The Effect of Films With and Without Subtitles on Listening Comprehension of EFL Intermediate Students

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of using films with and/or without subtitles on intermediate EFL students' listening comprehension. A total of 90 intermediate Junior and Senior students who passed their listening and speaking 4 with the grade of at least 12, already were picked out of 200 ones based on a proficiency test in this study. The material consisted of six episodes (34 min.) of a DVD entitled as "Wild Weather". The students viewed only one of the three treatment conditions: English subtitles, Persian subtitles, or no subtitles. After each viewing sessions, six sets of multiple-choice tests were administered to examine listening comprehension rates. The results revealed that the English subtitles group performed at a considerably higher level than the Persian subtitles group, which in turn performed at a substantially higher level than the no subtitle group on the listening test.
INTRODUCTION

With the increasing access to TV, video equipment and more recently, the computers, teachers have found more opportunities to use audio-visual materials at all levels of foreign language teaching, and they have frequently used them effectively in language classes (Kikuchi, 1997, p. 2; Canning-Wilson, 2000; Kothari, Pandey, & Chudgar, 2004; Lewis & Anping, 2002; Meskull, 1996; Ryan, 1998; Weyer, 1999). In the same line, Richards and Gordon (2004, p. 2) maintain that video, as a medium, enables learners to use visual information to enhance comprehension. It allows learners to observe the gestures, facial expressions and other aspects of body language that accompany speech. It also presents authentic language as well as cultural information about speakers of English.

Accordingly, although studies have shown that “both target-language captions and native-language subtitles were anathema to developing listening comprehension” (Robin, 2007, p. 111), more and more English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers have begun, in recent years, to use movies in their classes at different levels. But what has unfairly remained unresolved is the use of subtitles in movies. They are sometimes in dilemma whether they should show a film with or without subtitles and in what language and, above all, which way will benefit their students most in relation to listening comprehension.

A huge gap is observed between the use of subtitled films and listening comprehension in academic settings in Iran, too. In order to bridge this gap, the researchers have taken up this issue to conduct a study in order to determine the role of un/subtitled films in language learning/teaching in the Iranian contexts and find out which of the following is likely to be more effective in developing listening comprehension: bimodal subtitling (English subtitles with English dialogues), standard subtitling (Persian subtitles with English dialogues) and English dialogues with no subtitle.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to examine the efficacy of films with three different conditions on listening comprehension, the following questions are posed;

1. Do films with English subtitles help EFL students improve their listening comprehension more than films with Persian or without subtitles?

2. Do films with Persian subtitles help EFL students improve their listening comprehension more than films with English or without subtitles?

3. Do films without subtitles help EFL students improve their listening comprehension more than films with Persian or English subtitles?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

To answer the above questions, the following hypotheses are generated:

1. The video programs with English subtitles will help EFL students improve their listening comprehension more than films with Persian subtitles or without subtitles.

2. The video programs with Persian subtitles will help EFL students improve their listening comprehension more than films with English subtitles or without subtitles.
3. The video programs without subtitles will help EFL students improve their listening comprehension more than films with either Persian or English subtitles.

4. There is no significant difference among the efficacy of films with English subtitles, Persian subtitles and without subtitles on listening comprehension.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

One study over an 11-week period involved grades 5 and 6 Canadian pupils who had attended a French immersion program since kindergarten. The results of the tests which measured phrase form, contextual meaning, and comprehension demonstrated that captioning increased in effectiveness through time (Holobow, Lambert & Sayegh, 1984, p. 63).

Anecdotal reports of incongruities and discrepancies between the spoken and written texts support the notion that both channels can be processed simultaneously. But to go beyond anecdotal evidence of attention to both sources of input, a group of researchers set up a news program with subtitles occasionally deviating from speech on the phonological, grammatical, lexical, or informational levels (De Bot, Jagt, Janssen, Kessels & Schills, 1986). Two groups of subjects, 50 secondary school pupils teaming English at school, and 20 advanced university students who were no longer studying English, watched this program in English with subtitles in their native Dutch language. The subjects responded to a multiple-choice test about each news item, with questions equally divided between deviations and non-deviations. The results disproved the notion of exclusive subtitle orientation and showed that all viewers made use of the audio input, although this particular experiment was unable to quantify the extent of teaming directly resulting from the spoken text.

Markham (1989) investigated the effects of subtitled TV upon the listening comprehension of beginner, intermediate and advanced learners of English. He used two subtitled videos on topics not known to the learners. Each group viewed both with and without subtitle movies. He measured the participants' comprehension through multiple-choice questions based on the language of the video. Coming to a point where all three groups using the subtitles performed significantly better, he speculated that ESL (English as a Second Language) students might be able to improve their listening and reading comprehension at the same time.

In a study, Garza (1991) compared Russian and ESL learners' comprehension of video segments with second language captions to that of video segments without captions. Five segments of authentic American and Russian video, each between two and four minutes in length, were selected. Each segment depicted a particular genre of video (drama, comedy, news, animation, and music). A 10-item (multiple choice) comprehension test was used to measure students' comprehension of the video segments. A total of 140 students, with varying levels of proficiency in Russian, viewed the captioned or caption-less Russian video segments. Comparison of the comprehension test scores of the two groups of students revealed that students who viewed the video segments with captions gained the highest scores. Garza's data clearly showed that a textually enhanced visual channel, which presents information redundant to that presented, by the auditory channel facilitates students' comprehension.
In their study, Neuman & Koskinen (1992) investigated whether comprehensible input, delivered by captioned-television programs, affected the acquisition of vocabulary and of conceptual knowledge. The subjects were children in immersion programs and the video material was of science lessons. They picked out 90 of the most difficult words from these video lessons as target words, 10 for each week. Subjects were assigned to one of four treatment groups: captioned TV, TV without captions, reading along and listening to the sound track, and reading only. Results for the vocabulary acquisition strand of their study, which used word recognition tests and tests of the words in context sentences, showed that the captioned TV group performed consistently better.

Danan (1992) investigated the effects of different subtitling conditions on vocabulary recall. She found, like Holobow, et al. (1984) that reversed subtitling produced the most favorable results, but that bimodal input also positively increased vocabulary recall. The results also showed benefits for beginners using such bimodal input which was not the case in the Holobow, et al.'s (1984) study.

Brett (1995) in favor of subtitles explains that subtitles may unlock speech and enable input to be made more comprehensible, help to lower listeners' affective filters and provide a way into accents and dialects. That learners can adjust comprehensibility means individuals can tailor their own receptive capacities with the input and perhaps more readily convert input into intake. Subtitles can also be used in conjunction with the task feedback to put the learner in control of explanations and reasons. This enables and encourages the learner to explore and discover why the answers to tasks are what they are.

Automatic reading of subtitles, however, does not prevent the processing of the soundtrack. To demonstrate this point, d’Ydewalle and Pavakanum (1997, as cited in Kothari et al. 2005, p. 29) carried out another group of cognitive experiments and relied on a double task technique measuring reaction times to a flashing light during a television program. The slower reactions in the presence of both sound and subtitles suggested that more complex, simultaneous processing of the soundtrack and the subtitles was occurring. According to them with both subtitles and sound, attention seemed in fact to be divided between the two according to the viewers’ needs, with more time usually devoted to subtitles for the processing of complex information.

One study by Koostra & Beentjes (1999) focused on 246 Dutch children in grade 4 (before any formal instruction in English) and grade 6 (following one year of English at school), after they watched a 15-minute American documentary shown twice with or without subtitles. This study demonstrated that children acquired more English vocabulary from watching subtitled television, although even children in the condition without subtitles learned some new words. Children in the subtitled condition also performed significantly better on a word recognition test, consisting of words heard in the soundtrack and words that could have been used in the context of the particular program.

To examine the effect of captioning on aural word recognition skills, Markham (1999) designed another experiment involving multiple-choice tests administered orally. 118 advanced ESL students watched two short video programs (12 and 13 minutes respectively) with or without captions. In the subsequent listening tests, subjects heard sentences directly taken from the script and immediately followed by four single words (one key word which belonged to a sentence just heard and three distracters). The tests showed that the availability of subtitles during the screening significantly improved the students’ ability to identify the key words when they subsequently heard them again.
To test how subtitling affects listening ability regardless of semantic information, so as to assess recognition memory in relation to sound alone, Bird and Williams (2002) focused on the implicit and explicit learning of spoken words and non-words. Implicit learning pertained to auditory word recognition, while explicit learning referred to the intentional recollection and conscious retention of aural stimuli. A first experiment with 16 English native and 16 advanced normative speakers demonstrated that subjects in the captioned condition were better able to implicitly retain the phonological information they had just processed. They also showed superior explicit recognition memory when asked to aurally identify words that had been presented in a previous phase. A second experiment with 24 advanced ESL students found that captioning had a beneficial effect on word recognition and implicit learning of non-word targets paired with two rhyming and two non-rhyming aural cues, especially in the rhyme condition.

In all, various studies have demonstrated the positive effects of subtitling on productive skills such as verbatim recall and retention, reuse of vocabulary in the proper context, as well as communicative performance in specific oral and written communication tasks (Vanderplank, 1988, 1990; Baltova, 1999; Garza, 1991; Borras & Lafayette, 1994; Neuman & Koskinen, 1992). However, while interest in subtitled materials is relatively growing, research in this field is still limited in Iran compared to those in other countries. In fact, the link between the availability of subtitles and listening comprehension seems to be missing in the Persian instructional setting and it needs to be searched for by a systematic study. Moreover, since the main objection to the pedagogical use of subtitles stems from the perception that they hinder the development of receptive skills, the main goal of the present research is to examine whether captions and subtitles can also improve listening comprehension. More importantly, it is hoped to find out which one is likely to be more effective in developing listening comprehension: English subtitles with English dialogues (bimodal subtitling), Persian subtitles with English dialogues (standard subtitling) or English dialogues with no subtitle.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Participants**

This study was conducted with 90 students studying at Islamic Azad University of Masjed Soleyman. The participants were chosen from a group of 200 juniors and seniors majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) on the basis of their scores on the English language proficiency test. The participants filled out a background questionnaire immediately after giving their consent to participate. Table 1. shows the details about the subjects participating in the study:
TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THREE GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Group 1 (ESG)</th>
<th>Group 2 (PSG)</th>
<th>Group 3 (WSG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Females</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of males</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Classification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>6.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESG: English subtitle group  PSG: Persian subtitle group  WSG: Without subtitle group

Materials

The materials used in this study were as follows:

A) English Language Proficiency Test (Sharpe, 2001): it contained multiple-choice items and it was used to enable the researchers to select a homogeneous group. This test consisted of three parts: grammar (31 items), vocabulary (26 items) and reading comprehension (three passages with 13 items). As calculated through the Kuder and Richardson’s formula (KR-21), the reliability of this test was (0.814). The time allotted to answer the test was 50 minutes.

B) A Documentary Film: An English film on “natural disasters” with authentic and contemporary language called “Wild Weather”, developed by BBC worldwide Ltd. (2002) was prepared to be used for the study. The four-part series “Wild Weather” looks at the extremes of the earth’s climate and how man lives with and ultimately affects the weather. This film is approximately 231 minutes long each four episodes of which consisted of ten chapters. Two episodes (one-hour long each) were selected as the main source of the experiment and six chapters of each episode were chosen for six sessions. Each chapter of the film ranged from 4 to 7 minutes in length:

- Chapter 1: An experience (4 minutes)
- Chapter 2: Jungle (5 minutes)
- Chapter 3: Desert (5 minutes)
- Chapter 4: Marathon of the sands (6 minutes)
- Chapter 5: Ice storm (7 minutes)
- Chapter 6: On patrol (7 minutes)

C) Comprehension test: six sets of multiple-choice tests, with ten items each, were derived from the video episodes (one for each video segment). Each question contained language that actually occurred somewhere in the episode. A final comprehension test whose reliability was calculated to be 0.961 based on KR-21 was also administered.

D) Participants used the computers with CD-ROMs to watch the films.

Procedure

The experiment, lasting for six weeks, was conducted at the language laboratory of Islamic Azad University of Masjed Soleyman. The following three steps were taken in this study:

Step 1: After drawing out 200 junior and senior students who have passed language laboratory 4 with the grade of at least 12 or above out of 20, a proficiency test was administered. The allotted time for answering the questions was 50 minutes. After correcting the papers, 90 students whose scores fell between 26 and 48 were selected as the intermediate group.

Step 2: After the selection of 90 intermediate students out of 200, based on their score in proficiency test, they were randomly assigned to three groups, that is, English Subtitle Group (ES), Persian Subtitle Group (PS) and Without Subtitle Group (WS).

Step 3: At this stage, all three groups were asked to watch one chapter of the episode on the same day in order to increase the reliability of the study. Each group watched that segment with mentioned condition, namely ES, PS or WS. By the end of each session, immediately after watching the film, a multiple-choice comprehension test was administered in order to evaluate their listening comprehension and provide grounds for comparison.

DATA ANALYSIS

First, descriptive statistics of the mean scores were computed from the proficiency test to determine which students were entitled to participate in the study. Second, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether the differences between mean scores of ES, PS and WS groups were statistically significant. Third, Scheffe test was administered to specify the possible priority of one of the mentioned groups (ES, PS or WS) over the other.

RESULTS

The results of the mean scores, standard deviations, ANOVA and Scheffe test of the comprehension multiple-choice tests for the three groups during six weeks were calculated and are presented in tables below. A subject was given 1 point for each correct answer, with the highest possible score being 10 and lowest possible being 0. From the total average scores obtained by the groups, it can be seen that the mean of ESG condition was substantially higher than PSG condition and PSG condition in turn got significantly higher score than WSG condition. These results verified that students receiving the episode with English subtitle outperformed the other groups (PSG and WSG).

| TABLE 2. DESCRIPTIVES OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION TESTS |
|-----------------|-----|----------|----------|--------|----------|----------|
|                 | N   | Mean     | Std. Deviation | Std. Err | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Persian Subtitle| 6   | 5.0867   | .51771         | .21136  | 4.5434     | 5.6300     |
| Without Subtitle| 6   | 4.1033   | .38077         | .15545  | 3.7037     | 4.5029     |
| Total           | 18  | 5.2756   | 1.16514        | .27463  | 4.6961     | 5.8550     |
Table 3 illustrates the results of the one-way ANOVA for the listening comprehension tests during six weeks. As can be observed, there is a significant difference among the performance of the three groups \(F(2,15) = 41.897, p<0.05\). The scores for the ESG condition were much higher than the other conditions. The level of significance is set at 0.05.

### TABLE 3. ANOVA OF THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION TESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>19.574</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.787</td>
<td>41.897</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3.504</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23.078</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.39077</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine which group is superior to the other, a post-hoc test was run. Therefore, the results of the Scheffe test revealed that differences among groups were significant. As shown in the table 4, ESG had a better performance than PSG followed by WSG condition. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

### TABLE 4. SCHEFFE TEST OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION TESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Mean Difference ((\bar{D}))</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>95% confidence interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESG</td>
<td>PSG</td>
<td>1.5500*</td>
<td>.27905</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(.7927, 2.3073)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WSG</td>
<td>2.5333*</td>
<td>.27905</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1.7761, 3.2906)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSG</td>
<td>ESG</td>
<td>-1.5500</td>
<td>.27905</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(-2.3073, -1.7927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WSG</td>
<td>.9833*</td>
<td>.27905</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>(1.2261, 1.7406)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSG</td>
<td>ESG</td>
<td>-2.5333*</td>
<td>.27905</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(-3.2906, 1.7761)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PSG</td>
<td>.9833*</td>
<td>.27905</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>(-1.7406, -2.2261)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, all participants who were exposed to English subtitles reacted very positively in comparison with Persian subtitle or without subtitle in this study and believed that the subtitles not only assisted their understanding of the video, but also helped them do the tests. Therefore, the first hypothesis stating that the video programs with English subtitles will help EFL students improve their listening comprehension more than films with Persian subtitle or films without subtitle conditions was confirmed. The other three hypotheses were but rejected. This is consistent with the results of the study by Borrods & Lafayette (1994) who conclude that subtitles have potential value in helping the learners not only to comprehend the authentic linguistic input better but to produce comprehensible communicative output. More specifically, students commented that the subtitles enhanced their ability to notice, comprehend, spell, and recall new L2 material. The test outcomes and the comments suggest that under similar circumstances, students who are learning both vocabulary and content in an L2 will benefit more from watching English videos subtitled in English than from watching English videos subtitled in Persian.
As a subsidiary effect of the study, regarding listening comprehension, it was also proved that, compared to films with no subtitles, those with L1 subtitles facilitate recognition of English words by supplying the meaning of the content in the students' native language and leads to better understanding of listening materials.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the present study, intermediate students benefited from bimodal L2 input, because the proficiency level of intermediate students in terms of the range of vocabulary items and listening skill was higher than that of beginners. Therefore, the intermediate students, as acknowledged by the subjects in their survey, can understand the spoken language better and refer less to the subtitles except when they do not know the meaning of some key words, which are essential for comprehension. Only then, do they take a quick glance at those words while listening to the text; thus, there is no translation process. That is, there is no need to switch from one language to another since it takes time and the learners may lag behind and lose the track. Besides, from the point of view of language learners students might not benefit much due to the overwhelming dependence upon their native language subtitles. The subjects in the survey also commented that the Persian subtitles distracted their attention and prevented them from concentrating on the spoken language. It is hypothesized that Persian may have been used to comprehend the general message but might also have allowed subjects to bypass the English completely.

Considering ESG and PSG, it seems that the subjects in PSG have to perform an additional process and that is translation. With L1 subtitles, Iranian EFL students grasped the meaning by reading L1 subtitles and simultaneously translated the L2 subtitles information for chunking the flow of L2 audio. Because the translation process is difficult to manage and exceeds the learner's processing capacity, factors such as the presentation speed or the difficulty level of the text may lower the effectiveness of L1 subtitling. This might be due to limitations in their reading ability or overloading information input due to three media: audio, visual, and subtitles. Accordingly, the benefits of Persian subtitles are less than those of English subtitles and the additional process of translation may hinder understanding. Thus, based on the results of the comprehension tests the first hypothesis that the video programs with English subtitles will help EFL students improve their listening comprehension more than Persian or without subtitles conditions was confirmed and ES condition was proved to be the best medium for enhancing listening comprehension of intermediate students.

Another finding of the study was that English subtitles improve listening comprehension and ability of learners to recall information. Students given English audio and English subtitles performed better than those who were given L1 subtitles or without subtitles along with English audio. The findings contribute to the idea that L1 subtitles inhibit the effective processing of L2 audio input. Therefore, based on the collected data, it is assumed that students needed to translate from Persian to English when processing materials. The results of the study indicated that with Persian subtitles, the audio information and the visual information did not perfectly match. The same content is being conveyed in two languages while they are watching the video materials. Therefore, test scores are influenced by the translation ability of the subjects. Compared to the English subtitling
condition, the subjects must perform an additional mental process (translation). Accordingly, the benefits of PSG are smaller than those of ESG, and “the additional process of translation may sometimes hinder understanding” (Markham, 1989, p. 40).

Grounded upon the data collected from the survey, most students mentioned that video subtitles in the target language did help them associate the aural and written forms of words more easily and quickly than did videos with Persian or without subtitles; however, few students expressed a need for subtitles in their mother language. They also noted that the presence of Persian subtitles distracted their attention from audio; therefore, they did not pay attention to the soundtrack. So, the researchers concluded that the subjects of this study were more experienced in reading English than in listening to it. This is in line with Guillary’s study (1998) that the PSG performance was attenuated by the degree to which reading the subtitles interfere with attention paid to the linguistic message. Both the quantitative and qualitative results of the study indicate that subtitles in the target language facilitate student listening comprehension and give the students the opportunity to receive visual as well as auditory messages. It seems that reading and listening to messages simultaneously enhance learning of foreign language.

According to Valdes (1990), film subtitles are read by the audience and, while reading, the viewer may be missing the paralinguistic features expressed by the actors on the screen. Reading the subtitles is a process performed mainly by the left hemisphere of the brain and may leave out the audience’s comprehension of some of the features that are processed by the right hemisphere. Now, if we want to use a film in the foreign language classroom as a listening comprehension exercise, the subtitles may or may not help in this task. And based on the findings of this research those who are exposed to Persian subtitles often look at the subtitles to understand the story of the film in Persian which is not the aim of this study and miss the track of English spoken language. On the contrary, those subjects who are exposed to English subtitles seldom look at the subtitles since looking at subtitles cause distraction and confusion and if they do, it takes a little time to process the utterances because both inputs are in the target language so they move along with the film actors or narrator and improve their listening comprehension. This is perhaps a positive feature for those who have learned to use the text only for support, while it might be regarded as intrusive and disturbing for those who are distracted by it, and who thus feel obliged to focus on the form of the running text, rather than on the message of the stream of speech (Vanderplank, 1988, p. 277). This is clearly a worrying aspect, but the evidence from the study suggests that learners in ESG do in fact learn to use the text for support and for finding new words and phrases in a flexible and independent way.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate what kind of films is more effective in developing listening comprehension: ESG, PSG or WSG in the context of intermediate Iranian EFL students. In this respect, the present study has found that traditional and standard subtitling is less effective for L2 listening comprehension than bimodal L2 input. Bimodal L2 inputs generally strengthen the verbal message, suggesting that the double modal input may be processed more deeply because attention can alternate from the auditory to the visual format or be directed along parallel visual and auditory routes simultaneously. Rather than being a distraction, the double modal input appears to enhance comprehen-
Effects of Films With or Without Subtitles

In general, the results proved the hypothesis that the video programs with English subtitles will help EFL intermediate students improve their listening comprehension more than the other conditions. However, watching a film with L1 subtitles is claimed to be appropriate for beginners due to their limited range of vocabulary items and they can use their native language for the better comprehension of the film. The third condition, WSG, is but claimed to be beneficial to the advanced students, because immersing students in a flow of foreign utterances without any preparation may be of little help for intermediate EFL students. On the other hand the proficiency level of advanced students is higher and they have very little problem in understanding the films. Another claim is that students who practiced listening a lot and spent too much time listening and watching films, can watch un-subtitled English films with less difficulty, because they are accustomed to this way of watching and their ears are tuned to English spoken language.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study examined the effects of three versions of subtitled video programs on listening comprehension of intermediate EFL students. One program consisted of English audio and English subtitles. The second program consisted of English audio and Persian subtitles and the third program consisted of English audio and no subtitles. The sample population was intermediate level EFL learners and was not big enough to do a pilot study. Therefore, we cannot generalize the findings to beginners or advanced students in second or foreign language study. For example, the bimodal L2 input procedure obviously requires a certain level of skill in L2, and to test its generalizability, studies are required with pupils who have conventional levels of skills in L2, as can be found in English as a foreign language programs. So, further studies concerning using multilingual soundtracks with different subtitles and different language aptitudes are needed. The result of the study can be applied only to institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities that have intermediate level EFL students. Assessment of the learning outcome was measured only with multiple-choice tests. The problem lies with the need to devise alternative assessment techniques that tap various aspects of listening comprehension.
REFERENCES


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Author:  Hayati, A. Majid; Mohmedi, Firooz
Title:  The Effect of Films With and Without Subtitles on Listening Comprehension of EFL Intermediate Students A. MAJID HAYATI; FIROOZ MOHMEDI
Source:  Int J Instr Media 37 no3 2010 p. 301-13
ISSN:  0092-1815
Publisher:  Westwood Press, Inc.
149 Goose Lane, Tolland, CT 06084

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