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Técnicas cinematográficas para enseñar destrezas comunicativas en inglés en Educación Primaria

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Resumen

Se presenta una experiencia que utiliza técnicas cinematográficas como un contexto motivador para desarrollar las destrezas comunicativas en niños españoles. Los medios audiovisuales suponen una importante fuente de modelos discursivos de hablantes nativos y, teniendo en cuenta que la principal industria del cine está basada en un país angloparlante, sus posibilidades son infinitas. Además, la alfabetización audiovisual provee un contexto para el pensamiento crítico. De ahí que el principal objetivo de esta investigación sea presentar un proyecto innovador de enseñanza denominado *Hollywood Stars: 3,2,1... off we go! Roll & action!* y explorar su percepción por parte de los agentes implicados. El estudio se llevó a cabo en un centro bilingüe de Murcia, con estudiantes de sexto curso de Educación Primaria. La metodología usada es la investigación-acción, empírica-analítica, con un diseño cuasi-experimental que utiliza métodos mixtos de recogida de datos. Los resultados sugieren que las técnicas cinematográficas pueden aportar un contexto motivacional y significativo para aprender inglés.

Palabras clave

Educación audiovisual; educación primaria; destrezas comunicativas; enseñanza de idiomas.

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Film Techniques to Teach English Communicative Skills in Primary Education

Abstract

An experience through film techniques as a motivational context to unfold English communication skills in young Spanish speakers is presented. Media provide an important source of native speakers' speech models, and considering that the most important world film industry provider comes from an English-speaking country, the possibilities are endless. Furthermore, audiovisual literacy provides a context for critical thinking. Hence, the main purpose of this research is to present an innovative teaching project called *Hollywood Stars: 3,2,1... off we go! Roll & action!* and to explore the perception of it by the agents involved. The study was conducted in a bilingual school from Murcia (Spain), with students from sixth-grade of Primary Education. The methodology used in this study is action-research, being an empirical-analytical investigation, with a quasi-experimental design, using mixed data collection methods. The results suggest that film techniques can provide a motivational and meaningful context for English acquisition.

Key words

Audiovisual education; primary education; communication skills; language teaching.

Introduction

Mastery of communication in English has become a much sought-after skill in society as it is the universal language of global understanding. Even so, it is a fact that when analysing reports such as the *European Survey on Language Competences* (Ministerio de Educación Cultura y Deporte 2012a; 2012b) or the *EF EPI 2021* (EF Education First 2021), the data shown of the English level in Spain are not positive, as it scores behind neighbouring European countries such as Portugal and France. These data are even less encouraging when the results are analysed at the level of oral skills, which are the least developed in contrast to written skills, as shown in the *Cambridge Monitor* report (Cambridge University Press 2017).

One of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and which is framed in its Goal 4: Quality Education, is to promote skills for access to employment, in addition to others such as ensuring the quality of Primary and Secondary Education, and a global education that enables sustainable development. That is the valuing of cultural diversity, interculturality and the promotion of global citizenship (UNESCO 2017). Along the same lines, Article 2.6 of the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences (Council of the European Union 2018), includes the promotion and increase of linguistic competence level in foreign languages relevant to work and personal life, enabling international communication and mobility. In this scenario, the development of English skills is one of the key competences that citizens must acquire to foster a more sustainable R+D+i society. This requires the correct acquisition and learning of English to enable fluent and intelligible communication for common understanding. It is also important to nurture a positive attitude towards language learning, encouraging curiosity, respect for cultural diversity and intercultural communication, as outlined in the European Reference Framework of Key Competences for lifelong learning (Comisión Europea 2007) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

On the other hand, the development of digital competence has also become particularly important in recent years within the information society, as also stated in Article 2.4 of Council Recommendation (Council of the European Union 2018). In this regard, we have to consider multimodal literacy (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001), and media and transmedia literacy (Jenkins et al. 2009; Witte, Rybakova, and Kollar 2015), as essential elements in an increasingly digital society and which fall under this competence. Indeed, UNESCO itself developed the Media and Information Literacy curriculum for teachers (MIL), intending to make teachers be aware of the need to train students to use the media as a means of information and expression (Wilson et al. 2011). In addition, it is also necessary to develop critical thinking for citizen participation and information discernment, an aspect included in the current Spanish education law LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020) under the term 'critical spirit'.

In the light of the above, film is an attractive and versatile resource that enables the development of the aforementioned competences in the classroom (Amar-Rodríguez 2000; Breu and Ambròs 2011; Chan and Herrero 2010; Infante 2018; Ismaili 2013; Martínez-Salanova Sánchez 2002). Moreover, the CEFR itself (Council of Europe 2001) includes the use of audiovisual media as didactic and authentic materials for the approach and teaching of a second language, as well as allowing the 'ability to learn' to be enhanced through knowledge of their use and production. In this regard, it is convenient to distinguish two methods from our perspective for the application of film as a didactic resource in language teaching: the traditional method and the active method. The first refers to the viewing of films or TV series for the development of oral and written comprehension, critical reflection and the acquisition of linguistic input. Conversely, the second method focuses on film literacy (encompassed as MIL in UNESCO), where learners take on a more active and protagonist role by using film techniques for the creation of media content (prosumers), and by putting into practice the four language skills, whereas cooperative learning, creativity and critical thinking are encouraged as well. This would include the use of film techniques, such as dubbing activities, voice-over, the application of the Digital Storytelling technique, and thus, the making of short films. Examples of this approach include research by Herrero and Vanderschelden (2019), Kebble (2008), Pardo Díaz (2000), and Lázaro Ibarrola (2011).

The study presented here, derived from a doctoral thesis, is framed within the second method described above, whereby using film techniques is intended to provide a motivating response to the need to improve English linguistic competence in Spanish learners of EFL in Primary Education. At the same time, this proposal encourages the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), creativity and critical thinking competences and skills that need to be acquired from the basics of education. Thereby, the main aim of this study is to present our proposal and to analyse the opinion and perceptions of both teachers and students throughout the project. It will also explore the perception in relation to the didactic possibilities of film techniques.

Methodology

Materials and methods

This study is framed within action research, classified as an empirical-analytical type. It follows a quasi-experimental design as well, using mixed data collection methods. The study was carried out with sixth-grade students of Primary Education during the second term of the school year 2018-2019.

By means of a pre-test, the most frequent pronunciation errors were detected. Thus, an action plan was designed and consolidated as the *Hollywood Stars: 3,2,1... off we go! Roll & action!* project. For its implementation, a teaching unit was developed, following a combination of Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Project-Based Learning (PBL) approaches, integrating the Cooperative and Collaborative Learning (CCL) methods as well.

In addition, for the project design, data was collected through a questionnaire about the most used media in pupils' daily lives for their English practice, as well as information about the most captivating film genres for pre-teenagers and their correlation with their literary preferences. This helped to determine the theme of the book on which the students had to base on their short film adaptation.

The school environment of teaching practice was also studied in relation to the frequency of using films in their classroom for teaching purposes, and their level of knowledge about film techniques and their didactic applications.

Finally, after the implementation of the project, assessment data on the project were collected through a questionnaire, distributed both to the participating pupils and to the teacher involved. All these data allowed us to know the perception of the application of film techniques for communicative competence improvement.

Participants

The sample of this study consisted of the two sixth-grade classes of a bilingual state school in the Region of Murcia, which rose to 50 pupils of Primary Education. The needs of the pupils who required educational support were addressed by adapting the project tasks to ensure their participation.

Regarding distribution, the participants were divided naturally into two classes, and both were taken as an experimental group. This was done to avoid bias during the implementation of the project, following the school's requirements to allow research permission. In addition, the study was approved as experimental field research by the Research Ethics Committee (CEI) of the University of Murcia (ID: 2182/2018).

Instruments

Four questionnaires were designed, which are shown in detail in Table 1:

Table 1.

Questionnaires used and their internal reliability coefficients.

Instruments	Nomenclature	No. Items	Participants	Cronbach's alpha
Initial Questionnaire	Students CUIA	12	Sixth-grade pupils	0.84
General Questionnaire: Film and Literature	Teacher's CUGDOCILI	15	Teachers	0.72
Final Questionnaire: Teaching Unit (action project)	Student CUFAUF	16	Sixth-grade pupils	0.73
Final Questionnaire: Teaching Unit (action project)	Teacher CUFDUF	58	Teachers	0.72

All the questionnaires were anonymous, and the purpose was to collect information on the following aspects:

- To explore the most used media in pupils' daily life English practice.
- To identify film preferences of pupils between 11-12 years old, as well as those of the teachers at the selected school.
- To know pupils' interest and motivation in exploring the filmmaking process of their favourite films or TV series.
- To enquire into the frequency of using films or series in teacher's teaching practices.
- To survey teacher's knowledge about film techniques and their teaching applications.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and innovation of the project designed within the field of English language teaching.

These questionnaires were validated by two experts: a teacher specialising in EFL in Primary Education, and a university professor specialising in didactics of TEFL. Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient test was applied to all the questionnaires, as can be seen in the data shown in Table 1.

Therefore, the CUIA and CUGDOCILI questionnaires were applied prior to the project's implementation, whereas the CUFAUF and CUFDUF questionnaires were distributed after the implementation.

On the other hand, for data collection during the project performance, the participant observation technique was applied. However, to give more consistency and objectivity, and to enrich research data, two observers were present throughout the process: the principal researcher and the participants' English teacher. In addition, observational record sheets were used as an observational diary, along with interviews. It is worth mentioning that audiovisual media were also used to record information during the field research.

Procedure

As mentioned above, the present study was framed within the scope of action research. Thus, this study was adapted into the following eight phases:

- Phase 1. Preparation prior to the field research
- Phase 2. Distribution and collection of initial questionnaires (CUIA and CUGDOCILI)
- Phase 3. English pronunciation pre-test
- Phase 4. Development of an action plan to solve the most frequent English pronunciation issues
- Phase 5. Project implementation
- Phase 6. Distribution and collection of final questionnaires (CUFAUF and CUFDUF)
- Phase 7. English pronunciation post-test
- Phase 8. Data analysis and reflection on the perception and effects of the project

Due to the length of the research and the space constraints, this section will focus on explaining the proposal designed and the data analysis procedure.

The project was called *Hollywood stars: 3,2,1... Off we go! Roll and action!* in reference to the main theme of film techniques and the real orders given on a film set. As for the main features of the didactic model, it was conceived as an English pronunciation training course based on film techniques (including voice and dubbing techniques), with the students performing the roles of actors and the different members of a film crew throughout the project. Thus, the aim was for pupils to work on pronunciation through the motivating and attractive element of film, imitating diction improvement techniques used by dialect coaches and actors.

The teaching unit had 14 sessions of 60 minutes each, and the didactic methodology was based on promoting an active methodology through the combination of TBL, PBL and CCL methods, with the students' final task being called *Final Project* (henceforth *FP*). In this *FP*, the students had to make a short film adaptation of the graphic novel read in English, *Treasure Island*. Furthermore, in order to attend to diversity, a set of activities was designed, consisting of 60 worksheets distributed in two sections: the first one is for SLD students, and the second one is aimed at students with high abilities. **¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.** shows the QR codes to access to the aforementioned teaching material and planning.

Figure 1.

Teaching project and resources.



The implementation of the design took place from February to April 2019. The 14 sessions were carried out mainly in the hours of the subjects 'English as a Foreign Language' and

‘Spanish Language and Literature’. Hence, the project was developed in an interdisciplinary way.

To structure the sessions, the phases established by Norris (2009) were used. **¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.** shows a summary of the teaching sequence followed in the different project’s stages.

Figure 2.

Teaching sequence and stages.



Following **¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.**, the project was divided into three stages:

(1) Stage 1: Task input.

The purpose of this stage was to provide the necessary input in relation to film techniques, linguistic contents presented in the graphic novel *Treasure Island* (an adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's work) and in the textbook used in the school. In addition to that, the pronunciation practice of the errors detected in the test were included, emphasising the basic suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, and intonation).

Therefore, in *Session 1*, by means of a comic created *ad hoc*, a brief historical introduction to cinema and the film production stages was presented: development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. These stages are the ones that would later guide the students in the development of the *FP*.

Session 2 focused on the introduction to film language and its application to storyboarding. Thus, students were familiarised with the concepts of framing and shot, as well as with some basics of film techniques such as 'takes' and the use of the clapperboard. To this end, a summary of the activities that were designed is presented:

- a) *Film clips analysis*: five film and series clips from the action, fantasy, adventure and comedy genres were selected. These films were selected according to the children's genre and the data collected in the students' initial questionnaire. Therefore, to introduce the 'shot' concept and learn to identify them, as a game, the participants had to detect the number of shots when viewing the scenes. At the same time, they also worked on detecting the different types of shots, with the help of a bilingual film language guide prepared *ad hoc*.
- b) *Trailer analysis*: with a worksheet guide, students had to choose a trailer and analyse the number and shots type used, as well as the sound (sort of music, voice-over and special effects).
- c) *Quiz 'What type of shot is it?'*: Through Kahoot! a team competition was designed in which, by showing pictures from films and strips from the read graphic novel, they had to correctly identify the different shot types. Each team had a tablet from which they interacted to indicate the answer.
- d) *Story in three shots*: to practise film language and learn how to make storyboards, the participants were asked to invent a story using only three shots. To do so, they had to follow the basic narrative structure: beginning, middle and end. Furthermore, they had to include the name of the shot and the corresponding dialogue to the sequence. This activity was allowed to be carried out in bilingual mode.

Regarding the pronunciation practice, a phase called 'Pronunciation training' was created, which ran from *Session 4* to *Session 6*. This phase was guided by the introduction of the 'dialect coach' character, always present on the set of many film productions. This role was adopted by the EFL teachers present in the project, while the students performed the role of actors receiving such training. Among the techniques used to improve diction, the following are highlighted:

- a) Breathing exercises and orofacial muscle warm-up: based on the acting techniques proposed by Hardison and Sonchaeng (2005), a series of breathing and muscle relaxation exercises were performed, as well as the application of a series of voice warm-up techniques combined with vocal projection.
- b) 'A Spoonful of Sugar' karaoke: using the classical film scene from *Mary Poppins* (1964), the concept of English rhythm was worked on. The activity was divided into three steps: 1) scene display; 2) reproduction of song rhythm by humming, snapping, clapping, and tapping; and 3) karaoke performance.
- c) Shadowing/mirroring of narration and film scenes: on the one hand, an extract from the classic work *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, narrated by the British actor Jim Dale, was used. The students had to listen to the audio and then try to imitate the dialogue with the actor's intonation. On the other hand, by watching a film scene, students had to analyse the actors' gestures, facial and body expressions. To do this, the scene was first played without sound, and then watched with sound, this time analysing the actors' intonation and gestures. Finally, the class was divided into groups of three, and each student played a character from the analysed scene, impersonating the actor's gestures and intonation.
- d) Dubbing scenes from films and series: depending on the number of characters appearing in the different scenes to be dubbed, groups of two or three students were organised. They were given the scene's script and it was visualised with the original voices. Later, the scene was projected again, but this time without the actor's voices, and the pupils had to synchronise their dialogue with the actor's lip movements, giving them the same intonation and pronunciation as the performers.

Finally, *Session 7* was divided into two sections: 1) introduction to the screenplay concept and its structure; and 2) development of the screenplay for the short film adaptation of the graphic novel. The first section was the last part of *Stage 1*, while the second formed part of the beginning of *Stage 2*, and thus, the development of the *FP*.

To recap, the first section was dedicated to explaining the screenplay concept, the narrative composition in a film (three-act structure) through the plot diagram (Freytag's pyramid) and the basic structure of a screenplay taught through a real example¹.

(2) Stage 2: Pedagogic task work and task performance (Final Project).

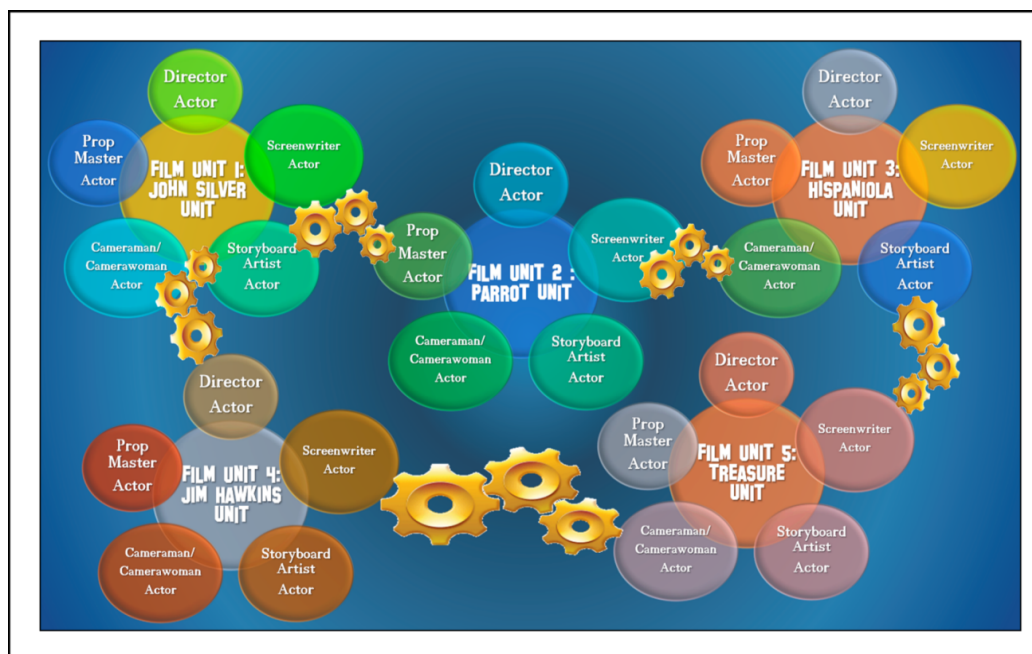
From this stage onwards, the students began to work on the development of the *FP*, that is the adaptation of the *Treasure Island* novel into a short film, which culminated with its screening in *Stage 3*.

To explain the *FP* to the participants, the five stages of film production introduced in *Session 1* were used to guide and structure it. Thus, the students became familiar with the processes, and a motivating immersive context was created for English skills development.

Furthermore, at the beginning of this stage, the pupils were distributed for the *FP*, using an organisational model (**¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.**) designed *ad hoc* to foster cooperative and collaborative learning.

Figure 3.

Project organisational model.



Consequently, five teams were organised, which were called ‘film units’ with roles similar to those of real film crews. Each film unit consisted of five members, each with an assigned role related to the production team. Thus, there were five roles: director, screenwriter, storyboard artist, cameraman/woman, and prop master. Hence, depending on the assigned roles, each participant had to coordinate and supervise a part of the project. In turn, each team was assigned a part of the graphic novel to adapt and film. Therefore, they all were part of a large team, where each film unit acted as a cog to achieve a common goal, which was the production of a short film.

For the development of the *FP*, seven sessions of sixty-minute length were planned. *Session 7* and *8* were devoted to the development of the screenplay and storyboards, while *sessions 9-13* focused on shooting the short film. For the writing of the screenplays, the participants used *Google Docs* through tablets. For the filming sessions, digital cameras, tripods, clapperboards, chroma keys and props provided by the participants were used.

(3) Stage 3: Task follow-up.

In this last stage, related to the ‘Distribution’ stage and addressed in *Session 14*, the trailers of the short films were first screened. Afterwards, during the school’s Cultural Week, all productions were screened for the whole school community. In addition, a diploma award ceremony inspired by the ‘Oscars’ was held.

Data Analysis

Based on the data collected from the questionnaires and observation records, a descriptive and quantitative analysis was carried out by using the triangulation technique. To this end, the statistical packages *SPSS Statistics* version 19 and *Microsoft Excel 2013* version 15.0 were used.

Results

Bearing in mind the research objectives that were set out, the results obtained from the analysis will be grouped according to three subjects:

Media preferences in the use of English, and interest and film trends in pre-adolescents

As mentioned above, the CUIA questionnaire was used to explore media preferences in everyday English practice, as well as film tastes and interests. This questionnaire was administered to all sixth-grade pupils of Primary Education (N=50) at the school, whose average age was 11. Moreover, in relation to English learning as a second language, 84% indicated that they started learning English at the Early Years Education stage, and only 32% were receiving complementary English classes, in addition to the three hours per week of the school timetable.

With regard to the media most used for daily English practice outside the classroom, Table 2 shows a summary of the results obtained.

Table 2.

Media preferences for daily English practice.

Media	Responses	
	No.	Percent
YouTube	33	33,3%
Reading English websites	11	11,1%
Videogames	25	25,3%
Film and TV series	30	30,3%
Total	99	100,0%

As can be observed, the most preferred media for participants to practise English from home were watching videos on YouTube, videogames, and films or series.

On the other hand, the preferred film genres for children between 11-12 years old were action (16%), comedy (15%), and adventure (12%) (**¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.**). This is consistent with the titles of favourite films and series provided by the participants (**¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.**). It is important to underline that in the 'Others' category we detected some cases that indicated series and films with a PG-18 rating, therefore not suitable for the age of the participants.

Figure 4.

Participants' film preferences.

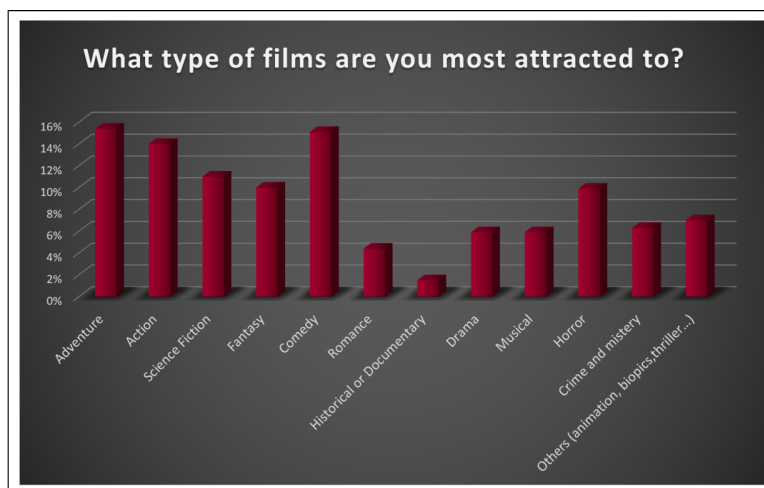
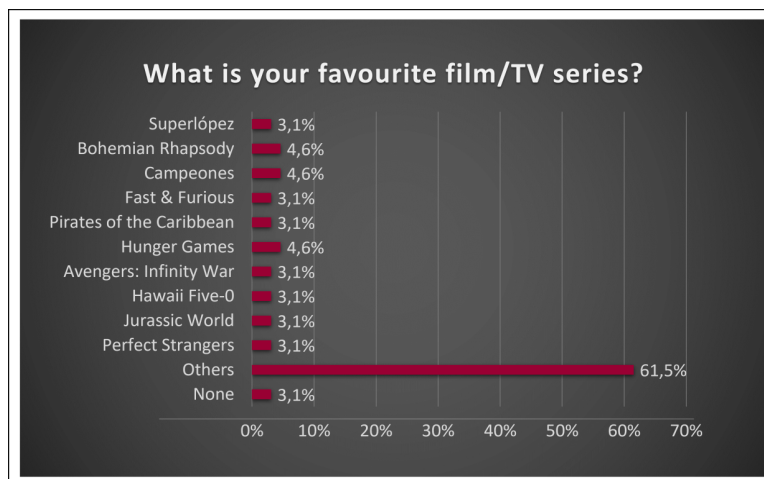


Figure 5.

Participants' favourite film/TV series.



Finally, about the participants' interest in learning about the filmmaking process of their favourite films and series (**¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.A**), most participants (82%) answered 'Yes'. However, when asked about whether they would like to make and participate in a film (**¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.B**), the percentage of those interested increased to 96%.

Didactic perception of film and film techniques in teaching practice

To find out the opinion, use, and knowledge of film techniques held by Primary Education teachers (N=20) at the school, the CUGDOCILI questionnaire was used to collect these data. This allowed to understand the school context and the type of didactic conception of film owned by the teachers.

Concerning the teaching use of films, Table 3 shows that the 70% of the sample reported occasional use of films in their lessons. Only 5% of the specialities of Primary, EFL, FFL and Physical Education indicated that they use them frequently.

Figure 6.

Participants' motivation towards filmmaking processes.

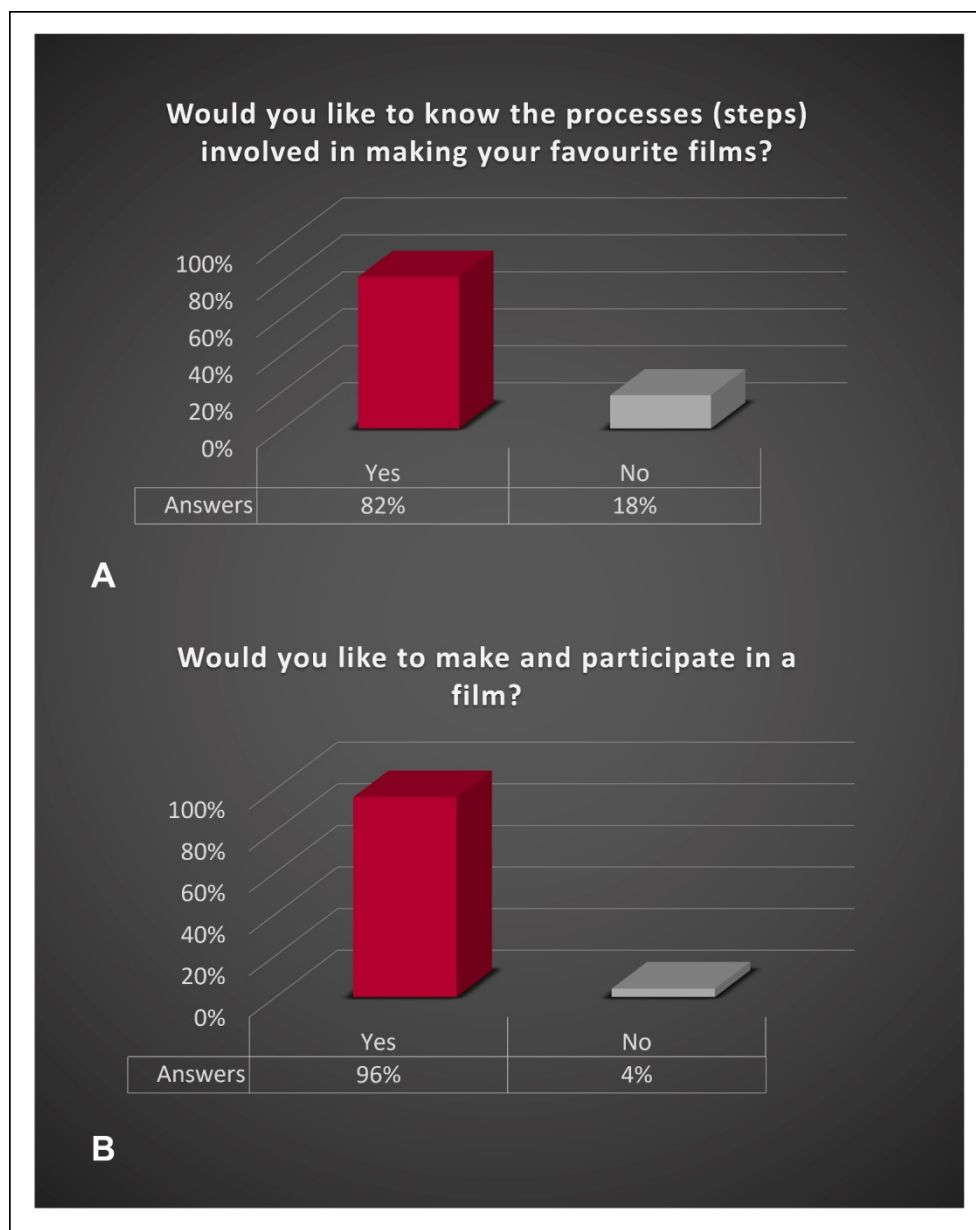


Table 3.

Frequency of using films in Primary Education.

How often have you used films in your classroom?		Film use frequency by speciality					
Frequency		P	EFL	FFL	PE	ME	R/V
Never	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-

Rarely	10.0%	5.0%	5.0%	-	-	-	-
Occasionally	70.0%	30.0%	30.0%	-	-	5.0%	5.0%
Frequently	20.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	-	-
Very frequently	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: **P**= Primary Education; **EFL**= English as a Foreign Language; **FFL**= French as a Foreign Language; **PE**= Physical Education; **ME**=Musical Education; **R/V**= Religion/Civic Values

If we examine the teachers' views on the didactic applications of films in their subjects to motivate pupils, 65% answered 'Much' and 'Very Much' (Table 4).

Table 4.

Teaching perception of films and film techniques by teachers.

ITEM	Relevance and knowledge level				
	NT	NM	N	M	VM
In your subject, can you see any didactic application of this resource to motivate students?	-	-	35.0%	50.0%	15.0%
Do you know the didactic possibilities that short film making can provide to your subject?	10.0%	45.0%	30.0%	15.0%	-
Would you like to learn about the processes involved in making short films?	-	5.0%	20.0%	40.0%	35.0%
Would you like to produce a short film with your students?	5.0%	5.0%	25.0%	45.0%	20.0%

Note: **NT**= nothing; **NM**= not much; **N**= normal; **M**= much; **VM**=very much.

In addition, those teachers who selected 'Very Much' belong to three specialisations: Primary, EFL and FFL (

Table 5).

Table 5.

Didactic perception of films and film techniques by Primary Education speciality.

DATA ON FILM USE ACCORDING TO SPANISH PRIMARY EDUCATION SPECIALITIES

Perception of film use as a resource

Relevance and knowledge level Speciality

	P	EFL	FFL	PE	ME	R/V
NT	-	-	-	-	-	-
NM	-	-	-	-	-	-
N	25.0%	5.0%	-	-	5.0%	-
M	10.0%	30.0%	-	5.0%	-	5.0%
VM	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	-	-	-

Knowledge of the didactic possibilities of making short films

Relevance and knowledge level	Speciality					
	P	EFL	FFL	PE	ME	R/V
NT	5.0%	-	-	-	-	5.0%
NM	15.0%	25.0%	-	-	5.0%	-
N	15.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	-	-
M	5.0%	10.0%	-	-	-	-
VM	-	-	-	-	-	-

Degree of interest in learning about the processes of making a short film

Relevance and knowledge level	Speciality					
	P	EFL	FFL	PE	ME	R/V
NT	-	-	-	-	-	-
NM	-	-	-	-	-	5.0%
N	10.0%	-	-	5.0%	5.0%	-
M	10.0%	30.0%	-	-	-	-
VM	20.0%	10.0%	5.0%	-	-	-

Degree of interest in producing a short film with pupils

Relevance and knowledge level	Speciality					
	P	EFL	FFL	PE	ME	R/V
NT	-	-	-	-	-	5.0%
NM	-	-	-	-	5.0%	-
N	15.0%	5.0%	-	5.0%	-	-
M	20.0%	25.0%	-	-	-	-
VM	5.0%	10.0%	5.0%	-	-	-

Note: **P**= Primary Education; **EFL**= English as a Foreign Language; **FFL**= French as a Foreign Language; **PE**= Physical Education; **ME**=Musical Education; **R/V**= Religion/Civic Values; **NT**= nothing; **NM**= not much; **N**= normal; **M**= much; **VM**=very much.

Along these lines, 30% of teachers reported to have experience in making short films and/or participating in a film as an extra. However, 55% admitted that they were unaware of the teaching possibilities that short filmmaking could provide in their subject (

Table 5). Nevertheless, 75% said they were interested in learning about the processes involved in making short films, and 65% would be willing to take part in a short filmmaking experience (Table 4). About the latter, the Primary, EFL and FFL specialisations once again stand out as those most willing to carry out an experience with film techniques (

Table 5).

Experimental implementation of film techniques in the classroom

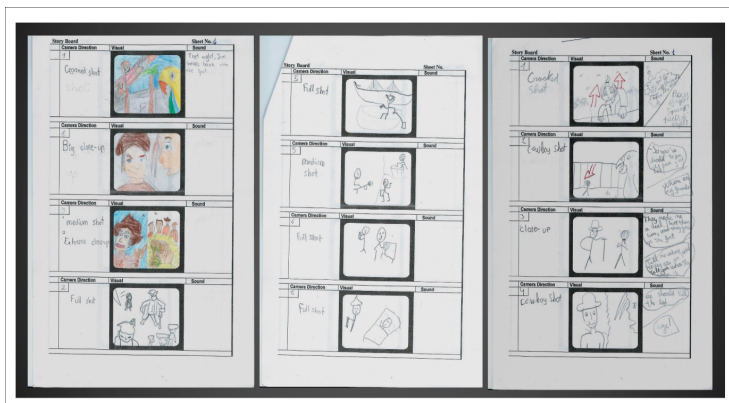
By means of the questionnaires (CUFAUF and CUFDUF) and the observation records, a positive attitude towards the project can be stated for both teachers and pupils.

From the teaching perspective, the only obstacles indicated were related to time (since the students needed more time than planned to shoot the short films) and to the activities carried out with ICT. Regardless of this, the comments shown in the questionnaires were satisfactory and encouraging, as they pointed out that it had provided new ways of implementing content at a methodological level and had resulted in a very complete and motivating project for the pupils' English learning process, particularly for the promotion and improvement of English acquisition from a multimodal perspective.

On the other hand, from the pupils' perspective, the most attractive elements were the filming and making of the short film, the portrayal of characters from the selected novel, and the experience of working as a team through the Film Units model. The only negative aspects pointed out were in relation to the shooting resources and time. It is worth noting that the activities produced the greatest motivation for their high level of participation were those devoted to the knowledge and development of film language (**¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.**), as well as the activities of dubbing and shadowing/mirroring of film scenes. In this sense, regarding the *Story in three shots* activity, the students' productions were original, showing a notable development of creativity through the creation of stories, the choice of shots, and the addition of colour. Likewise, through the *Trailer analysis* activity, a development of the students' critical capability was detected, as they even went beyond their own initiative and compared the elements of the trailer with those appearing in a film. Both activities were carried out in an interdisciplinary way with the area of 'Spanish Language and Literature', with the result of bilingual productions.

Figure 7.

Sample of participants' storyboards.



It is worth noting that it was detected two cases of children who had low academic performance in general, and from the project implementation they show motivation, participating actively in the activities. Moreover, in reference to the SLD students, they also participated eagerly in the elaboration of the storyboards and in the filming process. It was even observed the support and integration from their peers.

As a result of the *FP*, two trailers and two short films (**¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.**) to adapt *Treasure Island* in English were produced. It should be noted that, due to the interdisciplinary component of the project and its potential to promote the four language skills, as well as the development of different skills and creativity, some of the project's film techniques activities were extrapolated to the areas of 'French' and 'Spanish Language and Literature', at the school's request. As a result, in addition to the English short films mentioned above, two short films were made in Spanish to adapt Jules Verne's work, and a biographical short film in French by the same author. This is significant and encouraging as it shows the flexibility of the project that allows for the development and improvement of communicative competence in other languages.

Figure 8.

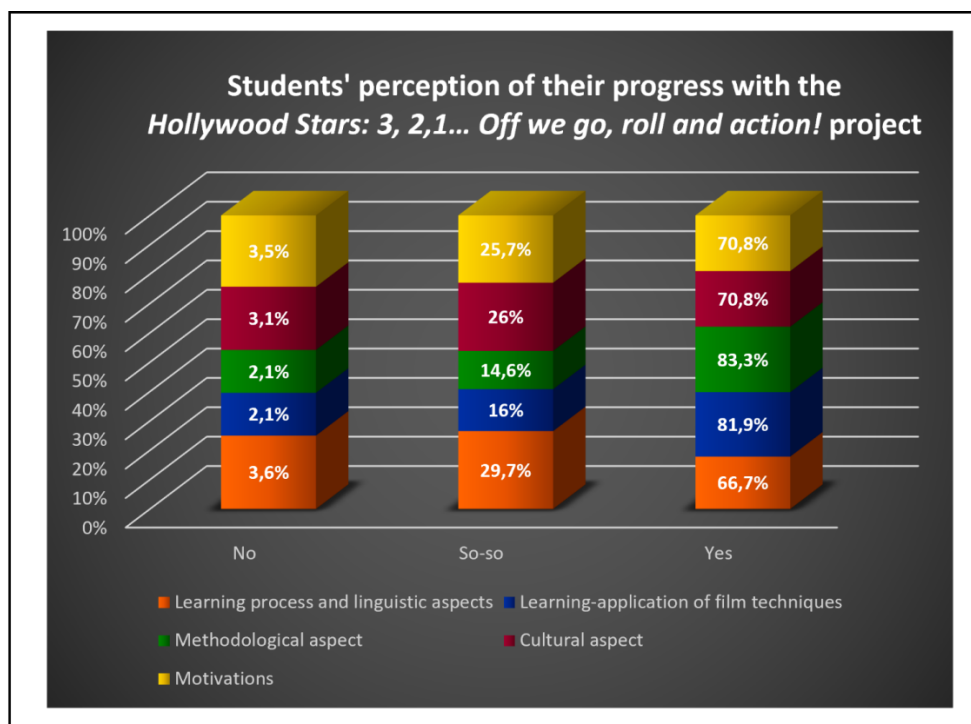
Frames.



Finally, in terms of self-assessment, the project's aspects most highly valued by the participants and with the highest scores obtained from the questionnaires were the methodology (83.3%), the learning-application of film techniques (81.9%) and the cultural and motivational aspects (70.8%) (**Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.**).

Figure 9.

Participants' self-assessment results on the project.



Discussion

Regarding the results obtained about media preferences for the use of English, it was observed that audiovisual content such as videos, films, series, and videogames prevailed over the reading of web pages. These data seem reasonable given that audiovisual media are attractive at these ages and facilitate the understanding of meanings in another language, as well as their culture (Barros Bastida and Barros Morales 2015; Grochowalska 2020; Herrero 2018).

Moreover, it is worth noting that the film genres most frequently mentioned by the participants are aligned with the recommendations of Canning-Wilson (2000), Pérez Vallejo (2010), and Ismaili (2013). These authors also claim that action and adventure films are the most suitable for the teaching-learning process in EFL since these genres, in addition to being closer and more attractive worlds to pre-adolescents, facilitate the comprehension of dialogues and expressions in another language, as they are reinforced by actions and immediate body language. On the other hand, it should be noted that the finding of PG-18 rating films' data is a matter of concern and should be carefully considered, as it could be related to parental habits (Wood et al. 2019).

As for the idea of participating in a project on film techniques, according to the questionnaire results, it can be stated that the participants were receptive and motivated by it.

Concerning the teachers' perception of the didactic possibilities of films, results show an interest by teachers in introducing films in the classroom, but they only use them occasionally and as recreational elements. It is worth remembering the importance of promoting the MIL curriculum for teachers (Wilson et al. 2011), for which UNESCO includes as competences 'Promoting MIL among students and managing required changes' and 'Applying new and traditional media formats'. This implies a broader vision beyond the ludic aspect of audiovisual media, seeing them as resources with multiple teaching possibilities

to foster both critical spirit (Alcolea-Díaz, Reig, and Mancinas-Chávez 2020; Jenkins et al. 2009) and artistic and cultural expression (Chan and Herrero 2010).

On the other hand, regarding the perception of the didactic possibilities of film techniques, the results of the study showed that those subjects related to language teaching are more aware of the benefits of using short-film creation techniques to teach languages, either mother or foreign. Moreover, this is in line with the MIL curriculum, as teachers are encouraged to apply approaches such as translations (understood as the interpretation of a text for its adaptation to image and/or sound), simulation, production and cooperative learning (Wilson et al. 2011). These elements are present when creating audiovisual productions, such as short films. In fact, Carney and Foss (2008) point out that these projects help learners to develop skills such as organisation, script writing, dramatization, directing and editing a film, while they are interacting in the second language simultaneously, boosting it.

In this regard, the results obtained from the implementation of this project corroborate what has been indicated in other studies: audiovisual creation activities provide a meaningful context for language teaching (Chan and Herrero 2010; Herrero and Vanderschelden 2019; Kebble 2008). Thus, the cognitive development and multimodal literacy of the students were fostered, as well as the application of transmedia storytelling by adapting a version of *Treasure Island*, read in graphic novel format, and transferring it to the screen (Hillman and Säljö 2016), while developing the role of prosumers (Herrero 2018), using English at the same time. In addition, critical thinking was encouraged through the analysis of films and trailers, as well as when selecting the shots to narrate Robert Louis Stevenson's novel in an audiovisual format.

Finally, regarding the pupils and teachers' perception of the project, the highest rating in all sections must be highlighted, with the only obstacles being the ICT activities and time. In relation to the former, this may have been due to the fact that it required highly organised coordination among students to take turns and experiment with ICT. In this respect, the need to provide educational centres with more and better resources for the development of digital competence is observed, which is unavoidably necessary to acquire both for current and future society. Regarding the second obstacle mentioned, there are contrasting opinions on the issue of time. In the case of pupils, a desire to devote more time to the project, whereas in the case of teachers, they demanded less time, possibly due to the need for time to teach other contents.

Conclusions

This article has presented new data about media and film preferences in 11-year-old children, and the way primary school teachers perceive films as teaching resources in their subjects. The predisposition of students and teachers in making short films was also shown, both to culturally know and value the process of filmmaking, and to use this technique as a motivational resource to enhance the communicative competence in young learners. As a result, a teaching model was designed and implemented by means of a project whose aim was to improve the English competence through the use of film techniques, promoting at the same time the MIL curriculum.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to present the project *Hollywood Stars: 3, 2, 1... Off we go! Roll and action!* and to show participants' opinions and perceptions of its implementation for the improvement of the English communicative competence. To this end, data were collected about pupils' media preferences and film tastes, as well as

teachers' pedagogical knowledge of film and film techniques. Finally, the perception of the implemented project was analysed. The results reveal a positive response from the agents involved and benefits in the students' learning process, fostering the use of English, developing creativity and the digital competence, as well as critical thinking.

In brief, the study and proposal presented here, which arise from a doctoral thesis, are intended to provide new and real data on short film making experiences carried out in a Primary School context. Furthermore, it intends to serve as a didactic model for EFL teachers in Primary Education, with the aim to improve the English communicative competence, as well as to enhance media literacy and critical thinking. These skills are crucial for the promotion of international employment and the sustainable development of future citizenship open to diversity and cultural exchange. It should be noted that due to the interdisciplinarity and to the flexible nature of the proposal, it can be extrapolated to the teaching of other languages through film techniques.

Notes

1. The resource created can be visited at <https://bit.ly/3chul3r>

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