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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECTS OF SHOWING MOVIES IN A SPEAKING SKILLS CLASS IN THE CONTEXT OF BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

Language planners' inconsistent attitudes towards teaching English in Bangladesh have made the standard of English really poor. 'Whether or not it is from such inconsistent language planning, the standard of the students' proficiency in English has been going down steadily over the years' (Quader 1998:57). In the context of Bangladesh, with large classrooms and emphasis on examinations, the majority of intermediate L2 learners lack competency in speaking. Most have difficulties in pronunciation. Their limited vocabulary makes it difficult for them to continue conversation. Again, lack of knowledge of syntax and structures makes learners unable to produce a conversation. Their goals for learning L2 are only to face the examinations. Memorizing certain given L2 items makes it even more difficult for them to use English in a real world. This paper aims at dealing with an Action Research to find out the effects of showing movies in speaking classes. Some learning theories will be presented to show the significance of using movies in teaching speaking. The paper also tries to prove that movies can be as important a tool as to motivate learners to learn the target language. It is hoped that this paper will be an eye opener to ESL practitioners.

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INTRODUCTION

To identify the areas of difficulty for South Asian learners of English, Shackle (1987:170-181) in his survey mentions that there are certain areas of phonology related to aspirated and unaspirated sounds, the pronunciation of some consonants, and some clusters, that may give rise to problems to our learners. Shackle again mentions that English is a stress-timed language where the stresses are not predictable while Indian languages are syllable-timed and always predictable. So the appropriate stressing of syllables in English words can be difficult for South Asian learners. All these problems may cause learners to be unwilling to communicate in target language.

To address the above problem with my students of undergraduate level I had to do an action research on how to improve learners' deficiency in speaking English. The action research was done with a group of 25 undergraduate students at a private university, where a speaking class for ninety minutes was conducted to find out the speaking proficiency of the learners. Later, these learners were shown a DVD, namely *Shrek 2*, an animated Movie. The running time was 93 minutes. A 15-minute break was given in

the middle. Later, one hour was spent for presentation and discussion on the movie. A classroom observation was closely made to find out the progress the learners made as better speakers. The whole discussion of about one hour was recorded for further analysis. A transcribed copy of the recorded tape is added in the appendix. A questionnaire was provided to find out learners' reactions towards the new technique.

Literature Review

Movies in SL classroom started to acquire pedagogic importance in the 1960s when more researchers came to agree that videotexts could give students an opportunity to experience contact with contextualized language and the culture of the target country, thus facilitating language acquisition (Lonergan, 1984, cited in Fassbender, 2009). LI Ling (2009) in his study 'On the use of films in EFL classroom' notes that students' motivation can be by showing movies, such as familiarizing learners with target culture, and making classes more interesting. Interactive language learning using films offers learners interesting comprehensible input and allows them to get actively involved in lessons at their desired pace. According to language scholars movies. A prepared educator can use movies to stimulate discussion, facilitate learning on particular topics. Johnson (1956) as he used movies in the classroom found that movies can:

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1. Increase the ability to understand the spoken language
2. Improve in pronunciation
3. Develop vocabulary
4. Develop the ability in self-expression through speaking and writing
5. Help in assimilation of grammatical forms and sentence patterns in context. (P.44 quoted in Fassbender 2009)

Moreover, Procotor (1990) states that movies are a great beneficial tool for communication and interaction for the following reasons:

1. Heighten student's interest without sacrificing academic rigor
2. Provide affective and cognitive experiences through vicarious involvement

As to investigate the importance of movie materials for language teaching and to study the effectiveness of audiovisual input in language teaching activities, some of the existing research needs to be reviewed. This review will elucidate the emergence and history of foreign movies in the SL classroom, as well as the advantages of using videos and movies (films, segments) as a teaching medium for second language. Movies in SL classroom started to acquire pedagogic importance in the 1960s when more researchers agreed upon the fact that videotexts could give students the opportunity to experience contact with contextualized language and the culture of the target country, thus facilitating language acquisition (Lonergan, 1984, cited in Fassbender, 2009). Little research has been done on the using of movies as an educational tool inside or outside classroom. However, as early as late 1930s (quoted in Fassbender 2009), researchers like Hendrix (1939) and Tatum (1941), noticed the rise of the moving- picture industry and expected great success from utilizing movies in the teaching of foreign languages. While Johnson (1956) noted that, adolescents' rising interest in and familiarity with movies promised a high acceptance on the students'. In recent years, some of these studies have begun to be addressed, but in limited contexts. For example, Balatova (1994) found that in movies, the scenes where utterances were supported by an action and/or body language and that were relatively shorter were much easier to understand by the students.

According to it's preferable for students to learn long age by watching movies. One of the results of her study reveals that learners prefer action/entertainment movies to language movies or documentaries in the classroom. She claims that although these movies may seem to create student's interest, it could be inferred that student's comprehension of the video may be due to the visual clues instead of the auditory components.

Prof. Dinçay (2004) emphasizes, in his study entitled "*kill the blackboard? Technology in language teaching and learning,*" the importance of using the new technology in teaching instead of using blackboard only. Through using films, students will be entertained in learning the language. The result of his study shows that videos can be used as a tool for developing students' listening comprehension and enhancing their intercultural competence as well as presenting new language material or consolidating what has already been presented through the

activities. Canning (2001 cited in Dinçay 2004) discusses the practical implications of using video in the classroom as follows:

Video provides visual stimuli such as the environment and this can lead to and generate prediction, speculation and a chance to activate background schemata when viewing a visual scene re-enacted.

Raymond Wolkowski (1987) did research on motivation in teaching. He stated that motivation stimulated behavior, gave direction to behavior, allowed the behavior to continue, and led to the selection of a specific behavior. Wolkowsik believed that motivation was influenced by attitudes, needs, stimulation, individual feelings, competence and reinforcement.

Movies and Learning Styles Principles

Learners learn in various ways—by seeing and hearing; reflecting and acting; reasoning logically and intuitively. The different ways how a learner acquires, retains and retrieves information are collectively termed as learning styles or learning performances. According to Claxton and Ralston, learning styles maybe defined as people's 'consistent ways of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning' (1987:7). Likewise, for Keefe, learning styles are the characteristics, cognitive, affective and psychological behaviours that serve as the relatively stable indicators how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment' (1979:4).

Moreover, some learning styles are adapted from Reid's perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (1998). These learning styles are visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group and individual. Brown (2007) also claims that there are three types of learning styles. Visual learners prefer studying charts or any graphic information. Auditory learners prefer listening to lectures and audiotapes. Finally, kinesthetic learners learn best by physical activities and demonstrations (Brown 2007). They prefer moving their bodies and activating their muscles as they learn. Furthermore, kinesthetic learners do well in chemistry experiments and sporting activities. They might stand up and walk as they study, use movement for meaning, ask for extra help on labs and so on (Wassink 1995). Based on the characteristics of kinesthetic learners mentioned above, the researcher feels that kinesthetic learners are not familiar with movies as learning material because it does not support their interests as tactile learners.

According to the above study, most of the learning styles are able to stimulate senses as to ensure effective learning. For example, Sensory stimulation theory (Laird: 1985) states that when multi senses are stimulated greater learning takes place. Experiential learning (D.A. Kolb: 1984) implies that there are four stages in learning process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. To be brief, most learning theories tend to highlight the importance of senses stimulation whether by applying observations or imaginations as well as experimentations. Laird (1985) claims that stimulation through the senses is achieved through a 'greater variety of colours,

volume levels, strong statements, facts presented visually, use of a variety of techniques and media.' Movies have valuable features that make them easy to reach and access different types of learners. For example, a visual learner takes in the movie visually, while an auditory learner learns from listening to the movies. They make understanding the language easier as listening to authentic language is more difficult than seeing the expressions written, thus matching the words with pictures and voice. Sherman (2003) says, "The eye is more powerful than the ear," and also there is an old proverb that states: a picture is worth a thousand words. Therefore, with more stimulation and understanding of presented materials by different learning styles, boredom is more difficult to fall into. Input is interesting and obliging to the acquirer, making the acquirer more thoughtful to the understood input from the movies.

Basically, teaching and learning styles vary across individuals (Brown 2007) according to their personalities and biological or genetic texture. As research shows, three-fifths of an individual's learning style is biological or genetic and the biological component of individual learning style works for an individual's whole life-time (Karpova, 1995) and (Dunn 1998). However, using movies as a language learning material reveals some learning styles such as:

Field independence and field dependence

Field independent style is "your ability to perceive a particular, relevant item or factor in a "field" of distracting items" (Brown 2007). FI demonstrates the perceptual skill of a person who can easily recognize the hidden or camouflaged items of a field. A child who can obviously spot the monkeys within the trees and leaves of an exotic forest in coloring books tend toward a field independent style (Brown 2007, Wyss2002). On the other hand, field dependence can be thought of as one's ability to perceive an overall scrutiny of a field so that concealed subparts of that field are not clearly perceived. However, FI learners who use movies as language learning material will pay most of their attention to the movies' particularized events and detailed scenes. They are able to analyze and observe the deep structure of movies and go beyond mere enjoyment to perceive foresights and reflect on the movie later. Moreover, Good FI learners can link scenes together to see its relationship to the movie's theme. Conversely, FD learners are more interested in general ideas presented in movies and easily perceive the main theme of a movie without much attention to investigate detailed scenes or particularized events. FD learners are not concerned about actors' names, scenes sequences, or presented features, whereas FI learners will pay most of their attention to these components.

Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic styles

Another salient dimension of learning style that can be empathized with movies as language teaching and learning material is the penchant of learners for either Visual, auditory, and/or kinaesthetic (bodily) input. Although learners may have a particular prominent learning style such as learning through seeing, hearing, or any other senses, good learners usually adapt themselves to learning through different senses as the sensory stimulation theory has as its basic premise that

effective learning occurs when the senses are stimulated and if multi-senses are stimulated, greater learning takes place (Laird 1985). However, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners can be identified through their behaviours, the way they speak, or the kind of words they use. While the vast majority of knowledge held by adult learners (75%) is learned through seeing, many adult learners (13%) tend to acquire knowledge by hearing (Laird 1985). Auditory learners have a tendency toward learning through hearing rather than by sight. They prefer listening to lectures, audiotapes, or music (Brown 2007, Lopez 2007, Riazi 2007).

Observation

The observation at the end of the movie was quite satisfactory and positive.

Students enjoyed the animated Movie *Shrek 2*. They participated in discussions and summarized the movie. Most students were enthusiastic about speaking in front of the class. They seemed to be less under pressure. They were more interested in sharing their opinion about the movie. The class became more interactive. The teacher spoke very little. A debating atmosphere prevailed in the class, though very few students seemed less participating.

Data Analysis

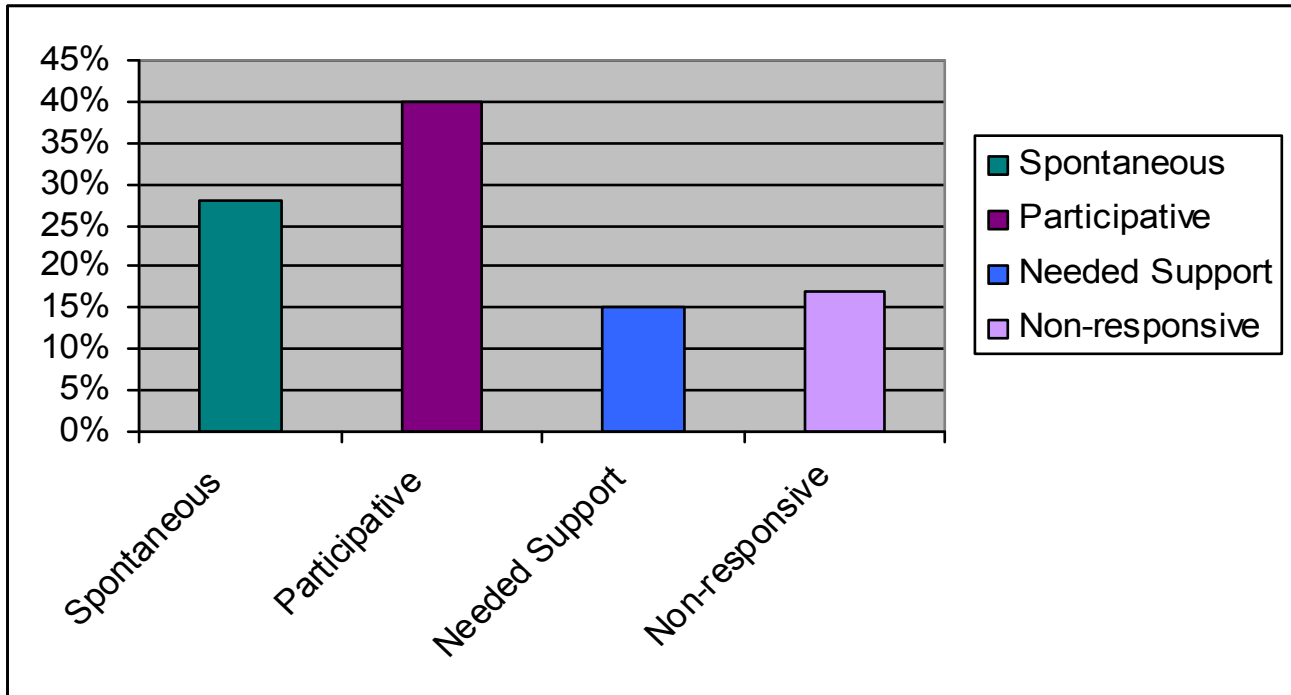
Data analysis has been done both quantitatively and qualitatively. The following figures show the quantitative data of the findings:

Before showing the movie *Shrek 2*, the learners participated in an open discussion where they discussed their personal information such as their interests in reading books, hobbies or information about their family. 28% of the students were spontaneous in their participation, though 40% of the learners participated when their turns came, 15% learners needed support and 17% learners showed no interest in speaking or participating in the discussion.

On the other hand, during the one hour discussion after the movie was shown 28% learners remained spirited as to participate in the discussion while 52% learners took part when their turns came. At this point 12% learners needed support and yet another 8% students remained quite unwilling to participate.

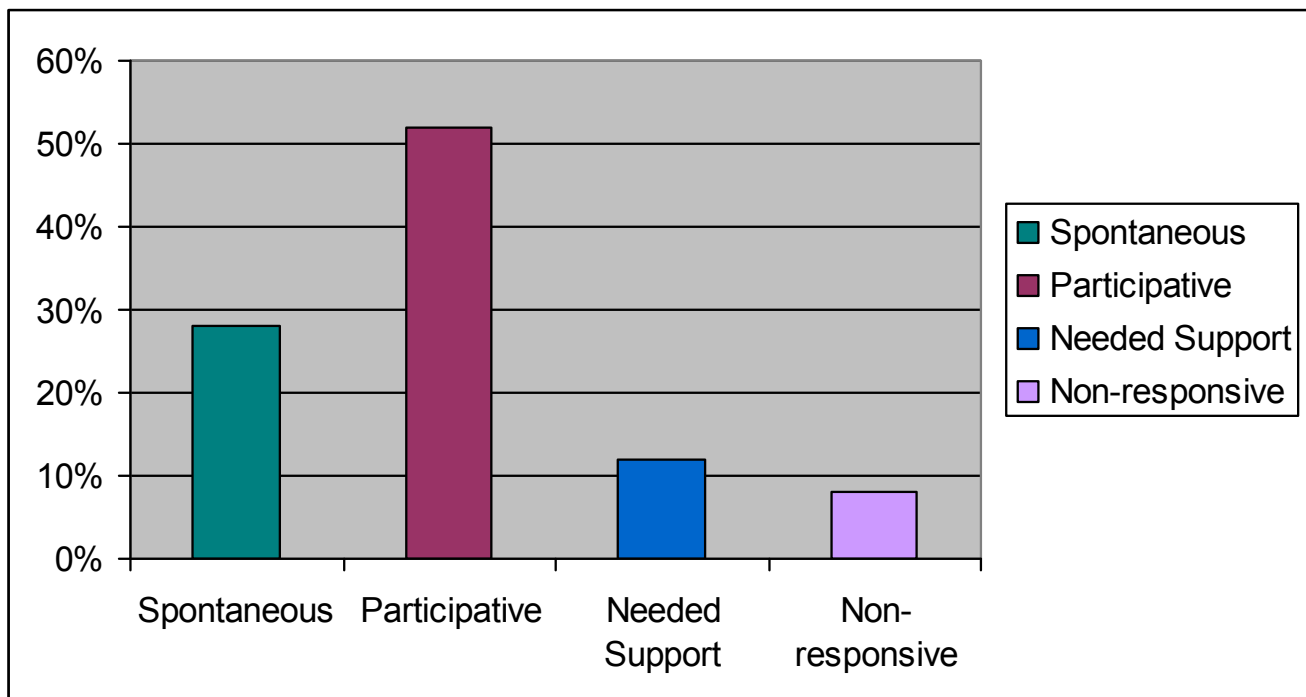
At the end, the data shows that the number of spontaneous learners remained unchanged in each case while the percentage of participative learners increased by 12%. Again, the percentage of learners who needed support decreased by 3% and the percentage of non-responsive learners decreased by 9%.

The findings again show that learners got many correct English sentences into their head. Many of them could imitate the correct English and could make their own sentences. They learnt even uncommon terms like 'ogres' or learnt the difference between a 'castle' and a 'tower'.



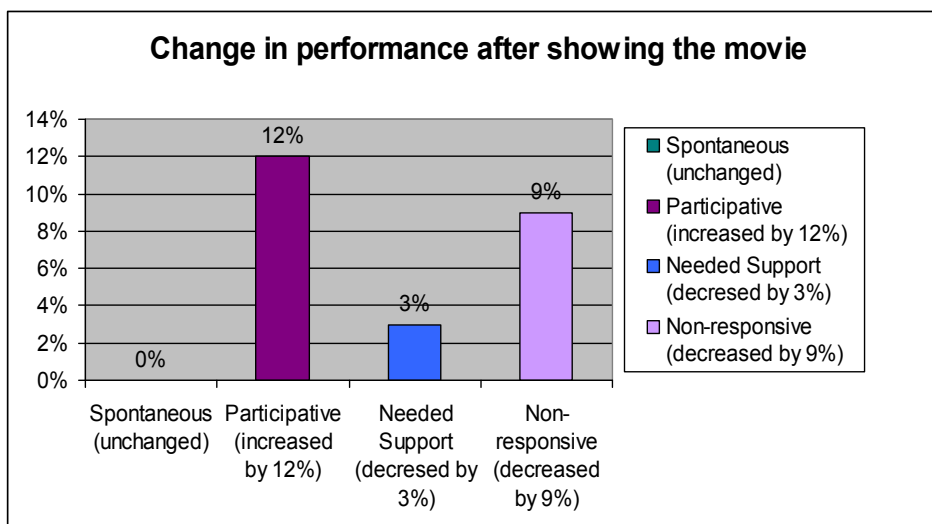
28% learners participated in speaking spontaneously
 40% learners participated when their turns came
 15% learners needed support while speaking
 17% learners seemed unwilling to speak

Fig. 1. Learners' performance before showing the movie



28% learners participated in speaking spontaneously
 52% learners participated when their turns came
 12% learners needed support while speaking
 8% learners seemed unwilling to speak

Fig. 2. Learners' performance after showing the movie



Percentage of spontaneous learners remained unchanged
 Percentage of participative learners increased by 12%
 Percentage of learners who needed support decreased by 3%
 Percentage of non-responsive learners decreased by 9%

Fig. 3. Learners' change in performance after showing the movie

They learnt or at least tried to make characterization when learners could use terms such as 'villain' or 'wicked'. The learners showed the tendency to express themselves on their own. Furthermore, watching English movies gave learners more opportunities to speak English more or less correctly because of the following reasons:

1. Learners learnt words the native speakers used in the movie
2. The Movie let them improve their pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.
3. English movies are made for the native speakers, not for learners of English. So the actors talk fast which creates excellent scopes to get the authentic source of listening to and learning from the target language.

Moreover, feedback from the students through questionnaire proves that the learners feel less under pressure if their lessons are based on a movie. Most of them approved of showing movies in the class. They preferred silent watching and then discussion on the movies.

Conclusion

Seeing the expressions written is easier than listening to authentic language. It is easy through watching movies to learn vocabulary and develop speaking. ESL teachers should take the initiative to motivate the students in learning a language. Movies have both audio and visual components which may lead to motivation. Watching movies can be stimulating. Learners' individual feelings, which form the classroom environment, will be improved if they are told that they would watch a movie. Learners' speaking as well as listening skills would more or less develop if appropriate movies can be shown in the classroom. Moreover, audiovisual material enriches the students' schemas and helps them to acquire values and attitudes that are different from their own. Watching a movie,

learners are likely to interact with some of the characters depicted, and thus develop an understanding of and empathy for these actors. Since the people in the film are native speakers of the language, the students acquire besides the language the target culture, which are shown in the movies. Movies also enable students to look to the movies from multiple perspectives according to the student's learning style.

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- Students: YESSS.
- Teacher: (P1), which character attracted you most and why?
- (P1:1): Mmm...the donkey..'cz he..mm it made the movie quite funny...n..n..the voice was pretty interesting..
- (P2:1): I agree! He is the most interesting character in the movie...because of his clever attitude...and the way he saved the whole of first segment in the dragon's palace.
- (P3:1): But he is a donkey, what about that? A donkey is the hero for you...! Hah, what a laugh?
- (P1:2): Really. But whoever is interesting we should appreciate.
- (P4:1): But you should tell us the reason. Mam, I like Fiona the most...Because...because I think she is courageous ...mmm...she refused to be a princess.
- (P3:2): You are right ...Fiona showed that she is not...not easily influenced by anyone!
- (P5:1): But don't u think Shrek is the real hero...because of all the heroic job in the movie?
- (P3:3): But listen we are talkin' about being interesting not heroic!
- (P1:3): Now you come to the point...it's the matter of being interesting. The donkey is interesting and funny character.
- (P2:2): P3 ...now you have to agree with us!
- (P4:2): Lemme clear it! Fiona has all the qualities to be the centre character. She is the princess n...n....cursedn locked in the tower. She makes the story goin'.
- Teacher: Okay...er... what do you think about the story, P6?
- (P6:1): mmm...it is a cartoon which ...which ...mm... is like a movie.
- (P7:1): It is an animated movie. Its a story of a princess who is cursed by a witch n...n the cursed would be removed if any prince could rescue her.
- (P8:1): Infact she is locked in tower n there is dragon to guard.
- (P7:2): Right. She is supposed..to be rescued from there.
- (P8:2): But Shrek is not a prince. He is what they call an 'ogre'. That's why the spell is not broken even after Fiona was rescued.
- (P7:3): Then it wouldn't be Shrek 2. They would live happily ever after.
- (P8:3): They do live happily ever after.

Appendix 1

Total Number of students: 25

Number of Participants: 21

*Participants are identified by serial numbers

*P= Participants

Teacher: So, did you like the movie?

(P7:4): But not as a prince or princess but as 'ogres' as you said.

Teacher: what do you think of her parents, P9?

(P9:1): Mam, they are King Harold and Queen Lillian. I think they are right. Because their daughter married an animal.

Participants: [ha ha ha ...]

(P10:1): But both of them are ogres. That's why they married.

(P11:1): No Fiona is half human and half ogre, remember?

(P10:2): But still she ogre most of the time.

(P12:1): No you forgot the story. She is human in the day time. But in night she is ogre.

(P13:1): So no prince will marry her. So she is not sad.

(P14:1): What do you mean? I think she think Shrek is the prince.

(P15:1): No she just want to go from the castle.

(P16:1): It's not a castle. It's called tower.

Teacher: Do you think the same way about Fiona?

(P17:1): Mam I think Laila is right.

Teacher: About what?

(P12:2): She just want to leave the castle.

(P18:1): But after that she was always with the Shrek.

I think she was happy with Shrek.

Teacher: What about you, P19? What do you think about the Fairy God mother?

(P19:1): She is the villain I think 'n (.3) very bad person. She

Started all the problem in the movie.

(P20:1): But she is interesting 'n very cute.

(P21:1): She did everything bad in the movie. She was wicked.

Teacher: OK (.2) that's all for today.

Students: Thank you mam.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for students:

1. What kind of atmosphere do you expect in language classes, especially in a speaking class?
 - a. friendly atmosphere
 - b. time to listen to lectures
 - c. time to gossip
 2. Do you think showing movies in the class is useful?
 - a. gives a break from studies
 - b. gives reason to talk about it later
 - c. helpful for improving speaking
 3. Which activity do you find most interesting?
 - a. pairwork
 - b. groupwork
 - c. silent watching
 4. Do you find it easy to talk about the movie?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 5. give reasons for your answers(ques.4):
-
6. What do you think about your performance after the film-show?
 - a. quite confident
 - b. developing
 - c. not sure
