WHAT IF THE CLASSROOM IS LIKE THE CINEMA FOR ELLs?

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ABSTRACT

For globalization, since five years ago, my institution has established the Foreign Exchange Programs with several colleges and universities around the world. In the course of Business English, I always have foreign exchange students from Japan, Philippine, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, India, Indonesia, Germany, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia. To accommodate the foreign students' needs from social, cultural, linguistic, and religious perspectives, and to help students develop the cultural awareness, the author conceptualized pragmatics, semiotics, aesthetics, and paralinguistics into the course of Business English by inviting students of diverse backgrounds to watch movies, talk about movies, write movies, and act movies. Pragmatics is the study of how language is used for communication in various social and cultural contexts; semiotics is the study of signs including languages, arts, music, dance, drama, films, etc.; aesthetics is the artistic stance that learners take for response to literacy experience; and paralinguistics is the linguistic behavior like the nonverbal signals including kinesics, gestures, body movement, eye contact, facial expression, voice in stress, pitch, and intonation. The purposes of this study are multi-functional: to develop the multisensory acquisition of literacy skills in thinking, listening, speaking, writing and reading in the natural authentic context, to promote students' cultural awareness, and to expand students' engagement. The multicultural movies from TV, DVD, YouTube, and Films on Demand are carefully selected to be implemented in this course. Based on my observation on students' interactive activities, collaboration in the group studies, and cultural awareness, I conclude that movies motivate students' interest in language learning, improve their listening comprehension, and provide opportunities for talking by discussing the movies, writing the movie scripts, reading their peers' movie scripts, and acting the movies. Both students from diversity and mainstream cultures acquire natural language for social function towards academic success and globalization.

Keywords: pragmatics; semiotics; aesthetics; paralinguistics, social language.

INTRODUCTION

The author explored the second language acquisition process of students from diversity, whose first language was not English in the course of Business English. To motivate those ELL students' interest in learning English, and to make the course more effective for communicative competency, the author and his students worked together to implement movies in this course and found movies expedited the ELLs (English language Learners) social language and benefited them for academic success toward globalization too.

The Limits in the classroom

Bardovi-Harlig (2011) assured that most ELLs have little opportunity to engage in appropriate linguistic activity outside classroom, which results in a growing awareness that simply exposing ELLs to grammatically correct rules is inadequate. The author observed that most students from diversity rarely asked questions or answered questions in the classroom,

but kept smiling. Those students were very active when they played with their native language speaking peers in the playground during recess or lunch time, while they had little interaction with their English-speaking peers.

The limits of teachers' being cultural bounds

Most teachers in this institute are "cultural bounds" – not interested in students from diversity, and are not trained to communicate with their students from diversity.

The limits of communication: sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failure

In using languages for effective communication, learners have to figure out "when" it is appropriate to perform a particular language function and "how" to encode it (Ellis, 1995). Thomas (1983) noticed that learners frequently experience difficulties with both: "sociopragmatic failure", which occurs when learners produce socially inappropriate behavior, and "pragmalinguistic failure", which occurs when learners do not express themselves in a linguistically appropriate manner. This is the reason that "paralinguistics" (Magrath, 2015) or nonverbal communication signals (Cherry, 2014) obtained from observing real peoples' conversation in the authentic setting is necessary. Watching movies in this study is to fill up the gap, while there has been very little research on second language (L2) learning with movies (Gibson, 2014).

Objectives

Inspired by the *Movie Script* (Hoffner, 2003), the author attempted to add movies in the course of Business English by encouraging students to watch movies. The movie activity engaged students from diversity, and developed the students' functional literacy (Ariza, 2009; Dolly, 1998) for social interaction towards academic success.

LITERATURE REVIEW: PRAGMATIC, SEMIOTICS AND AESTHETICS
Pragmatics

To Grice (1989), pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that deals with norms of conversation. Generally pragmatics was defined as the study of how language is used in communication in various social and cultural contexts (Ariza, 2009; Ellis, 1995; Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). It covers a wide range of linguistic phenomena like deixis, conversational implicature, presupposition, illocutionary acts, conversational structures, and repair (Ellis, 1995). Pragmatics is particularly concerned with appropriateness, with regard to what is said in a particular context and how it is said.

Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs like languages, arts, music, dance, drama, films, cultures, etc. that humans created to mediate the world (Cunningham, 1992; Deely, 1994; Sebeok, 1978; 2001; Siegel, 2006). In this study, the movie is the target sign, with its audio-visual artistic device to demonstrate various paralinguistics (Magrath, 2015) or nonverbal communication signals (Cherry, 2014; Cushner, McClelland, Safford, 2012) such as kinesics, gestures, head movements, posture, eye contact, tone of voice, and facial expression that were infused in literacy education for appropriate and effective communication. For a good language art

curriculum must be able to expand a learner's potential for understanding and communicating through various signs, not only languages (Burke & Harste, 2008).

Movie is the all-inclusive artistic composition (Eisner, 1978; 2002; Goldberg, 2001; Piazza, 1999; Uhrmacher, & Matthews, 2005) with language, arts, music, dance, drama, cultures, and nonverbal communication signals, etc. which attract learners' attention more than the books, and motivate their interest in using multisensory literacy skills in thinking, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as nonverbal behaviors for more appropriate communication to achieve personal goals.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the artistic stance that learners take to the responses to literary works (Cornett, 1999; Eisner, 1972; Goldberg, 2001; Piazza, 1999). In this study, movies are used beyond the scope of pragmatics, and are more attractive to students with the artistic/visual attributes. Debes (1969) defined "Visual Literacy" as a group of vision-competencies that a human being develops by seeing and simultaneously integrating other sensory experiences, and the development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. To Dewey (1934), art is the visual form of experience that vivifies life. Langer (1957) extends it, and declares that works of art are projections or images of feelings, presenting feelings, and making it visible or audible or perceivable through the symbols.

METHOD
Participants

The author and his students including the foreign exchange students in the course of Business English were invited to participate in the movie activities.

Materials

A good movie, like literature, that bears the moral themes such as the love of peace, justice, courage, honesty, kindness, righteousness, collaboration, and friendship (Norton, 2011). Since Disney movies comprise these themes, rich in action (Hoffner, 2003), and are employed in this study. The students' favorite movies are *Finding Nemo, Wizard of Oz, Little Mermaid, Lion King, Charlotte's Web, Pocahontas, etc.* The foreign exchange students brought with them their favorite movies too. In this study, only *The Little Mermaid* is discussed.

Process

The author briefly introduced the story of the movie with literary elements like characterization, settings, plots, and the themes in the form of graphic organizer, and the key vocabulary words in the movies to enhance students' "comprehensive input" (Krashen, 1982) before they watched the movies.

Students were grouped by five or six mixed diversity and mainstream cultures. The whole class watched the movie for five minutes, and the 1st group went outside of the classroom talking about the movie, picking up roles, writing the movie script (playwright) based on his/her role, sharing the draft of the movie script in the small group. The group members reviewed and modified the movie script for group rehearsal. The other groups kept watching

the movie. Five minutes later, the 2nd group went out to do the same activity until the last group completed the rehearsal. The whole class acted the movie.

Each group submitted the draft of the movie script to the author. The assistant collected the drafts of the movie script, edited the draft, typed it, and highlighted the movie script with different colors, i.e. blue, red, green, purple, and yellow for students to take home, and memorize the script at home with the help of their roommates for the week playing on Friday.

RESULTS
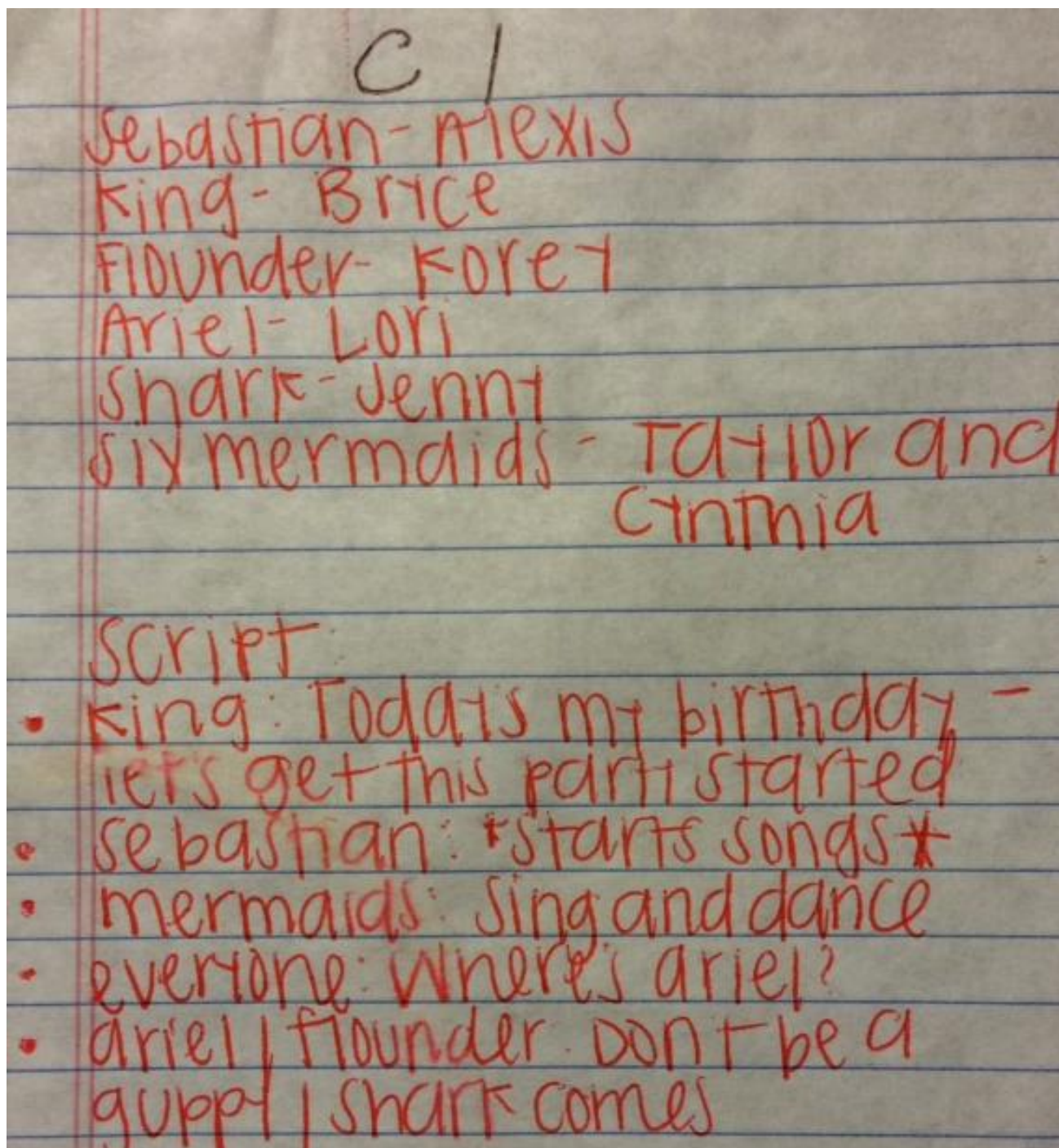
C 2

Ariel- ~~A~~manda

Flounder- Marina

Tritant- ~~Drew~~ Jason

Sabastian- Jacob

Scuttle ~~props~~ - Victoria

Ariel: what is this?
Scuttle: this is a dingle
  Hopper. Humans use this
  to do their hair. & this
  is used for music
A: music?! oh no! I forgot
  the concert
Flounder: no!
Tritant: Your irriponsible!
seb: you ~~~~ ruined my concert!
Ariel: whatever
T: Im taking your <u>shell phone</u>
seb: she needs supervision
T: yes! you watch over her
A: I want more

C - 3

~~Dane dep onde qtose~~

Erie → MUTE *Washing up on Shore*

Ariel: *Pokes Erie* Hey, I think
he's dead

Flounder: Cool, a body!

Sebastian: Yup, he looks dead to me

Ariel: Wait! ~~his~~ his chest is moving

Sebastion: So he can't be dead.

Flounder: Poke him again

~~Ark~~ Erie:* Chokes on Water*

Ariel: Are you okay?

Erie: Yes! I'm Alive!

Everybody: HE'S ALIVE *Applause*

DISCUSSION
English Language Proficiency

Movie invited multisensory development through the stimuli of audio-visual device for listening comprehension, speaking fluency, writing skills (movie script), reading competency, critical thinking, and imagination. For example, every student, either from diversity or the mainstream cultures, was able to use invented spellings (Laminack & Wood, 2006) as well as conventional spellings to write at least two complete sentences as movie scripts to express what he/she watched of the movie for five minutes. The author noticed that students in each group learned the social skills for respectful manner. They listened to each other, they talked, they discussed, they negotiated, and they reconciled in English. They read their peer's script, and help to edit the scripts. The five literacy skills in thinking, listening, speaking, reading and writing were practiced in each group. During rehearsal, each student was able to include the nonverbal communicational signals in the acting.

Movie is one form of visual literacy

Based on Gardner (1983), people were born with different intelligences and have different learning styles. But all normal humans learning better through visual or audio device.

Research suggests that people learn abstract, new, and novel concepts more easily when they are presented in both verbal and visual form (Salomon, 1979). Other empirical research shows that visual media make concepts more accessible to a person than text media and help with later recall (Cowen, 1984)

English for specific purposes: movie across the contents

Decker (2014) declares that media can be used to enhance teaching and learning from the web of http://www,teachwithmovies.org/. The selected movies can be used in the teaching and learning of English language arts like phonics, phonemic awareness from *Cat in the Hat,* life science of spider's life cycle *from Charlotte's Web,* food chain by *The Lion King, etc.*

Pragmatic competency: teaching natural conversation

In addition to the instruction of essential linguistics (Freeman & Freeman, 2014) like reading strategies, ESL, spelling, phonics, and grammar, the teacher educator implemented activities for Pragmatics: Teaching natural conversation (Houck, & Tatsuki, 2011) in this course, so that students, both Taiwanese students and foreign exchange students will learn how to communicate through the following interactional activities in authentic language patterns, e.g. expressing gratitude (Bardovi-Harlig & Nickels, 2011), saying apologies (Lieske, 2011), paying compliments (Carduner, 2011), taking turns & talking naturally (Carroll, 2011), and performing pragmatic competency in telephone conversation (Wong, 2011) by role play and small group activity. Through this kind of authentic discourse, the ELLs develop functional literacy (Dolly, 1998) for social success.

Communicative competence

The ability to use language is a contextually appropriate fashion, and pragmatic competence is a fundamental aspect of a more general communicative competence including the effectiveness of communication for the purposes of confirming, commending, convincing,

and persuading. To achieve the communicative competence, what the learners need is beyond the correct instruction of phonics (sound system), syntax (grammar), and semantics (meaning). They need to understand and communicate with the various types of nonverbal communication signals: kinestics, gestures (emblems, illustrations), head movement, posture, eye contact, facial expression, and intonation in an appropriate manner (Cherry, 2014; Magrath, 2015).

Sociolinguistic competence

Learners are expected to be knowledgeable about sociocultural rules of using languages. It is concerned with the learners' ability to handle settings, topics and communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts. In addition, it deals with the use of appropriate grammatical forms for different communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts, and social skills for collaboration through speaking, talking, discussion, negotiation and organization for the building of leadership. The author always encouraged the teacher candidates to assign students in the small groups took turns to be the leading role as movie director. Students from diversity as well as the mainstream, boys, girls, struggling learners, advanced learners, that means, everyone had the opportunity to take the leading role.

Discourse competence

This is related to the learners' mastery of understanding and producing texts in the modes of thinking, listening, speaking, readingand writing. It deals with cohesion and coherence in different types of texts.

Cultural awareness

Magrath (2015) declared that the study of a second language is the study of another culture. Language is both a product and a shaper of culture (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2012). Language and culture are intertwined. Through the study of other languages, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the cultures that use the language. Students learning English, or any other language, also learn the target culture. Movies in this study convey the knowledge of culture, and strategies for language acquisition as well. To help students from diversity to transit to the dominate culture and accommodate to American culture is as important as English language acquisition.

CONCLUSION
Social media expedite English language acquisition

Gibson (2014) declared that there has been very little research on second language learning with movies, and there does not appear to be any data on the amount of time that L2 learners watch movies.

Crumpler (2014) recommended that social media can truly spark curiosity and engage the interests of youth today. Educators must reach them through what they find interesting. Social media is a powerful tool that classroom teachers can use to deeply access the learning potential of the young generation. Based on her research, schools and educators need to implement effective strategies for dropout prevention in all education levels and environments.

Movies across the curriculum: culture, science, social studies, Arts

The web *www.teachwithmovies.org*with thousand lessons demonstrate how to include movies in the content areas like arts, music, math, science, social studies, English language arts, etc.

 Krashen's hypotheses on second language acquisition

The study in this research reveals that movies provide valuable resources in second language classrooms and fit Krashen's second language acquisition hypotheses (1982): acquisition rather than learning, natural approach, comprehensive input, free filter environment, self-monitor opportunity, and motivate ELLs' interest in learning. The benefits of using movies in second language classroom are more valuable than the books, especially the audio-visual artistic effects, and the nonverbal communication manners to the second language learners for acquisition of language proficiency and social/cultural competency.

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