

Exploring EFL Students' Perceptions of Utilizing Harry Potter Movies for English Idiom Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

Mastering English idioms presents a significant challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners due to their non-literal meanings. Integrating audiovisual media, such as movies, is theorized to provide the necessary contextual scaffolding. This research aimed to investigate the implementation of the Harry Potter movie series in teaching idioms and to explore students' perceptions of this media at Universitas Puhuwato. Employing a descriptive qualitative method supported by quantitative survey data, the study involved fourth-semester students from the English Education Department. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to nine students and in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of six students. The synthesized results indicate a highly positive perception; 100% of respondents strongly agreed on the importance of learning idioms, and the majority found the movie engaging and effective for vocabulary expansion. Although students faced difficulties comprehending the British accent and rapid speech, the visual context of the movie significantly aided their idiomatic comprehension. In conclusion, utilizing Harry Potter movies is an effective pedagogical strategy that boosts student motivation and enriches their idiomatic repertoire, provided that lecturers offer adequate linguistic guidance.

Informasi Artikel

Kata Kunci:

Idiom bahasa Inggris; Pembelajaran EFL; Film Harry Potter; Persepsi mahasiswa; Media audiovisual

ABSTRAK

Penguasaan idiom bahasa Inggris menghadirkan tantangan signifikan bagi pembelajar English as a Foreign Language (EFL) karena maknanya yang tidak harfiah. Mengintegrasikan media audiovisual, seperti film, diteorikan dapat memberikan perancah kontekstual yang diperlukan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki implementasi seri film Harry Potter dalam pengajaran idiom dan mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa terhadap media ini di Universitas Puhuwato. Menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif yang didukung oleh data survei kuantitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan mahasiswa semester empat dari Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang dibagikan kepada sembilan mahasiswa dan wawancara mendalam dengan sampel purposif sebanyak enam mahasiswa. Hasil sintesis menunjukkan persepsi yang sangat positif; 100% responden sangat setuju tentang pentingnya mempelajari idiom, dan mayoritas menganggap film tersebut menarik dan efektif untuk perluasan kosakata. Meskipun mahasiswa menghadapi kesulitan dalam memahami aksen British dan ucapan yang cepat, konteks visual dari film secara signifikan membantu pemahaman idiomatik mereka. Kesimpulannya, pemanfaatan film Harry Potter adalah strategi pedagogis yang efektif yang meningkatkan motivasi mahasiswa dan memperkaya perbendaharaan idiomatik mereka, asalkan dosen memberikan bimbingan linguistik yang memadai.

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1. Introduction

In learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), educators constantly seek innovative strategies to maintain students' motivation and enthusiasm. While basic vocabulary acquisition is a fundamental step, achieving native-like proficiency requires learners to master English idiomatic expressions. Idioms are notoriously difficult for EFL learners because their meanings cannot be deduced from the literal translation of their constituent words. For instance, the idiom "spill the tea" does not relate to physically pouring a beverage but rather means to share gossip or confidential information. Consequently, EFL teachers and learners often avoid using idioms, which paradoxically results in unnatural and disfluent communication.

To overcome the complexities of idiomatic expressions, traditional rote memorization is insufficient. Modern pedagogical approaches suggest that exposure to authentic audiovisual media, such as movies, can bridge the gap between abstract language and concrete comprehension. Movies provide a rich context of images, sounds, and situational cues that help viewers deduce meaning. Specifically, the *Harry Potter* movie series, beginning with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (2001), has been recognized for its dense use of rich vocabulary and unique idiomatic expressions. Previous studies have identified numerous syntactic and semantic idiomatic expressions within the franchise.

Despite the acknowledged benefits of movie-based language learning, there remains a noticeable research gap regarding how university students in regional contexts, who have limited daily exposure to English, perceive the difficulty and effectiveness of learning complex idioms through fantasy films with strong British accents. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how the *Harry Potter* movie is applied in learning idioms and to systematically analyze students' perceptions regarding its effectiveness and challenges at the English Education Department of Universitas Puhuwato.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method supported by descriptive quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the educational phenomenon. According to Atmowardoyo (2018), descriptive research involves collecting and describing data through interpretation based on field phenomena. The research was conducted at the English Education Department of Universitas Puhuwato over a period of approximately one month.

The population consisted of fourth-semester students, from which a sample was drawn using a purposive sampling technique. Data were gathered using two primary instruments: a

questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire, distributed to nine students, utilized a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) to numerically gauge students' perceptions regarding motivation, effectiveness, and vocabulary improvement. Subsequently, in-depth interviews were conducted with six students to qualitatively explore their personal experiences, struggles, and linguistic improvements after watching the movie. The collected data were analyzed interactively by synthesizing the questionnaire percentages with the thematic narrative responses from the interviews to draw robust conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The implementation of the *Harry Potter* movie as a medium for learning idioms yielded dynamic responses from the students. The quantitative data extracted from the questionnaires revealed a predominantly positive perception. Notably, 100% of the respondents strongly agreed that learning idioms is a crucial component of mastering English. Furthermore, when asked if the movie improved their vocabulary skills, 77.8% strongly agreed, and the remaining 22.2% agreed, indicating a unanimous consensus on the media's effectiveness in expanding their lexical range. The enthusiasm was also evident, with 66.7% of students strongly agreeing that they were excited to learn English through this specific movie franchise. However, the data also highlighted some ambivalence; regarding the ease of mastering idioms, 33.3% of students disagreed that the movie made the learning process "easier," pointing towards underlying cognitive challenges.

The qualitative data from the interviews provided depth to these statistics. Thematic analysis of the six respondents revealed two primary themes: **Vocabulary Expansion** and **Accent and Linguistic Complexity**. All interviewed students reported a noticeable improvement in their idiomatic knowledge. For example, students noted that the movie introduced them to unique expressions that made their conversational skills feel more creative and authentic. They appreciated the visual context, stating that the movie created a new, non-boring atmosphere for learning.

Conversely, the primary obstacle highlighted across the interviews was the linguistic complexity of the film. Multiple students explicitly stated that the British accent and the rapid pace of dialogue made it difficult to catch the exact phrasing of the idioms initially. One student mentioned that while the idioms were interesting, the foreign vocabulary required them to frequently pause and take notes. Nevertheless, the students concluded that consistent exposure to the movie eventually mitigated these difficulties, leading to improved comprehension.

3.2 Discussion

The findings clearly demonstrate that the use of *Harry Potter*

movies is a highly effective pedagogical tool, albeit one that requires significant cognitive effort from the students. The unanimous agreement on the importance of idioms aligns with Liu and Cooper's assertion that idiomatic mastery is essential for natural communication. The students' excitement and high engagement levels confirm that audiovisual media successfully lowers the affective filter, making the learning process enjoyable and motivating. As Sakkir et al. (2018) noted, the imaginative nature of movies immerses the audience, which in this context, helps students internalize the contextual usage of idioms rather than just memorizing literal definitions.

However, the difficulties reported regarding the British accent and rapid speech highlight a critical pedagogical nuance. While movies provide rich input, they can also cause cognitive overload for EFL learners who are unaccustomed to native-level speeds. The fact that 33.3% of surveyed students found it difficult to master idioms through the movie, coupled with interviewees admitting the accents were "foreign" and "hard to understand", suggests that simply watching a movie is insufficient. Educators must provide active scaffolding—such as pre-teaching complex vocabulary, utilizing English subtitles, and pausing for discussion—to maximize the media's effectiveness. Ultimately, the integration of such popular culture media significantly boosts students' self-confidence and provides a challenging yet rewarding avenue for language acquisition.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of *Harry Potter* movies significantly aids fourth-semester students at Universitas Puhwato in learning English idioms. The students hold a highly positive perception of this media, noting that it creates a fun, engaging, and immersive learning environment that directly contributes to vocabulary expansion. Although the linguistic complexity, particularly the British accent and fast-paced dialogue, presents an initial challenge, the visual and narrative context of the movie effectively helps students decode and remember complex idiomatic expressions. To optimize this strategy, it is suggested that lecturers provide continuous linguistic support and structured guidance while watching, ensuring that students do not become overwhelmed and can fully absorb the diverse vocabulary presented in authentic audiovisual materials.

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