Developing Listening Skills through English Movies
At the Post-Graduate Level

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Abstract: Present era is the era of science and technology where students spend their time on TV, Movie, Computers, Cell Phones, Laptops, Tablets, type digital screen more than books and printed material. In this age, importance of movies cannot be denied by present age of students. This significance has even been increased for adults. As soon as some movies release from Hollywood, Bollywood, Lollywood or anywhere from the world, students and especially graduate students become anxious and crazy to watch those movie. Educationists and researchers are thinking about E-Book concept and including movies in curriculum. Purpose of the present research also to explore impacts of movies by helping the learners of L2 in improving their students listening skills for the post graduate students. AV aids were used in the class of 40 Punjabi EFL students for 12 weeks in Punjab, Pakistan. Pre-tests and the post tests revealed significant results. The students' interest for learning L2 was increased and they were able to improve their listening skill rapidly.

Introduction

By using videos and especially English movies language teachers can allow their students to derive more from English movies than passive enjoyment. Within well planned, engaging activities, English movies can be an excellent tool for improving listening comprehension skills of EFL learners. English movies can not only motivate EFL learners towards learning English language in an authentic way but the audiovisual material will raise the culture awareness of students.

English is taught as a foreign language in Pakistan. The focus is mainly on reading and writing skills. In schools and colleges where listening is taught, there the language instructors use ready-made materials that are especially designed for the purpose of language teaching. Ready made materials in most of the cases are not motivating for the students due to which the learners lose interest. Language institutions in district Pakpattan of southern Punjab are not exceptions. Private colleges and schools focus mainly on improving speaking skills of the learners while listening skill is ignored. The few institutions which take classes for improving the listening

comprehension of the learners use audio tapes that are designed for the purpose of language teaching.

There is no fashion of using authentic materials like English movies for developing listening skills in district Pakpattan, which might not only develop the listening skills of the learners but will also motivate the learners. Current study aimed to contribute using informative social and cultural English movies to develop the interests of the students towards learning a language.

Objectives

This study aimed at following objectives:

- To explore the impacts of English movies for improving listening skill.
- To provide an insight into the culture of the native speakers.

This study was to explore new effectiveness of listening English movies for learning English as second language and to adopt the kind of material which is different from the traditional teaching material and which gives maximum output on part of the learners. The study also aimed to explore new ways of arousing the interest of the students and to motivate them to learn English in an easier and effective way.

Literature Review

To evaluate the importance of video material especially Hollywood Movies for language teaching, the previous research were reviewed that would illustrate the emergence of foreign movies in second language classroom, as well as provide deep insight into looking over videos & particularly movie segments as a teaching medium for second language & culture.

Duzer (1997) describes that it is very crucial to note that the L2 learners listen to the target language twice in the language classroom than they speak the language & four or five times as much a reading & writing. Consequently the role of listening cannot be ignored because the acquisition of the receptive skill becomes a vital prerequisite of good speaking ability (Kusumaradyti, 2004). To promote the learners' mastery of listening skill, the language instructor needs to carefully select & prepare a variety of quality teaching material & aids to be used in language laboratory, ensuring that the learners will gain optimum results from the listening lessons. A relatively simple way to achieve this goal is by selecting commercial videos containing movies as teaching aids & then developing material based on it.

A film has the power to create optimal language learning environment. Films direct students' attention to features key to successful language acquisition. Through engaging plot & technology effects, film diverts students' attention away from the aspects that cause them

anxiety, thus lowering their affective filters & allowing them to acquire language with reduced self-consciousness.

According to King (2002):

"Feature films are more intrinsically motivating than videos made for EFL/ESL teaching because the embody the notion that "a film with a story that wants to be told rather than a lesion that needs to be taught".

Using Authentic Video in Language Learning

Unlike most of their ESL counterparts, many EFL students lack access native speakers for authentic communication. Using authentic videos in the classroom can provide opportunities for learners to evaluate a medium that they use in their daily lives (King 2002, cites Stempleski & Tomalin, 1990). Moreover the realism of movies provides a wealth of contextualized linguistic, paralinguistic & cross-cultural information, classroom listening comprehension & fluency practice (King 2002, cites Stempleski, 2000).

Natural Everyday Speech

King (2002) again stated that Films are such valuable & rich resource for teaching for they present colloquial English in real life context rather than artificial situations, an opportunity of being exposed to different native speakers' voices, slang, reduced speeches, stress, accent & dialects

Brandt (2005) identifies two advantages of using authentic listening material in ELT classroom. First, spontaneous authentic material exhibit the characteristics of natural everyday speech in away that read aloud text do not. Second, authentic materials are not simplified to reflect language levels of SL learners.

Developing Aural/Oral Skills

Usually in language learning, the valid procedure involves listening & speaking first, to be followed by reading & writing. But now-a-days procedure often seems to be opposite. First, comes reading closely followed by writing. The language teacher has to speak very slowly as to make his students understand well, which result in the poor listening abilities of the students.

Listening is one of the primary means of interacting with other people, because listening is the most frequently used method for gaining information (Satterwhite & Oslen, 2007:76). The process of listening involves good speaking & listening abilities. But under the pressure of examination these two skills are neglected.

At best the students are exposed to slow formal style of English spoken on taped courses & they understand it very well because that is 'slow colloquial'. But when they are exposed to

normal speech of the native speakers than they are a failure. There has been a quite rapid change in the style of pronunciation used in public speaking & in this context today slow colloquial is rarely heard (Brown, 1985:2).

In listening one needs to put oneself in the 'speaker shoe' in order to understand the message that the speaker is communicating (Satterwitte & Oslen, 2007:77). A native speaker is not going to reform his speech habits over night. Where English is not the first language there is a danger that student may never develop the ability to use an appropriate there is a danger that student may never develop the ability to use an appropriate style of pronunciation (Brown, 1985 :4), if the students are not given any opportunity to learn to understand and informal style of speech.

Movies are a very good medium for providing an informal style of situation to the learners where actors are not supposed to slow down for the class to be understood or s/he has to be artificial in delivering his/her dialogue. In the process of movie appreciation, the students' abilities can be developed consciously or subconsciously. They will encounter impressive & divers language in the movie.

The teacher has to select appropriate movies for his class according to the level of the students. The language of the movie should not be too simple or excessive complicated that the students feel frustrated & discouraged then the result would be counter productive. The language of the movie must not only be authentic but varied, for it is necessary for the students to encounter various speech styles directly.

King (2002) proposes four approaches Sequential, Single-Scene, Selective & Whole-Film Approach. She says that while presenting films, some structurally driven approaches have widely adapted by classroom teachers:

- **Sequential Approach:** One movie scene by scene or one segment at a time teaching.
- **Single-Scene Approach:** One segment from the entire film is utilized for teaching.
- **Selective Approach:** Using a few scenes from an entire movie for language teaching.
- **Whole-Film Approach:** Show the movie in its entirely in a single viewing for teaching.

When selecting approaches, they are all feasible depending on the teaching objectives & target groups.

1. Canning-Wilson (2002) suggests that video should be shown in segments not as a whole for improving listening comprehension of the learners.

   It is not possible to achieve any goal without classroom activities. Therefore, sufficient practice should be prepared for the students. On the other hand too much practice might result in boredom. The teacher must be aware of the purpose of these skills what he wants his students to develop by doing the tasks. He should take the students' interest, language proficiency etc into account.

Duzer (1997) explains that it is a common practice in language decoding (including listening) that at the beginning stage the teacher spends a sufficient amount of time helping the learners build the appropriate schema to facilitate comprehension .This actually encourages the learners to recall the knowledge that they already in mind.

The teacher should clear the difficulties & doubtful language points that will appear in the movie, thus making the students prepared. In such case, even if they cannot grasp every word express in the movie the students have already caught the gist of the story. Certain assignments can be designed in advance to attract students' attention during the showing of the movie so that the attention of the students might not be distracted & prevent them from watching the movie for fun.

While-Viewing

It is wrong to think that the role of the teacher is to push the button & then relax & let the movie go. The movie can be interrupted, replayed, frozen or even taking the sound or vision off at certain places. In fact the controlling process of the movie is also one of its advantages.

Post-Viewing

There can be a number of activities after the show immediately or in the near future, where the learners are required to be active participants. The challenge for the teacher is to set clear goals & achievable tasks & also to organize it. As in a movie there are always some favourite characters of the students, the teachers should take advantage of this motivating opportunity and ask the students to play the role of his/her favourite character.

Methodology

The current study was experimental research which was conducted in a class room setting. A pre-test was conducted from the learners for knowing their initial listening comprehension abilities. The pre-test was based on clips from English films. The learners were guided for how to attempt different questions in the pre-test. The data were collected and analyzed quantitatively on SPSS. After the pre-test a questionnaire among the learners was distributed so that their interest and knowledge about English films, and the purpose for taking part in the experimental class is known. The researcher took a very good idea about the kind of films they were interested in. The researcher selected films on the basis of the interest of the learners.

After analyzing the questionnaire, four Hollywood films were selected that had to be presented to the learners in the language classroom. Each film was taught in two to three classes and the learners were asked to complete worksheets during the classes. After finishing each film a listening comprehension test was conducted to measure their listening comprehension.

A post-test was conducted at the end of all the four films taught in the class. The data collected from the pre-test and data collected through the post test were compared quantitatively. Follow up interviews from selected the learners were taken from to know about the factors that influenced their interest in the class.The results of listening comprehension tests, pre-test, post-test and interviews were the major contents for the data analysis.
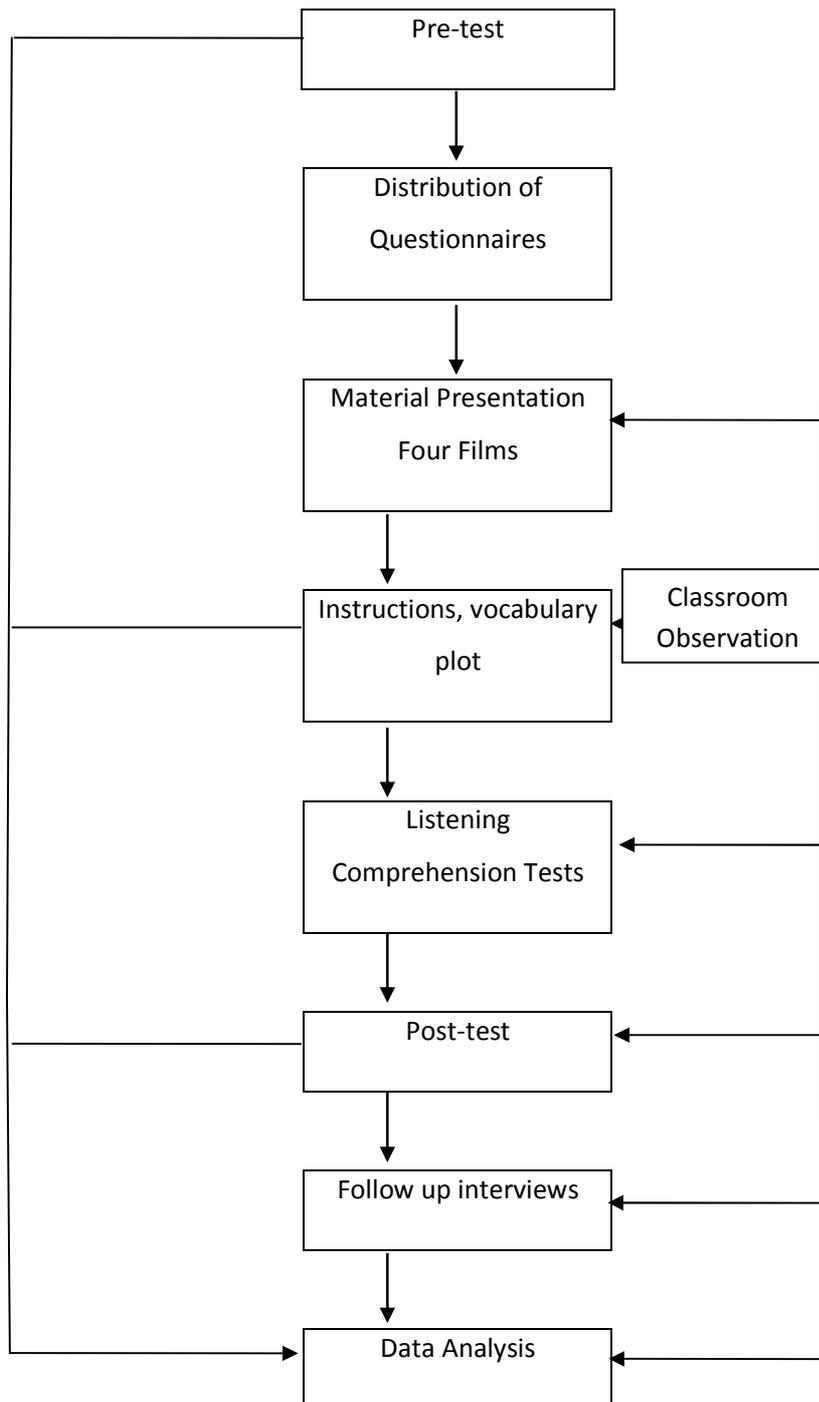
Sample

The sample was Punjabi EFL learners at Cambridge Girls College Pakpattan in southern Punjab of Pakistan. There were 40 post graduate female learners. Their ages were between18 to 25.

Video Materials

The materials used in this study were four featured films. The stories or the themes of the films were in accordance with the age of the learners so that they might not lose interest in the experimental class.

The learners, with the help of the video, as every one knows, easily know the films. The number of vocabulary and sentence patterns is more than the ability of the learners. It points out that video presentation would be intrinsically interesting to language learners. The learners would like to watch even if their listening comprehension is limited. The material should be motivating. The learners should be willing to see more, to ask questions, to follow up ideas and suggestions. Films like "Pride and Prejudice" (based on Jane Austin's novel), shows class distinction and the desire of middle class girls to be married in upper class families. It shows the culture of the time in a very beautiful way. The learners could not only improve their listening comprehension skills but also know about the target culture (i.e. the Victorian culture).

3.4   Schedules and Procedure

The teaching experiment lasted for 12 weeks, for the experiment, a computer monitor and good quality speakers were arranged which were attached to a laptop. The schedule for the presentation is shown in the table.

Weeks	Date	Films
1	02/03 Nov 2014	Pride and Prejudice
2	10/11 Nov	Pride and Prejudice
3	16/17 Nov	Pride and Prejudice
4	23/24 Nov	Pride and Prejudice
5	30 Nov/01 Dec	Titanic
6	07/08 Dec	Titanic
7	14/15 Dec	Titanic

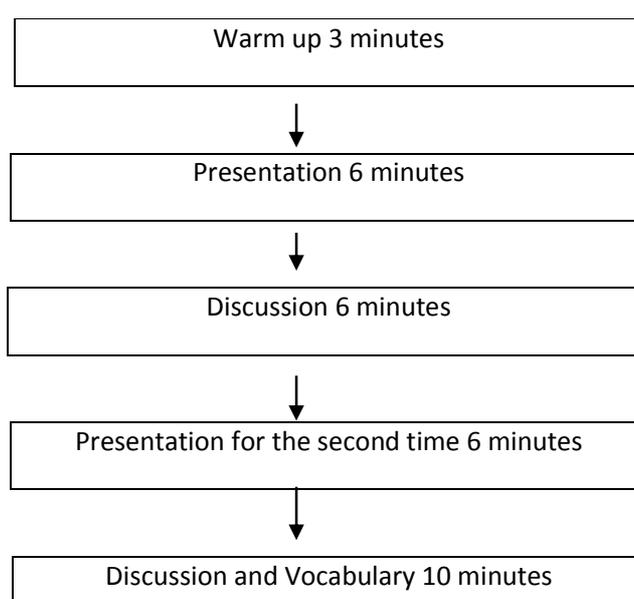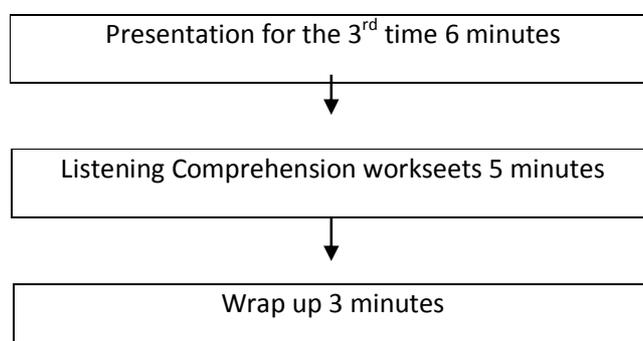| 8 | 21/22 Dec | Brave Heart |
9	28/29 Dec	Brave Heart
10	03/04 Jan 2015	The Pearl
11	11/12 Jan	The Pearl
12	18/19 Jan	The Pearl

Sequential Approach

King (2002) describes four approaches for teaching English through movies; the approaches are Sequential, Single Scene, Selective and Whole films approach. In this study the researcher has adopted Sequential, logical step by step approach for movies, so that maximum results could be achieved. Two clips were taught in every class, each clip for 45 minutes.

Procedure

In every class the instructor used 3 minutes to remind the story or bring a new story in accordance with the film that was to be presented. The instructor would then present a short clip from the film of 2 to 5 minutes either with no sound or with no video and would ask the learners to predict the story and what the characters were trying to say. This would give them a very good speaking practice as well.

Overall Teaching Procedure

Warm up 3 minutes

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Presentation 6 minutes

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Discussion 6 minutes

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Presentation for the second time 6 minutes

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Discussion and Vocabulary 10 minutes

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│      Presentation for the 3ʳᵈ time 6 minutes  │
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│   Listening Comprehension workseets 5 minutes │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Wrap up 3 minutes                │
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Pre-test

For knowing the initial listening comprehension abilities of the learners a pre-test was conducted the result of which was noted. The test was consisted of six questions. The first question was a "true-false question". The learners had to watch a video clip from a film and then they had to answer the questions. They were asked to read the questions first then the clip would be played on for one time therefore they had to be very attentive. And then they had to mark the statements in the first question as true or false.

Post-test

At the end of the experiment, the learners were given a similar test like the pre-test to know about the level of improvement in the listening comprehension abilities of the learners.

Like the pre-test there were six questions in the post-test and the learners were told that they had to watch the film clips only for one time. The clips were played one by one, and the questions were then attempted by the learners.

The data collected through the post test was compared to the data collected through the pre-test. Both the data were analyzed and results were drawn through that comparison. The clips both for the pre-test as well as the post test were new for the learners (i.e. the clips were not used for language teaching in the class).

Data Analysis

During the experiment listening comprehension tests were conducted at the end of each film fir judging the performance of the learners. A post-test at the end of the experiment was conducted for knowing the level of improvement of the learners. An interview was conducted after the post-test to know the reflections of the learners about the whole project.

The pre-test questionnaire, listening comprehension tests at the end of each movie and the post-test are the things that supported the findings of the study. All the variables are discussed in detail in this chapter.

Pre-test

The Pre-test consisted of 6 questions. The questions were "filling in the blank", "multiple choice". A total of 14 learners participated in the test but 2 of the learners as mentioned in Chapter III could not participate in the experiment therefore their results were not included in the analysis.

As mentioned by Salli-Copur (2005) mixed abilities classes have always been a headache for every teacher. The teacher has to face a lot of challenges when helping learners with lower English proficiency levels. At the same time, the learners of higher English proficiency levels feel bored when the teacher explains the same thing time and gain.

The researcher wanted to know the initial listening proficiency level of the learners not only for the level of differences in terms of listening comprehension abilities but the data would be used for later analysis. Therefore a Pre-test was conducted before the start of the experiment.

The Mean score of the Pre-test was calculated as 6.82 and the standard deviation (SD) as 4.4. The large SD shows that there are prominent English proficiency level differences among the learners and the class is a mixed ability class.

The SD shows that there are two groups of learners in the class, the higher proficiency level learners and the lower proficiency level learners. For higher proficiency level learners English is easy while for lower proficiency level learners English is difficult. Therefore

To prevent the lower level learners from frustration towards learning English and giving the higher level learners and optional choice, authentic materials should be used in the language classroom.

The statistics of Pre-test of the learners	
N	40
Mean	6.82
Standard Deviation	4.4
Variance	19.36

Range	14
Minimum Marks Obtained	19
Maximum Marks Obtained	23

Pre-test Obtained Marks Percentage

In the table the percentage of the total marks obtained by the learners in the Pre-test is shown. The average marks of the whole class were calculated as 47% in the pre-test.

Graph 4.3   **The statistical representation of the obtained marks percentage, at the completion of each film.**
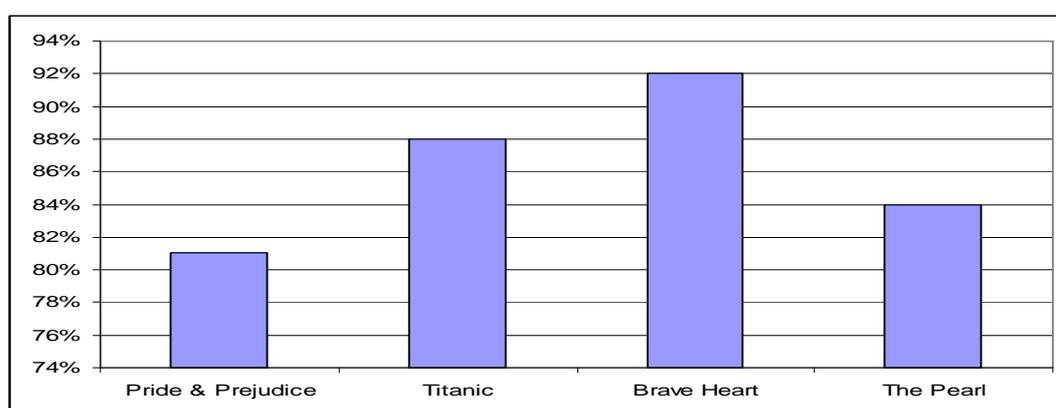
The average score in each film is 86.25% which means that the performance of the learners in the tests was very good. The reason was they were exposed to the listening texts before they ad the background knowledge for the listening texts used in the tests. Secondly most of the vocabulary used in the listening texts were also been delivered to them. Thirdly, the pronunciations of certain worlds were also highlighted to them. Finally there was confidence on part of the learners that the text which was to be used was familiar to them. These were the factors that contributed to good result of the learners.

The statistical representation of the post-test.	
N	12
Mean	6.51

| Standard Deviation	1.99
Variance	3.96
Range	6
Minimum Marks Obtained	25
Maximum Marks Obtained	31

4.6   Comparison of Pre-test & Post-Test

As mentioned earlier, before the start of the experimental class a Pre-test was conducted of the learners and the data was recorded. Then lessons were planned on short clips of 2 to 5 minutes from English movies for 12 weeks. It was very important to judge the level of improvement and the success of the experiment.

To measure the level of improvement, the results of Pre-test and Post-test were compared and the differences were noted and analyzed. Firstly the total marks of the Pre-test and the post-test obtained by the class were compared.

In the Pre-test 198 out of 420 marks were obtained by the whole class which makes 47% of the total marks. After teaching for 12 weeks when the post-test was conducted the result came to be 322 out of 420 which makes 77% of the total marks.

Statistical Graph presenting Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test
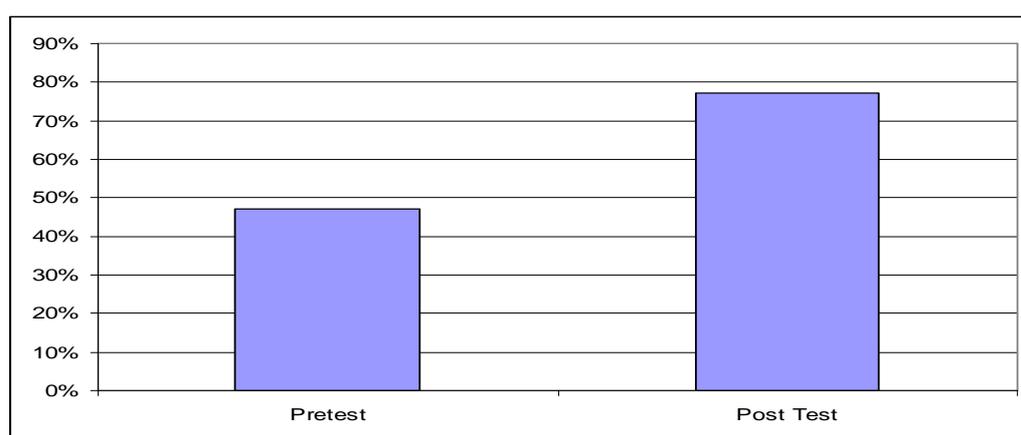
If the result of the post-test (Appendix E) is subtracted from the result of the Pre-test (Appendix A) the result comes to be 124. It means that there is an increase of 30% in the total marks, which shows a very good progress on part of the learners.

The result shows that there is a considerably good improvement in the result of the learners so the experiment is a success.

The learners-wise result of the pre-test and the post-test is shown in the following graph.

Conclusion

The researchers discovered that English movies can be used in an effective way for developing listening skills of EFL/ ESL learners. The researchers also found that the material can improve the listening comprehension skills of the learners up to a great extent. As the result of the experimental classes shows that there is an increaser of 35% of improvement in the progress of the EFL/ESL learners in 12 weeks. Classroom observation shows that movies can even play an ancillary role in developing speaking skills as well.

Pedagogical Implications

This research further may contribute in new vistas in the area of ELT where Punjabi EFL learners find hurdles in understanding the native speakers by galvanizing introduction of English movies in class room setting to facilitate English teachers in Southern Punjab that movies should be and should not be included in various educational programmes and curriculum. The research may also pave way towards new research about benefits and drawbacks of movies in the classroom.

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