its motivating effect on students could clearly be observed as most of them stated that they enjoyed the movie and participated in the lessons actively – as acknowledged by a number of researchers and educators (Braddock, 1996; Harmer, 2007; King, 2002; Mekheimer, 2011; Stempelski, 2000; Voller & Widdows, 1993). However, as already discussed above, it is hard and risky to make judgements about students' thought processes because of their being unobservable. Nevertheless, there were some phenomena that could be observed, namely, that students developed a certain tolerance of ambiguity when listening to the movie. Although there were lots of words that they did not know and therefore some scenes that they did not fully understand, students did not show symptoms of being threatened and they were able to overcome the situation, which was proven by the fact that the vast majority of them answered the listening comprehension questions referring to the general understanding of the plot correctly. In addition, they also improved in certain listening strategies such as making intelligent guesses from the context and inferring meaning from visual clues, facial expressions, and other sounds, which findings are consistent with prior research in this field (King, 2002; Mekheimer, 2011; Rammal, 2005). The listening activity can therefore be viewed as an active process as students constructed meaning from the utterances, using the top-down processing since they got "*a general view of the […] listening passage by, in some way, absorbing the overall picture*" (Harmer, 2007:270).

Reading

1. *The data*. Since 'Mickey Blue Eyes' was broadcast with subtitles, reading did not only take place in the post-viewing section but throughout the whole process of watching the film – engaging students thus in a mixture of intensive and extensive reading activities as well. Whereas the former involves a directed process aimed at developing specific receptive skills, the latter refers to reading "*for pleasure and general language improvement*" as defined by Harmer (2007:283). However, as the process of reading subtitles while watching a movie is not observable either, there were not many comments about this in my observation notes. Nevertheless, I observed that students were writing down some words from the film in their notebooks, which lead me to the conclusion that they were reading the subtitles and copying from the written text as they knew how to spell them. During the watching process, there was constant smiling and laughing in the classroom.

Upon asking for the development of which skills they think watching films is good for, 8 out of 15 students wrote that it was reading along with other skills – usually listening. However, only three students wrote that they felt development in their reading skills. Besides, there were also reading sections and some comprehension exercises in the while-viewing and post-viewing sections containing the reading of quotations, the summary of a scene, and sample reviews. During the reading of quotations and the summary, students were engaged in the process and asked several questions connected to the texts – mainly about vocabulary. While reading the sample reviews, students did not ask much, only some minor questions.

2. *Results of the analysis, discussion.* Apart from extensive listening, watching the movie also meant an extensive reading activity as students were reading the subtitles. The benefit of developing a high tolerance of ambiguity applies to this field as well – students were exposed to lots of unknown words when reading the subtitles; however, it did not deprive them of understanding the gist. Interestingly, a comparison can be made here between this reading process and the process of reading the summary of one short part from the movie. After the third viewing section, an approximately ten-minute-long part from the movie had to be left out due to lack of time. Therefore, students had to read what happened in this part – a traditional type of reading was going on without any visual clues. When reading the summary, there were some things that students did not understand as the plot became a bit complicated; however, they did not behave the same way as during the watching of the film. They wanted to know every word and asked me about their meaning; moreover, some students even asked for the Hungarian equivalents of some words. This can be considered as a result of the lack of sound and picture. Therefore, it can be concluded that reading combined with sounds and pictures – as in the case of watching a film and reading its subtitles – is more effective than the traditional way of reading.

However, there was another "traditional reading" process in the post-viewing section, which also can be compared to the other two types of reading during the research, namely, reading subtitles and reading the summary of one part of the film. As students' final task was to write movie reviews, they had to read some sample reviews before doing so. This can be again considered a traditional way of reading as the samples were printed on the handouts – they were not illustrated by pictures or sounds. The same way as in the other two reading sections, there were also a lot of unknown words; however, students did not ask the meaning of certain words or their Hungarian equivalents as they did during the reading of the summary. On the contrary, they behaved as in the watching process when they were reading the subtitles – they succeeded in understanding the gist. This can result from several factors such as the difference in the purpose of reading or in the level of difficulty of the texts; however, this phenomenon might also have resulted from students being accustomed to ambiguity during the process of film watching. Nevertheless, it is clear that students developed in using reading strategies such as guessing and inferring meaning from the context or reading for gist – also called "skimming" (Harmer, 2007:283) – during the film-watching process. However, there was also some development identified in other types of reading during the reading of samples, quotations, or the summary, namely, reading for specific information – also called "scanning" (Harmer, 2007:283) – or reading for detailed comprehension.

Speaking

1. *The data*. Designing the whole process of watching the film as an alternation of viewing sections and discussion parts among them, there were numerous opportunities for students to speak. Therefore, the greatest part of my observation notes centres around students' speaking activities. In the story-writing part of the previewing section as well as the review-writing part of the post-viewing section – though writing was intended to be in the centre – there was a lot of speaking going on as students were thinking and gathering ideas together in buzz groups. However, they were mostly using Hungarian and switched to English only when I approached. During the pre-teaching of key vocabulary and the brainstorm part, there was a lot of speaking going on – students were sharing their ideas about the continuation of the movie with ease, providing thus a fluent – yet not accurate – speech delivery. During the while-viewing section – in the in-between parts among the viewing sections – there were a lot of unplanned, interactive speaking events mostly of transactional function. At the beginning, students – when struggling with re-telling what happened – occasionally used Hungarian, which phenomenon later gradually disappeared. In addition, students were sometimes speaking even during the film when guessing what was going to happen or expressing their feelings, saying their immediate reactions or practising gangster-pronunciation along with Hugh Grant. Moreover, as far as vocabulary is concerned, most students used the newly acquired words correctly. Upon asking the development of which skills students think watching English films is useful for, 8 out of 15 students answered that it was speaking along with other skills, usually listening. However, when asked which skills they developed in, only five students wrote that their speaking skills improved along with other skills, usually listening. Out of these, one student explicitly mentioned pronunciation. Moreover, one student also mentioned that they felt improvement in their vocabulary, which is – among other skills as well – connected to speaking.

2. *Results of the analysis, discussion*. As there were numerous speaking events during the present research, it is clear that students were able to practise this skill during the lessons. As the speaking events were mainly interactional and took place mostly in buzz groups, great emphasis was laid on conversational strategies – students improved in the use of strategies of turn taking, buying time, starting turns, interrupting, or marking the beginning or the end of a segment. Moreover, they also expressed their thoughts about several scenes and topics during the discussion parts. When encouraged to express personal opinions, students were speaking much more than in connection with the usual comprehension tasks. However, it was clearly observable that they were speaking the most when facing exercises that required some degree of creativity – such as the story-writing section in the previewing part – and where they had to make predictions – such as predicting how the movie would continue after the first section of the while-viewing part – as stated by Kusumarasdyati (2004), Louw (n. d.), and Voller and Widdows (1993). This phenomenon can be explained as a result of the motivating force of tasks requiring imagination and feelings as stated by Harmer (2007), Kusumarasdyati (2004), and Rammal (2005). Nevertheless, a clear difference was noticed between students' speaking activities at the beginning and at the end of the film-watching process. Whereas at the beginning students frequently asked for English words and sometimes even wanted to use Hungarian – a common problem in the language classroom as stated by Ur (1991) – when they wanted to retell what they saw, the proportion of their use of Hungarian and their vocabulary-questions

gradually decreased. This development in fluency might be a result of the fact that students were exposed to authentic language during the watching process and therefore acquired "*more words and greater schematic knowledge which […], in turn, [resolved] many of the language difficulties they started out with*" (Harmer, 2007:273).

Writing

1. *The data*. During the process of watching the movie "Mickey Blue Eyes", writing processes took place mostly in the pre-viewing and post-viewing sections. In the pre-viewing section, students wrote different types of stories in different genres in groups of four. This task built upon students' creativity, which resulted in them being carried away by their imagination. As they were thinking in Hungarian – some students even wanted to write down their immediate ideas in their mother tongue – several students were struggling with writing the story in English. They frequently used the dictionary or asked for English words. However, the atmosphere in the class during the story-writing process – being a creative and cooperative type of writing at the same time – was good; students were constantly speaking and laughing and everybody took part in the making up of the story actively. However, the results of this process can hardly be considered high-quality products as there were numerous mistakes in them; besides, the organization of the texts was of poor quality as well. Nevertheless, the main plot was understandable – it could be clearly figured out what students wanted to express.

In the post-viewing section, the writing process was similar to the previewing part – namely, that it was cooperative – however, the focus was on the process rather than on the product this time. Students were given more information about how to write a review as well as they were taught several devices of cohesion and coherence along with information about the construction of longer texts, thus encouraging them to pay attention to the details of text production such as organization, coherence and cohesion, and even grammar. Therefore, the writing process was much slower and it seemed to be more difficult for them. When asked which skills they think watching films is useful for, five students mentioned writing.

2. *Results of the analysis, discussion*. Although writing was present throughout every lesson, when analysing the data, I concentrated mainly on the two most important writing events, namely, writing stories in the previewing section and writing reviews in the post-viewing section. Although the writing processes themselves seemed to be quite similar – students working in groups and thinking and collecting ideas together – there were a number of differences between them, which could be clearly seen in students' end-products. Whereas they produced funny stories full of mistakes and lacking organization in the pre-viewing section, they succeeded in composing valuable pieces of writing that were well-organized in the post-viewing section.

This raises an interesting question, namely, what caused this development. In the previewing part, students faced a creative writing task that built on their imagination and that was therefore extremely motivating for them; moreover, a certain sense of achievement and "product pride" could be detected since they seemed to be eager to tell their stories to their peers as stated by Harmer (2007) and Ur (1991). Although they did not manage to produce high-quality pieces of writing, this process seemed to have some benefits. Upon asking my mentor teacher, it turned out that these students were not really accustomed to writing longer texts, especially not in

the classroom. For this reason, this writing section can be viewed as a first step to develop this skill. The aim was that students "*build the writing habit so that they recognise writing as being a normal part of classroom practice and [that] they come to writing tasks with as much enthusiasm as they do other activities*" (Harmer, 2007:329). This goal was probably achieved since students seemed to be enjoying this task; moreover, they even asked whether they could take it home and finish it. In the post-viewing section, the level of enthusiasm did not reach that of the previewing section; however, the end products were of much higher standard. This may have resulted from the fact that students had already got used to the process of writing in the pre-viewing section as already mentioned above. Moreover, they had received more information about how they should write reviews as well as they had read several samples of the genre beforehand. In addition, they succeeded in looking up words in the dictionary and using the newly acquired devices of coherence and cohesion correctly as well as applying the rules of preparing a text in a specific genre, thus identifying genre features. Therefore, it can be concluded that students' writing skills developed during the movie-watching sessions.

The Research Question: Which skills can be developed with the help of films?

Before answering this question, the limitations of the present research have to be referred to again emphasizing the fact that the results can hardly be generalized and one cannot draw far-reaching conclusions from this single study. Although the research was neither a long-lasting one, nor did it involve a control group, a development in each skill could be identified and observed even within this short period of time in this single group of students. Consequently, the answer to this question is that every skill can be developed with the help of films. Students can benefit from the use of feature films in the classroom not only in terms of the receptive skills as is widely believed, but also regarding their productive skills since "*much language production work grows out of texts that students see or hear*" (Harmer, 2007:267). The findings of the present small-scale research verify that my main hypothesis – namely, that one can develop all four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing with the help of films – is confirmed as well.

Conclusion

The present paper aimed at investigating the field of skills development with the help of films in the EFL classroom and therefore answering the research question "Which skills can be developed with the help of films?". The findings of the research gave evidence about the fact that all four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing can be developed with using feature films in the English classroom.

Pedagogical Implications

Along with existing studies within the field of using films in English Language Teaching, the present paper provided evidence of the fact that the use of films can be indeed beneficial for an English classroom. However, this means a lot of extra work for a teacher since the preparation of a single film is extremely time-consuming. Nevertheless, films are worth dealing with in a language classroom due to their numerous benefits as discussed in the present study. Therefore, films should be used constantly in language teaching and they should not be considered mere sources of entertainment – and therefore a waste of time in a lesson – anymore. It is important to emphasize that films are beneficial for the whole language learning process across all the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Therefore, when incorporating a film in the teaching process, it is crucial to take an integrative approach to teaching. Moreover, a careful selection of the film and finding a sensible way of working on it relying on interactive, cooperative, and imaginative tasks are also essential to the success of films as useful and effective media.

Suggestions for Further Research

On the basis of the findings of the present study and the pedagogical implications, several suggestions for further research arise. Since the focus of this research was on language skills, there is a need to explore how films can be used concentrating exclusively on certain sub-skills and abilities such as conversational strategies, vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation. Furthermore, it should also be investigated whether films can be used in language testing, how this could be carried out and how valid and reliable such a type of testing might be. In addition, since the watching of films is a combination of listening to words and seeing visual clues, there is a research need to investigate the effects of the two separately – whether it is the visuals or the heard text that is more important for a learner when understanding a film. As we can see, the television medium – along with films – can be an interesting source of making an English lesson more colourful and effective at the same time and it therefore raises several interesting ideas for future research that could be useful and worth conducting.

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