

The Effectiveness of Watching English Movies on Pragmatic Improvement and Willingness to Communicate among Nursing Students

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Abstract

Introduction: Communication skills can be improved in a variety of ways. Watching movies is thought to contribute to the acquisition of permanent knowledge. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the effect of watching English movies on nursing students' pragmatic improvement and communication skills.

Methods: This experimental study included 36 volunteer nursing students at Kerman University of Medical Sciences who conformed to the criteria for inclusion. The participants were classified into two groups experimental (EG = 18) and control (CG = 18). Three instruments were used to collect the data of this study: Quick Oxford Placement Test, pre and post-test of Pragmatic Analysis, and WTC questionnaire. The results were analyzed using EXCELL and SPSS Software.

Results: The mean for the pretest of CG and EG was 12.95 ± 1.08 and 13.45 ± 1.02 , respectively changed to 13.65 ± 0.14 and 16.7 ± 0.651 in the posttest. A significant difference was observed between pre and post-test of the experimental group ($P = 0.000$). The mean for the pre-administration of the WTC questionnaire for CG and EG was 103.87 ± 1.23 and 99.77 ± 1.88 , respectively changed to 125.66 ± 0.96 and 175.06 ± 2.43 for the post-administration of the groups. As the data reveals, a positive relationship was observed between WTC and pragmatic knowledge: Beta = 0.668, $t = 8.889$, $P < 0.05$ among nursing students.

Conclusion: Study aids along with theoretical lessons help nursing students to enhance their English language communication skills permanently. Accordingly, watching movies is beneficial for students' communication and learning professional skills that are peculiar to the occupation of nursing. Further studies about the impact of movies should be done on much larger samples of students.

Keywords: pragmatic competence, movie-watching, willingness to communicate, nursing students

Introduction

Pragmatics as a branch of applied linguistics is concerned with the contextual use of language and the utterances being used to transfer meaning. Different definitions have been given to pragmatics. Alsuhaibani's study¹ referred to pragmatics as being the study of contextual meaning. Yule's² definition reflects an understanding of pragmatics as being "the meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener". Al-Qahtani³ elaborated pragmatics by emphasizing the factors that influence our language choice in the context of social interaction and the resulted effect of these choices. This definition indicates the necessity of some important factors having been formulated in specific social contexts. It can be concluded and based on the given definitions, pragmatics is considered to be

one of the elements that constitutes the communication effectiveness in L2.⁴

Pragmatic competence (PC) that is defined to be the ability of using language appropriately is now widely recognized to play an important role in EFL or L2 education.⁵ Most models of communicative competence recognize PC as the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and nonlinguistic signals in the context of socio- culturally organized activities.⁶ PC is comprised of two types of knowledge: pragma linguistic (how language form affects meaning) and sociopragmatic (how to adapt language according to situational or social factors).⁵ It has been introduced to be the most important factor to effective communication and

success in second language (L2) learning.⁷ Despite this attitude towards PC, its improvement can lead to some challenges in the EFL context. Studies have revealed that the learners belonging to different levels of proficiency in some situations face difficulties in using their PC appropriately in their daily communication.⁸ On the other hand, studies on L2 pragmatics have focused on the EFL learners' differences.^{9,10}

The primary aim of nursing education is to facilitate student comprehension of nursing practices and the underlying professional ethos. Additionally, students are required to develop distinct competencies, including the cultivation of effective interpersonal communication skills and the ability to establish meaningful relationships, as nursing embodies a service-oriented profession.¹¹ Communication-focused courses are integrated into the curriculum for undergraduate nursing students, enabling them to enhance their personal and professional growth by fostering self-assurance and self-esteem.⁷ Willingness to communicate (WTC) having been elaborated as readiness to communicate in the L2 context (MacIntyre, 2007) is a factor that influences individual differences in language learning.^{12,13} It is found as a very important factor for effective communication.¹⁴ Studies have introduced a number of factors impacting WTC in EFL context. As an instance, Liu¹⁵ explored Chinese learners' WTC in Chinese and learners that their WTC was assigned by the anxiety in speaking and length of residence in China. Moreover, Nkrumah¹⁶ discovered that the two environment and teaching method impacted Chinese learners' WTC. On the other hand, Hosseinpur and Nevisi,¹⁷ who came to different achievements, identified a positive correlation between pragmatics and WTC. However, few studies can be named that could identify any kind of relationship between pragmatics and WTC. Meanwhile, not enough attention has been devoted to the WTC of EFL learners from pragmatics' point of view. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the effect of watching English movies on nursing students' pragmatic knowledge as well as their WTC.

Materials and Methods

This experimental study consisted of nursing students who educated in 2021-2022 academic year at Kerman University of Medical sciences. This Research involving human subjects complied with all relevant national regulations, institutional policies and is in

accordance with the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration. This research was conducted with the consent of the participants. They were also assured that all information collected will remain confidential. The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest. Because this study is not of clinical type and the participants of this study are not patients, ethical approval was not required for this study.

Students participated in the study voluntarily. English is one of their major courses they had to study. Moreover, since most of the students are interested in immigration, they have shown a great tendency to master the oral skills of English and coming to the level to be successful in communicating English. They were then motivated to hear about the careful teaching procedures that would lead to their success in speaking English. Cambridge Placement Test was run to homogenize the true subjects. As a result of the test, 9 students who were either too high or too low were eliminated from the study. The others (N = 36) established the subjects of the study that subsequently were randomly assigned into two groups of experimental (EG = 18) and control groups (CG = 18). Thus, the researcher used purposive sampling procedures to select the subjects. In assigning the participants, the researcher tries to observe ethical issues by taking the consent of the participants.

Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect the data of this study: Quick Oxford Placement Test, pre and posttest of Pragmatic Analysis, and WTC questionnaire.

Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test

To estimate the pragmatic knowledge of the participants, the Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT) developed by Birjandi and Rezaei¹⁸ was used. The test contained 20 situations focusing on the two speech acts. Any test item introduced a situation and then the question items were designed based on the provided context. It is important to state the subjects were given the required instructions in Persian about what the test was about and also any difficulties of comprehending the situations that were anticipated by the researcher were explained. The test was taken two times: once at the beginning of the experiment and the other after they had received the instruction. Cronbach Alfa was run to estimate the test reliability. It came to .91, high

enough for the study. To confirm the validity of the questionnaire, Birjandi and Rezaei¹⁸ followed the required procedures to ensure the content as well as the choices of each test item

WTC Questionnaire

To evaluate the subject's attitudes on their level of WTC, this study employed the questionnaire developed by MacIntyre et al.¹⁹ The questionnaire contains 27 items being divided into 4 categories of speaking, reading, writing and comprehension in an English class. Five point Likert scale beginning with "almost never willing" to "almost always willing" was used to seek the attitudes of the learners. MacIntyre, et al.¹⁹ described this scale as a reliable and valid one. Moreover, this study estimated separately the reliability of each category of speaking (8 items, $\alpha = 0.87$), comprehension (5 items, $\alpha = 0.92$), reading (6 items, $\alpha = 0.77$), and writing (8 items, $\alpha = 0.83$).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

As the procedure of the study, *Friends Series*, a popular American TV show created by David Crane and Marta Kauffman (1994-2004), were used. The stories are attractive and reflect American everyday life and can attract the young audience. Only five episodes were recommended to be watched. The students in EG spent 15 to 20 minutes watching as well as analyzing segments of the movies every session for four months period. In parallel, the participants were instructed to focus on the speech acts being used in the film in different formal and informal situations. The reason for selecting this movie was that the dialogs presented everyday-social roles and offered multiple, age-appropriate relationships and thus the viewers were exposed to various speech acts and relational work. On the other hand, the participants in CG were instructed

to follow their ordinary conventional teaching method of using their English textbooks for this group. Fortunately, none of the students were absent during the treatment, and this factor would increase the validity and reliability of the results. During the last session, the learners received the pragmatic posttest and the WTC questionnaire to answer. After this step, all the data were gathered for analyzes and interpretation.

Statistical Analysis

Analysis of the quantitative data from the questionnaires and tests is performed using Excel and SPSS software version 21. Both descriptive and inferential data were used to show the effective use of films on the use of certain set of speech acts and boosting pragmatic motivation of the language learners were developed. In fact, the scope of the study was limited to teaching and practicing only two samples of speech acts in order to have the required control over different variables that appear throughout the study. More precisely, paired-samples *t*-tests and independent -samples *t*-tests were employed to determine any significant differences in the pre-and post-test scores between the experimental and control groups.

Results

Descriptive Statistics (Discourse Completion Test)

It is clear, the mean for the pretest of CG and EG was calculated to be 12.95 (1.08) and 13.45 (1.02), respectively that changed to 13.65 (0.14) and 16.7 (0.651) in the posttest. The result of the paired sample *t*-test analysis did not show any significant difference between the mean scores for the pre and post-test of the control group ($P = 0.12$) but a significant difference was observed in the mean scores for the experimental group in pre and post- test (Table 1).

Table 1. Results of Pre- and Post-test in Pragmatic Learning of Participants

Pragmatic learning	Test	Mean (SD)	T-Test	Df	P-Value of T-Test
EG (n = 18)	Pre-test	13.45 (1.02)	-9.15	17	0.000
	Post-test	16.07 (0.651)			
CG (n = 18)	Pre-test	12.95 (1.08)	0.5	17	0.12
	Post-test	13.65 (0.14)			

Data of WTC Questionnaire

As Table 2 indicates, the mean for the pre-administration of the WTC questionnaire for CG and

EG was calculated to be 103.87 (1.23) and 99.77 (1.88), respectively that changed to 125.66 (0.96) and 175.06 (2.43) for the post-administration of the

groups. The considerable change in the means indicates the effect of movie-watching on the WTC of the participants. In other words, their WTC was affected by exposure to the movie-watching for a period of time.

As the data reveals, the relationship between the two variables was calculated to be significant: $\text{sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$. Moreover, there was a positive significant

relationship between WTC and pragmatic knowledge: $\text{Beta} = 0.668, t = 8.889, P < 0.05$) among nursing students. The equation indicates that higher WTC is meaningfully associated with higher mastery of pragmatic learning among the learners. This indicates that the learners with higher pragmatic knowledge have higher level of WTC and they are more successful in developing this trait.

Table 2. Descriptive Data on Pre- and Post-administration of WTC Questionnaire (CG)

WTC Questionnaire	Test	Mean(SD)	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
EG	Pre ad. of WTC	99.77(1.88)	0.431	65.44	156.93
	Post ad. of WTC	175.06(2.43)	0.961	85.6	166.25
CG	Pre ad. of WTC	103.87(1.23)	0.32	71.00	160.00
	Post ad. of WTC	125.66(0.96)	0.67	85.6	114.33

Table 3. Regression Analysis for the Relationship between WTC and pragmatic Learning

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	6.205	1.067		5.818	0.000
WTC	0.090	0.010	.668	8.889	0.000

Discussion

Pragmatic competence development has been regarded to be the key to effective and meaningful communication. Despite this fact, the development of pragmatic competence can lead to serious challenges for the learners who study the language out of L2 context. Nursing students need English for two reasons: to be able to read a great deal of English material as a part of their ESP courses and also be able to communicate in English as an immigrant. All these require them to learn English and provide them with the required motivation. However, not all of them are successful to achieve this goal since they face various theoretical and practical restrictions. To overcome some part of the problem that they face, this study was carried out by introducing movie-watching in their curriculum. The results of our study showed that watching movies is effective in teaching communication skills. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference between participants' pre-test and post-test scores on the pragmatic learning. Thus the researchers' intervention contributed to the positive development of participants' communication skills. Past studies have also shown that watching movies triggers positive changes in individuals related to the aim of the observation.^{20,21} These findings are in accordance with the findings of this study.

Based on the study's outcomes, exposure to movie-

watching had an impact on the participants' WTC over a period of time. The pleasurable nature of films played a significant role in stimulating their motivation to learn the English language, as supported by previous research conducted by Ismaili,²² Khan,²³ and Nath et al.²⁴ These studies emphasized that films served as an enjoyable resource for acquiring English and facilitated the creation of a conducive learning environment. Furthermore, this aligns with Khan's²³ assertion that learning English through films, which can serve as a source of motivation, was both enjoyable and entertaining. Additionally, the findings revealed that students felt more motivated to speak English after watching movies, consistent with the findings reported by Kabooha,²⁵ Nath et al.,²⁴ and Madiyoh & Putro,²⁶ indicating that English film activities enhanced learners' motivation and confidence to engage in English conversation.

According to our statistical analysis, there is a significant positive relationship between nursing students' understanding of pragmatics and their WTC. This suggests that students with a higher level of pragmatic knowledge also have a higher level of WTC and are more successful in developing this trait. This finding contradicts the conclusions of Lv et al.,²⁷ who found a negative correlation between EFL learners' pragmatic competence and their WTC. One possible explanation for this discrepancy could be differences in the specific aspects of pragmatics examined and the tasks used in

the studies. However, our results align with the findings of Hosseinpur and Nevisi,²⁸ who reported a positive relationship between EFL learners' pragmatic competence and their WTC. Therefore, it is important for research and instruction on L2 pragmatics to consider learners' WTC. Instructors and researchers can develop innovative teaching and research methods to encourage CSL learners' intention to speak, which will enhance their pragmatic competence by cultivating their WTC. Additionally, providing more opportunities for pragmatic practice both in and outside the classroom can help L2 learners improve their awareness of pragmatics.²⁹ Consequently, instructional methods should be carefully designed, and instructors' attitudes play a crucial role in influencing CSL learners' WTC. These findings highlight the significance of L2 WTC and learner pragmatic competence as motivating factors for language learners to persist in L2 learning and communication. Language learners who possess higher L2 WTC and have established their identity as second language speakers/writers tend to prioritize L2 communication.

The results of this research have several implications regarding English in EFL context. First, English teachers should provide authentic situations through exposure to videos, movies, and other sources that can facilitate learners as much as possible to develop both their pragmatic knowledge and at the same time increase their WTC. Furthermore, considering that learners' pragmatic development that can become a strong predictor of learners' WTC, it is suggested that teachers should design class activities and use the materials in such a way that they can establish a sense of progress among learners, and thus increase their pragmatic competence. As they have been capable of considering themselves as capable communicators who have developed their pragmatic competence, they will likely be more apt to communicate in any situation, leading to actual L2 use and improved proficiency.

This study is subject to several limitations. Firstly, the small sample size restricts the generalizability of the conclusions to a wider population of students. Additionally, the implementation of the research posed challenges, as it was time-consuming and difficult for most nursing students to participate in the film-watching aspect. Furthermore, the use of questionnaires at a single point in time may not fully capture the dynamic nature of learners' WTC. Another limitation pertains to the failure of the authors to investigate how

effectively the knowledge acquired through the elective course translates into the students' subsequent professional careers. This aspect should be evaluated in future studies.

Conclusion

The outcomes of the pragmatic test demonstrated that nursing students significantly deepened their understanding of pragmatic analysis through exposure to movie-watching. Additionally, the instructional strategies employed during movie-watching sessions fostered the development of learners' willingness to communicate, which in turn facilitated increased engagement and improved communication abilities. It is postulated that study aids, such as watching movies, in conjunction with theoretical instruction, have a lasting positive effect on nursing students' English language proficiency. Interactive teaching methods are indispensable tools for imparting communication skills to future generations. This investigation highlights the advantages of incorporating movie-watching into the nursing curriculum. Moreover, this approach has the potential to be effective in acquiring other occupation-specific competencies within the nursing field. Future research should aim to examine the impact of movies on much larger samples of students.

Ethical Approval

Research involving human subjects complied with all relevant national regulations, institutional policies and is in accordance with the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration. This research was conducted with the consent of the participants. They were also assured that all information collected will remain confidential. Because this study is not of clinical type and the participants of this study are not patients, ethical approval was not required for this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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