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Effect of Movies in English on Teaching Students of Technical Specialities Listening

It is well known that movies have a tremendous effect on people's lives as long as they are not only means of leisure spending but culture representatives, authentic sources of foreign languages for people of different nationalities and even educational aids. The latter is the subject of these theses.

In the process of teaching English to students of technical specialities at universities of countries where English is a foreign language, one of the most important aspects is making an educational material understandable for them and, what is vital, interesting and memorable. J. C. Richards and D. B. Gordon [6, p. 2] state in their work that videos enable people, who study a foreign language, to employ visual information in order to boost comprehension, observing body language that accompanies speech (gestures, facial expressions, etc.) and being simultaneously exposed to an authentic language (i.e. for technical students that includes their professional terminology), as well as cultural information about native English speakers.

In the course of study, students should realize clearly that they need English for their future professions and be interested in getting that knowledge, but, for all that, be ready to give feedback at English lessons. In order to do that, students should obtain sufficient vocabulary including both technical and everyday words and phrases. Video subtitles can help them with that. T. Garza's [2 (as cited in 3)] research results showed that a visual channel, enhanced with the help of textual aids that provide additional information to that offered by the auditory channel, promotes students' foreign language perception, retention and recall of presented vocabulary. The researcher's comparison of 2 groups of students' scores after a comprehension test demonstrated that those who

watched video fragments with subtitles got the highest marks. M. Danan [1] received the same results, seeing the enhancement of students' vocabulary acquisition.

The aforesaid facts stand for the use of videos at English lessons. But it should be mentioned that the use of movies – or their fragments – is even more beneficial than of specially-prepared educational videos. The reason for that is the fact that films give their viewers an incomparable access to the authentic language with all its vocabulary and word-combinations, including neologisms, that may not be present in video materials created exactly for teaching, whereas these educational videos are made mainly with the aim of being understandable for people who study a language, and so present slower speech rate, shorter phrases and sentences, what is a double-edged weapon since, on the one hand, students have fewer problems with comprehension, and the progress of study is easier reachable, but, on the other hand, sometime later, when they find themselves in their professional sphere and are to communicate with their colleagues from other countries, it may be rather hard for them as non-native listeners to grasp naturally produced clear English speech, which is rich in neologisms that emerge in a “live” language every year and so cannot be found in specially-prepared training video recordings made earlier, or even much earlier, than these neologisms appeared; the same is with other words and phrases that may be used by people on the daily basis but be absent from videos with literary language because they are considered colloquial.

The preceding superiority of movies over educational video materials with “artificial” foreign language confirm R. Smiljanic and A. R. Bradlow [7, p. 252-253], saying that “in more natural communicative situations, that is, outside of laboratory, talkers produce speech that is more complex and involves producing utterances that are longer than syllables, words or short sentences. Spontaneously produced clear speech may, therefore, show different patterns and degrees of articulatory-acoustic adjustments compared to clear speech produced in laboratory conditions.”

In addition to the provision of up-to-date authentic English vocabulary to viewers and illustrative demonstration of concepts that students of technical specialities study at

professional lessons at their university, another essential advantage of movies is their role in vocabulary expansion. R. L. Oxford [5, p. 40 (as cited in 4, p. 181)] outlines the process and results of using films in teaching a foreign language: 1) connection of the verbal and the visual, 2) the most efficiently packaged parts of information are transferred to the long-term memory through visual images, 3) visual images become the most powerful aid to recall verbal material.

To sum up, the use of movies for teaching English to students of technical specialities at universities is a substantial aid, which helps to keep students interested in the foreign language and culture, motivated to continue improving their level of English, as well as communicative skills, and engrossed in expanding their vocabulary of professional and general English.

References:

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