



An Exploratory Study on First Year University Students’ English Language Learning Experiences through a Netflix Animated Film: Over the Moon

Watjana Suriyatham

watjana.s@litu.tu.ac.th, Language Institute, Thammasat University, Thailand

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Received 12/01/2026 Received in revised form 15/05/2026 Accepted 27/05/2026	ABSTRACT English movies have emerged as invaluable resources and language learning tool for language educators seeking to enhance the language proficiency of learners. (Brown, 2001; Ho & Le, 2025; Pervan, 2024; Rao, 2019;) However, there is a research gap to explore on how to integrate movies into language instruction to offer an insight into effective strategies, and how to address potential benefits and limitations of incorporating tasks on movies into classroom. This research study aims to probe language learning experiences a group of 21 first year university students gained through completing language tasks such as vocabulary, and content comprehension through watching a Netflix musical fantasy animation, Over the Moon. The study also engaged a group of three volunteer participants to reflect their own learning experiences in a mini focus group interview. The findings showed that the learners could acquire the right meanings of words. Before watching the film, the average score = 8.43 out of 20 words, and after watching, the average scores increased to 17.71. Most students performed strongly on the while- and post-watching tasks, with mean scores of 9/9 (100%) for character identification, 14/15

	(93.3%) for quote recognition, and 8.9/10 (89%) for event sequencing. Additionally, the results from the questionnaire presented the overall picture that this group of participants had moderate to very high positive perceptions toward learning English through movies, with mean scores ranging from 3.24 to 4.29. The qualitative data analysis from the mini focus group interview was in line with the quantitative data analysis, and also gave an insight on what the participants actually learned through the movie and learning tasks, and shed light on how to integrate the movie to promote their learning experiences. Keywords: learning experiences, learning English through movies, language learning tasks
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Introduction

It is generally known that EFL learners nowadays tend to become autonomous language learners since they are surrounded by advanced technology in communication. Within this shift, the role of the language teacher has evolved from that of a knowledge transmitter to a facilitator who actively supports learners in constructing knowledge through authentic materials and interactive experiences, sustain learners' motivation and foster deeper language acquisition. In recent years, there has been growing recognition that effective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction should extend beyond the teaching of isolated linguistic elements to encompass meaningful, contextualized language use. One pedagogical approach that aligns with this perspective is the integration of films into the language classroom. English movies, in particular, offer a rich tapestry of linguistic input, cultural nuances, and communicative contexts, thereby serving as potent vehicles for language acquisition. (Kabooha, 2016; Rao, 2019) From a theoretical standpoint, this approach is supported by the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which emphasizes that language learning involves not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to interpret and engage with cultural meanings (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). In addition, film-based instruction is grounded in research on multimodal input, which suggests that learners benefit from simultaneously processing visual and auditory information. This combination can enhance comprehension, facilitate vocabulary acquisition, and support memory retention by providing multiple channels for meaning-making (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2020; Lim & Tan-Chia, 2023). Empirical studies in EFL contexts further indicate that exposure to audiovisual materials, particularly films with or without subtitles, can

improve learners' listening skills, pragmatic awareness, and overall engagement (Herrero & Vanderschelden, 2019; Dooly & Vinagre, 2022). This has generated considerable interest among English language learning researchers to explore what EFL learners can learn and improve their English skills from watching movies. (Herron & Seay, 1991; Katemba & Wei, 2018; Xhemali, 2013) These research findings also confirmed that the participants had a positive attitude towards English movies, and they believed that movies can help EFL learners promote their language proficiency. Although there have been a considerable research studies conducted in many EFL countries throughout decades, many of them put their main focus on learners' perceptions and experiences towards the movies after viewing the films. (Roslim et al., 2021; Tahir, 2015; Uzzaman & Roy, 2019) Data analysis was conducted by using the data mainly obtained through the questionnaire, thus; leaving a research gap to explore on how to integrate movies into language classroom to offer an insight into how to address potential benefits and limitations, or how to foster a conducive learning environment for learners of diverse linguistic background and competence. Particularly, there is still a lack of sufficient research studies on how to train or guide the learners at the university level to acquire and practice their English skills through the movies. Thereby, this study aims to bridge the gap by designing while and after watching learning tasks to examine how this group of participants reflected their learning experiences through the movie.

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent can the participants complete the learning tasks?
2. What do they think they can gain from learning English through the film tasks?
3. What are their learning experiences on learning English through the film?

Literature review

Movies and Learning English

English movies have emerged as invaluable resources and language learning tool for language educators seeking to enhance the language proficiency of learners. (Brown, 2001; Rao, 2019). Drawing upon empirical studies and pedagogical frameworks, this review elucidates the multifaceted roles of English movies in facilitating language acquisition, vocabulary expansion, cultural understanding, and communicative competence as well as their benefits and drawbacks.

Roles of English movies in English Language Teaching and Learning

Apparently, English movies constitute a valuable source of authentic language input by exposing learners to naturally occurring speech patterns, colloquial expressions, idiomatic language, and diverse accents encountered in real-life communication. Such exposure can contribute to the development of listening comprehension and improve learners' ability to interpret spoken English in meaningful communicative contexts (Alqahtani & Alhamami, 2024; Talapova & Zhanbolatkyzy, 2025). In addition to linguistic benefits, movies function as cultural texts that reflect the customs, traditions, beliefs, and social practices of English-speaking communities. Through engagement with authentic cultural contexts, learners are able to develop greater cross-cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence (Chaya, 2022; Sánchez-Auñón et al., 2023). Furthermore, the multimodal nature of movies, which combines visual, auditory, and emotional elements, can increase learners' motivation and engagement in the learning process. This heightened level of interest may encourage active participation and sustained attention, thereby facilitating more meaningful and enjoyable language learning experiences (Ketongma, 2025; Omar & Razi, 2022).

Another role of English movies is to enhance language acquisition. The learners can enjoy themselves and simultaneously acquire English through listening and watching how characters converse and react in conversations. Therefore, movies are regarded as one of the authentic materials that EFL learners can acquire English language input. Another benefit EFL learners can gain while watching films is to choose to see subtitles in their own native language, English or other languages of their choice. Wang and Shen's study (2007) revealed that watching English movies with subtitles in the learners' primary language (L1) helped improve listening skills.

To prove that movies can play a part to help promote English language learning, there have been studies to probe what EFL learners think about using movies as a learning tool. For example, Albiladi et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study to probe adult learners' perceptions towards the use of movies to develop their English competence, and the findings revealed that the learners believed that the movies could help them improve speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, and writing. On top of that, movies helped increase their cultural awareness on U.S. culture. Another example of study was conducted by Uzzaman and Roy (2019) to find the relationship between watching movies and learning English, and the effects of English movies on English language learning by interviewing fifteen students and three ELT experts from the University of Dhaka. Similarly, the participants responded that movies could enhance their English language skills effectively including vocabulary, writing, speaking, and listening. It was also

reported that movies had a strong influence on English language learning although they were not consciously aware of the learning process while watching movies. Another benefit gained from learning English through movies was it turned the formal classroom setting into an informal friendly style that encouraged learning motivation. This qualitative study was also in line with the quantitative study by Roslim et al. (2021). The researchers used a questionnaire to elicit 77 participants' responses and almost 70% of the participants found that learning English through movies was interesting.

From the examples above, it is likely that movies have their beneficial value to help EFL learners promote English language skills. Apparently, movies can offer various aspects of content and lessons such as culture from many countries, history or important events happened around the world, a variety of accents and biographies of people from all walks of life. Therefore, further research studies should turn its focus from the learners' perceptions and attitudes towards watching movies into how to guide the learners how to acquire the language skills and pick up the good things from the movies.

Despite the pedagogical benefits of using English movies, several challenges warrant consideration in language learning contexts. One notable challenge pertains to the linguistic complexity and variability inherent in movie dialogue, which may pose comprehension difficulties for learners at different proficiency levels. In addition, issues related to accessibility, appropriateness such as sex and violence, and cultural sensitivity of movie content necessitate careful selection and adaptation by language teachers. Moreover, the incorporation of movies into language instruction requires thoughtful planning, alignment with curriculum objectives, and integration with other instructional materials to ensure meaningful learning outcomes and experiences.

To sum up, English movies represent a valuable resource for language educators seeking to enrich the language learning experience of learners. By harnessing the immersive and interactive potential of movies, language teachers can enhance learners' linguistic proficiency, cultural competence, and communicative skills. However, the effective integration of movies into language instruction requires careful consideration of pedagogical strategies, learner characteristics, and contextual factors.

Previous Studies

The literature on utilizing movies as tools for language learning demonstrates a consistent consensus regarding their multifaceted benefits across a wide range of studies. That is due to the fact that English movies expose learners to authentic language, including diverse accents, pronunciation, idiomatic expressions, and cultural contexts, thereby

enhancing both linguistic and intercultural competence (Rao, 2019; Sherman, 2003). Through observing and imitating authentic language use, learners may develop their language skills, increase cultural awareness, and imitate what they hear and observe, contributing to language acquisition through a combination of visual and auditory stimuli. In terms of movie types, Hsieh et al. (2010) explored students' preferences in movie genres, and found that 95% of respondents agreed that movies are effective for language learning, with comedy films being the most popular choice. Although this institutional study was not peer-reviewed, its findings provide useful preliminary evidence that learners' genre preferences may influence their engagement with movie-based language learning. Their research also revealed that subtitles serve as a helpful tool, although only a small portion of respondents preferred to watch films with English subtitles alone.

Tahir's (2015) conducted a study with a group of students at the University of Halabja, and found that movies both educational and entertaining, aiding in language retention. On another front, Chao (2013) examined the development of intercultural competence through film exposure in an EFL setting, discovering that students showed significant progress in intercultural knowledge, motivation, and awareness, which suggests the integration of intercultural content in EFL curricula. Le Bach Truong & Tran (2014) found similar results, where films enabled Vietnamese students to engage in cross-cultural comparisons, break stereotypes, and immerse themselves in authentic learning experiences.

Recent studies continue to affirm the positive impact of movies on language skills. Albiladi et al. (2018) engaged twenty-five adult participants, and further demonstrated that movies contribute to improvements in learners' speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, and writing, in addition to increasing their cultural awareness of U.S. culture. Uzzaman and Roy (2019) supported these findings, emphasizing that movies improve language skills subconsciously and create a relaxed, informal learning environment. Lastly, Roslim et al. (2021) reported that over half of their participants believed that movies significantly enhance oral skills, and nearly 70% found learning through films engaging and effective.

Based on the overall review of the literature, it is evident that previous studies have primarily focused on learners' perceptions and attitudes toward movies after watching them. However, limited attention has been given to learners' experiences when engaging in structured learning tasks before, during, and after watching a film. This gap suggests the need for further investigation into how task-based activities integrated with film viewing may support language learning. Therefore, this study aims to examine the incorporation of learning tasks alongside film viewing in the

classroom and explore how such an approach may facilitate participants' language skill development and encourage reflection on their own learning.

Research Methodology

Research design: a mixed method study using a questionnaire to triangulate quantitative data with qualitative data analysis from a mini focus group interview.

Participants: There were twenty-one university students enrolling in a communicative English course, and willing to take part in these learning tasks. This group responded the questionnaire whereas another group of three participants volunteered to attend the mini focus group interview.

Focus Group Interviews in Language Teaching

Focus group interviews have become a valuable qualitative method in classroom language research, offering insights into language learners' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences through interaction within a socially constructed environment (Dörnyei, 2007; Richards, 2009). The method involves guided group discussions that allow participants to express their views while engaging with others, thus generating data that are shaped both individually and collectively (Morgan, 1997).

In applied linguistics, focus groups are especially useful for exploring complex topics such as language identity, motivation, intercultural communication, and classroom dynamics—areas where context and social interaction significantly influence meaning-making (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). According to Dörnyei (2007), the dialogic nature of focus groups helps reveal attitudes and perceptions that might remain hidden in one-on-one interviews or written surveys, especially when participants build upon or challenge each other's statements.

Krueger and Casey (2015) note that focus groups are advantageous when the aim is to explore how language learners collectively make sense of their experiences, such as their use of digital tools, reactions to teaching methods, or feelings about language anxiety. In addition, Barbour (2007) highlights that focus groups are well-suited for educational contexts, where peer interaction can mirror classroom communication and offer insights into authentic language use.

However, researchers in applied linguistics must navigate certain methodological concerns. Group settings may inhibit some participants—especially those from collectivist cultures or lower proficiency levels—from voicing dissenting opinions, leading to social desirability bias (Litosseliti,

2003). Additionally, managing turn-taking, multilingual code-switching, and power dynamics among participants requires careful moderation and thoughtful analysis (Richards, 2003).

Despite these challenges, focus group interviews remain a powerful tool in applied linguistics research. They align well with sociocultural theories of language learning and provide rich, contextualized data that support the interpretation of language learner's lived experiences (Norton & Toohey, 2011). As such, they are increasingly employed to complement other qualitative and mixed-method designs in second language acquisition (SLA), language teacher education, and discourse studies.

The focus group interview in this study consisted of three participants, which can be classified as a mini focus group. Although conventional guidelines often suggest 6–12 participants per group, recent qualitative research emphasizes that such numerical recommendations are flexible and context-dependent rather than prescriptive. Scholars argue that smaller groups can be particularly effective when the objective is to generate in-depth insights and detailed interaction, as they allow each participant more time to express their perspectives and reduce the risk of participant dominance (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Guest et al., 2017).

In addition, methodological literature highlights that data adequacy (or information power)—rather than sample size alone—should guide qualitative research design. When participants share relatively similar backgrounds and the research topic is focused, smaller groups can still produce rich and meaningful data (Malterud et al., 2016; Hennink et al., 2019). This is particularly relevant in the present study, where participants were drawn from a homogeneous group of EFL learners and were asked to reflect on a shared learning experience.

Furthermore, recent discussions (2018–2025) reinforce that mini focus groups (3–5 participants) are appropriate in educational research contexts, especially when participation is voluntary and when deeper reflection is required (Nyumba et al., 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2021). Therefore, the use of three participants in this study was considered methodologically appropriate, as it facilitated rich, interactive discussion while ensuring that each participant could contribute extensively, thereby enhancing the depth and quality of the data as Guest, Namey and McKenna (2017) confirms that in qualitative research, a focus group consisting of only three participants may still be considered acceptable in certain circumstances, although it generally represents the minimum number typically recommended for this type of discussion.

Research Tools:

1. Animated Film, *Over the Moon*.

This film is used as a tool for the following reasons. First of all, *Over the Moon* is a 2020 Netflix musical fantasy animation, which is animated by Sony Pictures Imageworks. ([Over the Moon – Netflix Official Site.](#)) The film was first shown at the Montclair Film Festival on October 17, 2020, followed by its Netflix and select theaters release on October 23. The film grossed \$860,000 worldwide; it earned a Golden Globe nomination for Best Animated Feature Film. Secondly, the content of the film is not only for entertaining, but it is also educational. It involves a plot regarding family issues about a 15-year-old Chinese girl whose beloved mother passed away when she was young, and when her father starts to have a relationship with another woman, she refuses to accept it and wants to prove that true love exists by building a rocket ship to meet the goddess of the Moon in the legend. The film incorporates value and mindset to cope with sadness when losing someone we love, and also depicts Chinese culture on how Chinese people celebrate Moon Festival. In addition to that, the running time of the film is only 90 minutes, allowing room for doing learning tasks in class.

2. Learning Tasks

Tasks include pre-watching, while and post watching tasks such as vocabulary, matching characters with the right pictures, identifying who says or sings phrases and verses and putting events in the correct order.

3. A 5-point Likert Scale Questionnaire

The internal reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The analysis yielded a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .86$, indicating that the items in the questionnaire were sufficiently consistent in measuring students' perceptions of learning English through movies.

4. Mini Focus Group Interview to probe learners' reflections:

- a. what they think they can gain from learning English through this movie
- b. what they like most about the movie
- c. which part of the scenes they dislike
- d. whether this movie is suitable for learning English
- e. Whether these learning tasks can help or deter their language learning

- f. What they think about learning English through a movie with learning tasks

Findings

1. To What Extent Can the Participants Complete the Learning Tasks?

- ***Pre-Watching Task***

Before watching the film, a list of 20 words from the movies was asked to activate the participants' background knowledge and to prepare them to focus on the vocabulary before watching it. The scores in Table 1 below shows that the participants knew the meanings on the average of 8.43 words before watching the film, and could give the correct meanings of 17.71 words after watching it.

Table 1

Pre and Post Vocabulary Scores

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Paired	Pre-watch vocab	8.43	21	2.749	.600
	Post-watch vocab	17.71	21	1.488	.325

A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test scores. The results indicated a statistically significant difference between the two scores ($p < .001$), as shown in Table 2, with the 95% confidence interval indicating a meaningful difference between the means.

Table 2

Paired Samples Test

- ***While and Post Watching Tasks***

		Paired Differences						Sig. (2- tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval		t	df	
					Lower	Upper			
Pair	Pre & Post	-9.286	2.723	.594	-10.525	-8.046	-15.628	20	.000

Table 3*While and Post Watching Scores*

As shown in Table 3, the participants demonstrated strong performance across the tasks. They achieved a perfect score on the task

Tasks	Total scores	Mean Scores	%
A. matching characters with the right pictures	9	9	100%
B. identifying who says or sings phrases	15	14	93.3%
C. putting events in the correct order	10	8.9	89%

requiring them to match the main characters with the corresponding pictures, with a mean score of 9 out of 9 (100%). In the task requiring them to identify who said or sang specific phrases, the mean score reached 14 out of 15 (93.3%). Similarly, in the task involving the sequencing of events in the correct order, students obtained a mean score of 8.9 out of 10 (89%). These results indicate that the students were able to complete the tasks with a high level of task comprehension.

2. What Do They Think They Can Gain from Learning English through the Film Tasks?

3. What Are Their Learning Experiences on Learning English through the Film?

- ***The 5-Point Likert Scale Questionnaire***

The participants responded in the questionnaire after watching the film to reflect what they think they can learn from the movie, and their learning experiences. The data gained from the questionnaire were analyzed using the 0.80 interval, and the ranges are interpreted as follows:

Range of Mean Scores	Interpretation (degree)	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.80	Not at all	Strongly Disagree
1.81 – 2.60	Not much	Disagree
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate	Neutral / Undecided
3.41 – 4.20	High	Agree
4.21 – 5.00	Very high	Strongly Agree

A: Language Skills that the Participants Can Learn from the Movie

Figure 1 below illustrates the overall picture of the participants' perceptions on how much they think they can learn those language skills from the animated movie, *Over the Moon*.

Figure 1

Perceptions

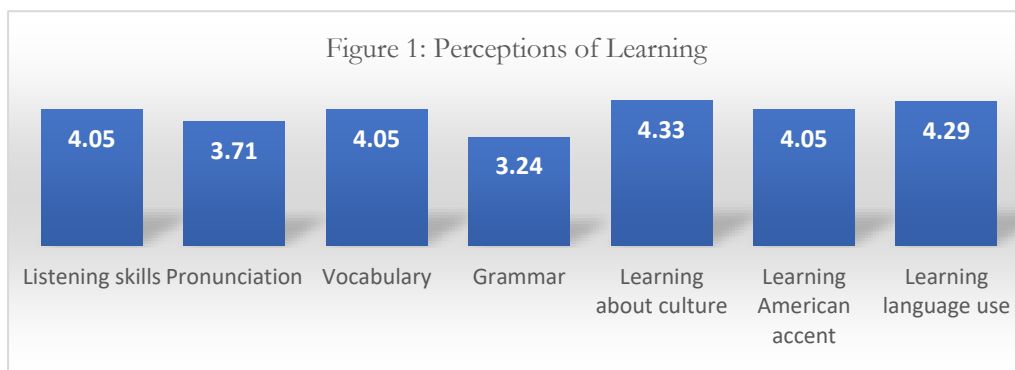


Table 4 below shows the details of each skill with the standard deviation value as well as the interpretation of the mean scores.

Table 4

Perceptions of Learning Language Skills

Students' Perceptions of Learning Language Skills (N = 21)			
Item	M	SD	Interpretation
Listening skills	4.05	0.74	High
Pronunciation	3.71	0.85	High
Vocabulary	4.05	0.80	High
Grammar	3.24	0.77	Moderate
Learning about culture	4.33	0.80	Very High
Learning American accent	4.05	0.80	High
Learning language use	4.29	0.72	Very High

Overall, students demonstrated moderate to very high positive perceptions toward learning English through movies, with mean scores ranging from 3.24 to 4.29. In terms of language learning benefits, students perceived movies as particularly useful for learning cultural aspects of the

language ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.80$) and developing language use in real life ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.72$). They also believed that movies supported the development of several language skills, including listening skills ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.74$), vocabulary acquisition ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.80$), and familiarity with the American accent ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.80$). However, among all items, grammar received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.77$), suggesting that students perceived movies as less effective for learning grammatical structures compared with other aspects of language learning.

B: Learning Experiences that the Participants Gain from the Movie

The descriptive statistics revealed that the participants generally held positive perceptions toward learning English through movies. As shown in Table 5, the overall responses were predominantly within the high agreement range. Students reported a strong preference for learning English through movies ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.51$), indicating that movie-based learning was well received by the participants. They also agreed that movies could stimulate reflection and deeper thinking, as reflected in the item “food for thought” ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.00$), and could provide memorable language expressions. The item memorable quotes from the movie ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.94$) reached a very high level, highlighting the strong impact of movie dialogue on learners’ retention. In addition, participants strongly agreed that learning English through movies was enjoyable and appropriate for language learning, as indicated by high mean scores for the items “learning through this movie is fun” ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.74$) and “it is suitable” ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.59$).

Table 5

Participants’ Learning Experiences

- ***Mini Focus Group Interview***

Learning experiences	M	SD	Interpretation
food for thought	4.00	1.00	High
Memorable quotes from the movie	4.24	0.94	Very High
Learning through this movie is fun	4.38	0.74	Very High
Over the Moon is suitable for learning	4.38	0.59	Very High
Liking learning English through a movie	4.52	0.51	Very High

Another group of participants consists of three first year students who volunteered to attend the focus group interview to provide their reflections toward learning English through this animated film. Their gender is female, and pseudo names are used in these excerpts; Nina, Sophia, Anna. These are the guideline prompts for the interview.

- a. what they think they can gain from learning English through this movie
- b. what they like most about the movie
- c. which part of the scenes they dislike
- d. whether this movie is suitable for learning English
- e. Whether these learning tasks can help or deter their language learning
- f. What they think about learning English through a movie with learning tasks

A: Learning Experience

The group agreed that they learned language skills such as vocabulary, listening and speaking from watching the movie, *Over the Moon* as shown in the excerpts below.

Excerpt 1:

Sophia: For me, I learned from the movie about vocabulary. There are many words that I don't know, and the movie has subtitles.

Anna: I think it helps me improve listening and speaking skills.

Nina: Yes. Yeah, I feel like, you know, improving listening skill through the movie is the most effective way. I think it helps listening a lot, and it uses easy words that I think most of us can understand.

Anna: And the movie didn't go very fast and that we can catch up the conversation and understanding at the same time.

(Excerpt 1)

Excerpt 2:

Sophia: You know...I love cartoons, so I think for me this animation doesn't have many hard words or difficult words, so it's easy.

Nina: Yeah, easy to understand, and more than other things, I think the dialogue is not complicated and is easy to understand too.

Anna: That's true. About vocabulary, I think I can learn new words about space such as rocket ship, and astronaut.

Sophia: Yeah. For me, I think I can learn more about vocabulary of Moon festival in China.

(Excerpt 2)

Excerpt 2 also revealed that each participant was recalling what they watched from the movie and the account confirmed their responses with the reasons. Anna confirmed her agreement with Sophia on vocabulary by providing some examples of the words from the task. When triangulating

data analysis with the questionnaire result on learning grammar from the movie, Excerpt 3 presented an explanation why grammar did not receive high mean score in the questionnaire.

Excerpt 3:

Nina: Did we learn any reading skills from watching the movie? I don't think so. For me, like listening to speaking, I learned from the movies or documentaries. But reading and writing I learned from the textbook.

Anna: Yeah. So, like for me, not really, I mean.

Sophia: And one more about grammar. I feel like if you learn it, it's not like you know how to use grammar. They are not speaking like real regular one, so it's different.

Anna: It's not 100% accurate, right?

Sophia: Exactly!! It's not like the grammar you learn from class.

Nina: Yeah, I think you don't. You can't really like learn it from the movie.

(Excerpt 3)

B: Impressions

The excerpts below (4-6) present the reasons why the participants enjoy watching the film, *Over the Moon*. In addition, the participants also discussed about the story of the movie as shown in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 4:

Nina: I enjoy watching the movie because I love to see them. This one has fantasy beyond my imagination and the story in this movie is so practical. I can adapt it in real life.

Sophia: For me, I enjoy the movie too, because I like the pictures and the way they use the color made me feel like it and the song in the movie is very nice.

Anna: I agree with you. It's fun, but how did Fei Fei build a rocket and go to the moon?

Sophia: Yeah. It's impossible. (*All laughing*)

Anna: It might be impossible, but in your life, if you say that to your father, that I'm going to the moon and prove that Chang Er's real, I think I will do it. So the movie is fun and enjoyable for me.

(Excerpt 4)

Excerpt 5:

Nina: In fact, I think I love character development of every character. I can see how the family love is out there in the movie.

Sophia: I like the storyline too. It makes me know about the history of Moon Festival.

Anna: Yes, and the culture of getting together on that day. I feel that spending time with family is precious. We don't know when or where our love one in the family will pass away just like Fei Fei's mother. She died after New Year.

Nina: That makes me sad too.

Sophia: Yeah. For me, I think we have to respect each other's opinion and I think we have to open mind too. The father wants to have a new wife, so we should respect father's opinion.

(Excerpt 5)

Excerpt 6:

Anna: And I learned about the story of the mooncake festival. The mooncake is really famous in China and also in other countries. In the movie, it is a big celebration, so I am interested in that culture.

Sophia: Yes. I think the movie shows the world how Chinese people take their culture seriously.

Nina: Yeah, I really like the way their culture is not westernized. Like even though they have a lot of connection with Western country mobilization. But they can still maintain their culture.

Sophia: I agree. Still take it seriously. Maybe it is because that's something their ancestors believed, so I think it is the way to show how they respect their ancestors and then treasure the tradition.

Nina: It's really sent out from other people in the wall, like you just get their culture. Also, wherever they go, you know in the world they always tell you about their culture and who they are. Umm, to them culture is their root.

Anna: Oh, I think it's really beautiful.

(Excerpt 6)

Apart from what they like, they also reflected their dislikes in this excerpt below.

Excerpt 7:

Nina: I'm a really romantic person. In that movie, I don't really quite enjoy the idea of the father wants to marry again. Because, you know, like I...er.. My perception of love is that you can only love one person in your lifetime. If you love another person, the love is not real because if you really love one person, you can only love one. You know as a soul. So yeah, I when I watch the movie, I feel like it is kind of influencing negative ideas of love that you can remarry again in the future.

Sophia: I know their message, but they just try to move on from the past trauma or the past experience just like in real world. There are a lot of marriage problems.

Anna: I see your point. I think that is a big burden for the stepfather, you know trying to portray that family, like the modernist stepmother, can be a good family if you cooperate each other.

Sophia: So I think the movie is a kind of healing for the children when something happens because in real world to love a person for the whole life is not realistic.

Anna: People are already moving forward, so I think moving on is a great example for children. If we cooperate each other as a family, we can live together.

(Excerpt 7)

C: Tasks Engagement

The following excerpts (8-9) reveal the participants' reflections on doing learning tasks.

Excerpt 8:

Nina: OK for me, tasks are like some guidelines about what we need to do. We need to focus more on conversation, and what is going on.

Sophia: Sometimes it helps us like to follow the story. It's like this one. When we sometimes don't focus on it and there is a task that we need to put the situations in the correct order and that helps me focus.

Anna: It is a tool that has a tank, I'd say. We know what to focus on and I think task is a good tool to get a good work from watching an animation.

Sophia: Yes. For example, vocabulary that the teacher gave me before watching the movie makes me realize that whatever that I don't know, I will find it in a movie.

(Excerpt 8)

Excerpt 9:

Anna: I feel like it's important to recall the memories again because like if you just watch the movie and you don't do any recalls, you will just forget about it.

Nina: I think tasks should let us remember only the plot, not the details. To do these tasks, then I really have to recall my memories again even though I don't have enough memory. (laughing)

Sophia: The task is not that difficult, at least we learn two or three more tasks. For me, I think the assignment is important because like without it, it will be just like entertaining.

Nina: Yes, I agree with what Sophia said.

(Excerpt 9)

The participants agreed that tasks played a role to help them watch the movie with a learning focus. However, the tasks should be aligned with the core content of the movie and designed with an appropriate level of length. Additionally, they should be calibrated to avoid being excessively easy or overly challenging.

D. Challenging

• Watching a Film without Subtitles

According to Excerpt 10 below, watching English movies without subtitles depends on the purpose and listening competence. It might probably be too difficult, and a challenge for those who want to practice their English competence.

Excerpt 10:

Anna: For me, with subtitles because it's difficult for me.

Nina: I don't like currently I don't really use subtitles when I'm watching something because I think they're like annoying, but if I'm curious about something or to catch up with something, I would just like remember it.

Sophia: Because we have our basic knowledge of intermediate level for English. When we open subtitles, we tend to focus on subtitles not on the voice.

Nina: There's some kind of like, you know, difficult history. British history. I have to open it because sometimes if you want to learn new vocabulary you need to open your subtitle.

Sophia: I think so too, but if you are practicing for your listening skills, then opening subtitles may be a disruption because you just focus on the subtitles, so subtitles can make your listening become really weak immediately.

(Excerpt 10)

Discussion and Conclusion

The results from all movie tasks scores indicate a high level of comprehension, particularly in identifying explicit information, while the slightly lower score for sequencing suggests that reconstructing narrative order may require more cognitive processing. This finding aligns with research on multimodal input, which shows that the combination of visual and auditory information in video-based materials facilitates comprehension and meaning construction (e.g., Tragant & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2019; Hidayat et al., 2024). Moreover, studies on subtitle use in EFL contexts demonstrate that audiovisual input can significantly enhance learners' comprehension and information recall (Manurung et al., 2024). Together, these findings suggest that movie-based learning supports learners' ability to process and retain key information, particularly when multiple modes of input are available. In addition, the findings from the questionnaire reveal that the participants demonstrated overall positive to very high perceptions toward learning English through films. Based on the interpretation scale, most items fall within the high (3.41–4.20) and very high (4.21–5.00) levels, indicating strong support for film-based instruction. First, students reported a very high level of positive attitudes for learning English through movies ($M = 4.52$), along with high agreement that learning through movies is fun ($M = 4.38$) and suitable ($M = 4.38$). The qualitative data accounts also support the above results as the participants provide the reasons behind their impressions towards the film, *Over the Moon*. These findings confirm that films function as a highly motivating instructional medium, which is consistent with studies by Roslim et al. (2021), Albiladi et al. (2018), and Kaboocha (2016), which reported that both students and teachers expressed favorable attitudes

toward integrating movies into EFL classrooms, emphasizing their role in enhancing motivation and facilitating language learning. Furthermore, the item “providing food for thought” ($M = 4.00$) indicates that films stimulate learners’ critical thinking and reflection. More recent research reinforces this perspective. For example, a systematic review by Sánchez-Auñón et al. (2023) highlights that film-based instruction contributes not only to language development but also to learners’ critical thinking by engaging them in meaningful interpretation and analysis of multimodal content. Similarly, Domínguez Romero and Bobkina (2023) demonstrate that cinema-based practices foster reflective thinking and deeper engagement with social and cultural themes in EFL contexts. Recent studies in EFL education also emphasize that integrating multimedia and technology-rich tasks can enhance learners’ critical thinking skills by encouraging analysis, evaluation, and reflection (Schenck, 2024; Allehyani, 2025). These findings suggest that film-based learning, particularly when combined with discussion and reflective activities, can promote higher-order thinking skills alongside language development. In terms of language learning experiences, students perceived that films were particularly effective in enhancing listening skills ($M = 4.05$), vocabulary ($M = 4.05$), and language use ($M = 4.29$). These results are confirmed with the focus group data analysis on learning experiences and are consistent with the review by Sánchez-Auñón et al. (2023), which concluded that movies are effective in enhancing multiple language skills, particularly when integrated with well-designed pedagogical tasks.

However, among the language skills, grammar obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.77$). The qualitative data presented in Excerpt 3 further indicate that students are aware that the grammatical structures used in the movie reflect spoken language, which differs from the formal grammatical conventions typically emphasized in classroom-based writing instruction. It also aligns with more recent research indicating that while multimedia input enhances engagement and fluency-related skills, explicit instruction is still necessary for grammar acquisition, and its effectiveness depends heavily on instructional scaffolding and learner readiness. Without structured guidance, learners may struggle to process complex input, which may explain the limited gains in learning grammatical structures in the present study.

Regarding learning experiences on culture, the findings of the present study indicate that students perceived movies as particularly effective for developing their understanding of cultural aspects of the film, as reflected in the high mean score ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.80$). This suggests that films serve not only as linguistic input but also as a rich source of cultural representation, enabling learners to access sociocultural knowledge that is often difficult to

convey through traditional classroom materials. The qualitative data further substantiate this result. For instance, one participant described gaining knowledge about the Mooncake Festival and expressed increased interest in this cultural practice after viewing its portrayal in the film. Another participant emphasized that the movie illustrates how Chinese people value and preserve their cultural traditions, and another participant agreed that this practice is beautiful. These responses indicate that learners are not merely passive recipients of cultural information; rather, they actively interpret and reflect on cultural meanings, which contributes to a deeper level of intercultural awareness. The ability to recognize cultural practices, values, and perspectives presented in films suggests that movies can function as a form of authentic cultural exposure, fostering learners' curiosity and engagement with the target culture. These findings are consistent with previous research. For example, Chao (2013) demonstrated that film exposure in EFL contexts significantly enhanced students' intercultural knowledge, motivation, and awareness, highlighting the pedagogical value of integrating intercultural content into language instruction. Truong & Tran (2014) found that films provided Vietnamese learners with opportunities to engage in cross-cultural comparisons, challenge stereotypes, and experience authentic cultural contexts. The convergence between the present findings and prior studies reinforces the argument that films are an effective medium for promoting intercultural competence in EFL learning.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that incorporating movies into language instruction can meaningfully support the development of learners' cultural understanding. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that films provide authentic cultural input and promote intercultural awareness among EFL learners (Chao, 2013; Ismaili, 2013). This has important pedagogical implications, as it underscores the need for EFL curricula to move beyond purely linguistic objectives and to intentionally integrate cultural dimensions of language learning, since language and culture are closely interconnected in communicative competence (Byram, 1997).

Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges identified in the present study—such as a high cognitive load to remember the story lines in order to complete the while and post-watching learning tasks, particularly for lower-proficiency learners and those who are not keen for rote learning as shown in excerpt 9. Another challenge is the different level of reliance on subtitles among learners. In this study, English subtitles were provided as suggested by the work of W. Lee (2010), who found that captioned movie clips significantly improved learners' comprehension, but some participants in this present study may argue that subtitles hinder their listening practice. Whereas students' reliance on subtitles can be viewed as a strategic aid that

supports language processing and output, it also can be regarded as a limitation.

From a broader perspective, the findings are also consistent with the review by Sánchez-Auñón et al (2023), which concluded that movies are effective in enhancing multiple language skills, particularly when integrated with well-designed pedagogical tasks. The present study reinforces this position by showing that films alone are insufficient; rather, their effectiveness lies in how they are pedagogically operationalized in the classroom. In relation to the present study, students' strong performance on while- and post-watching tasks, along with their reported learning of cultural aspects, suggests that movie-based instruction can effectively support both linguistic comprehension and cultural understanding. Therefore, integrating films into EFL curricula is not merely a supplementary activity but a pedagogically sound approach to fostering more holistic language development that aligns with contemporary views of communicative competence.

Based on the findings of this study, several practical implications can be drawn for English language teaching as follows:

1. Integration of structured viewing tasks

Pre-while and post watching activities can be incorporated to guide learners' attention to specific linguistic features such as key vocabulary, comprehension, and group discussion.

2. Selection of appropriate film materials

The choice of films should be carefully aligned with learners' proficiency levels with clear pronunciation and moderate speech rate with a suitable length for classroom activities to reduce cognitive overload.

3. Strategic use of subtitles

The subtitles should be used as a pedagogical tool rather than a crutch.

4. Promotion of active speaking practice

To maximize the benefits of film-based learning, the students should be encouraged to participate in a group discussion and opinion-sharing after watching.

5. Addressing learner differences

Given that some students may struggle with authentic input, differentiated instruction, therefore, is necessary to provide additional support for lower-level learners.

In conclusion, the findings of this study are strongly consistent with both earlier and recent research. Learners' positive perceptions and reported accounts confirm that films serve as an effective supplementary pedagogical tool, particularly for enhancing, vocabulary, listening skills, and cultural awareness. However, the relatively lower score for grammar highlights the

need for instructional scaffolding, supporting the argument that films should be integrated with structured teaching strategies rather than used in isolation. In sum, the findings suggest that English films are highly effective in fostering communicative competence and learner engagement, but their pedagogical value is maximized when combined with explicit instruction and guided learning activities.

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About the Author

Watjana Suriyatham: An associate professor of English at Language Institute, Thammasat University, holding an EdD. In Applied Linguistics from the University of Warwick. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, material development, learner autonomy, Business English, teaching and learning language skills.

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