

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In today's digital era, the integration of multimedia into our daily lives has transformed how we engage with information and entertainment, making television programs and films once primarily leisure activities powerful tools for academic study and language acquisition. For English language learners, these media provide an immersive, dynamic environment that extends beyond traditional textbook-based instruction, offering valuable opportunities to enhance listening comprehension, expand vocabulary, and deepen cultural understanding. Unlike static learning materials, movies and TV shows present context-rich scenarios that expose learners to the nuances of language used in real-life situations. This approach is especially significant given the global importance of English as a lingua franca. As the most widely spoken and written language, proficiency in English is critical for both personal and professional success. However, despite strong reading and writing skills, many learners struggle with listening comprehension, highlighting the need for innovative methods to improve auditory proficiency.

The theory that watching English movies boosts listening skills is grounded in the immersive, contextual nature of language learning through audiovisual media. Film is like *The King's Speech* presents

authentic examples of spoken English in real-world contexts, with natural intonations, conversational rhythms, and a variety of accents. Such exposure helps learners develop a deeper understanding of how language operates across different settings, from informal conversations to formal speeches, something that may not be as effectively captured through traditional language learning methods. According to Karim et al. (2024), watching movies enables students to grasp the full range of verbal communication by associating speech with non-verbal cues like facial expressions, body language, and context. These elements reinforce comprehension and provide meaning beyond just the words spoken. Additionally, the emotional investment films create helps foster active listening and retention, as learners become more engaged with the narrative and characters. This method also exposes learners to a wider array of vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references that are often missing in conventional language textbooks.

The exploration of the relationship between cinematic language and language acquisition has gained significant attention in the fields of education, film studies, and linguistics, as movies have the unique ability to engage audiences on emotional, intellectual, and sensory levels. This study examines how cinematic techniques, particularly in Tom Hooper's critically acclaimed film *The King's Speech* (2010), can effectively enhance listening skills by integrating auditory and visual elements to

foster deeper comprehension. The film tells the inspiring story of King George VI, a monarch battling a severe stammer, and his transformative collaboration with Lionel Logue, an unconventional yet empathetic speech therapist. Together, they navigate both personal and professional obstacles to overcome the King's speech challenges, leading to a critical wartime broadcast that symbolizes his victory over adversity. Themes of resilience, emotional vulnerability, and the necessity of clear communication anchor the narrative, creating a powerful framework for examining the role of film in supporting language learning.

Cinematic language encompasses more than spoken words; it includes components such as sound design, visual storytelling, editing, and acting, all of which contribute significantly to audience engagement and the communication of meaning. In *The King's Speech*, the carefully constructed pacing and authenticity of dialogue highlight the physical and emotional dimensions of speech impediments. This meticulous attention to detail invites viewers to focus on elements like rhythm, tone, and inflection, offering a valuable opportunity to actively engage with auditory subtleties, which are essential for developing listening comprehension. Furthermore, the interactions between King George VI and Lionel Logue demonstrate practical strategies for overcoming communication barriers, emphasizing patience, empathy, and mutual understanding. These interactions illustrate that listening extends beyond

mere words, encompassing the recognition of emotions and intentions that underpin spoken language, an indispensable skill in mastering auditory comprehension.

The idea that exposure to various accents and speech patterns enhances listening comprehension is rooted in the understanding that real-world language use involves processing a wide range of linguistic variations. Solijonova (2024) argues that interacting with different accents, speech styles, and phonetic distinctions helps learners build flexibility in understanding spoken language. Unlike the uniform language often found in textbooks, real-life communication is diverse, incorporating regional accents, colloquial phrases, varying speech speeds, and distinctive intonations. By encountering these differences, learners improve their ability to recognize unfamiliar sounds, interpret context-driven meanings, and detect subtle linguistic features. This exposure strengthens phonological awareness, a key element of auditory processing. Moreover, regularly engaging with diverse speech patterns encourages learners to pay closer attention to auditory signals, sharpening their skills in predicting and interpreting meaning in challenging listening contexts. Over time, these experiences enhance listening comprehension, enabling learners to handle a wide variety of communicative situations, such as international interactions, multicultural settings, and language use in different forms of media.

Despite its potential as a learning resource, 'The King's Speech' poses certain challenges for learners seeking to enhance their listening skills. Difficulties may arise from the unfamiliarity of British accents, period-specific vocabulary, and the formal language reflective of the early 20th century. The King's stammer and the deliberate pacing of his speech may create further obstacles for learners who are unaccustomed to processing such complexities. To address these challenges, targeted strategies can be employed, such as repeated viewing of key scenes to build familiarity, utilizing subtitles to enhance understanding, and conducting guided discussions to clarify meanings within the context of the film. Providing pre-lesson insights into the historical and cultural backdrop can also mitigate confusion, helping learners to better appreciate the nuances of speech patterns and references unique to the era.

Sound design is another critical aspect of the film, contributing to the auditory experience by incorporating elements like pauses, echoes, and deliberate shifts in volume. These sound techniques effectively mirror the emotional struggles of King George VI, enriching the audience's ability to connect with auditory patterns and their underlying significance. However, for learners unfamiliar with analyzing such audio-visual elements, the layered soundscapes might initially be overwhelming. To overcome this, educators can direct learners to focus on identifying specific instances where sound amplifies narrative meaning, guiding them

to pay attention to the relationship between auditory cues and emotional contexts. This approach enables learners to gradually build their analytical skills and confidence in interpreting sound within film.

The broader historical and emotional dimensions of ‘The King’s Speech’ further amplify its value as an educational tool, framing language learning within a culturally and narratively rich context. Set during a transformative period in early 20th-century Britain, the film reflects a time when radio revolutionized public communication. This historical backdrop provides learners with insights into authentic English usage, including speech patterns, idiomatic expressions, and vocabulary contextualized within significant socio-political changes. Additionally, the personal stakes faced by King George VI, his fear of public failure, dedication to his role, and the supportive dynamic between himself and Lionel Logue render the narrative relatable and emotionally engaging, which is vital for motivation and retention in language acquisition.

Apart from that, the use of technology in learning is found in the Koran from Surah Al-Mujadilah (58:11):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ
 اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُزُوا فَانْشُزُوا يَرَفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

This verse emphasizes the significance of seeking knowledge for spiritual and intellectual growth, and modern technology provides innovative pathways to fulfill this directive. One such method is the use of films for language learning, which creates an immersive and dynamic environment for learners. Films combine visual storytelling, dialogue, sound, and cultural context, all of which make the learning process richer and more effective. Known as cinematic language, this multidimensional approach helps learners grasp not only the literal meanings of words but also the subtleties of tone, context, and non-verbal communication. This aligns with the Islamic encouragement to embrace contemporary and effective methods for acquiring knowledge, demonstrating how technology can support intellectual and personal advancement.

For English language learners, film like *The King's Speech* provide authentic and practical examples of spoken English. They expose learners to diverse accents, natural intonation, and realistic conversational styles while also offering cultural insights often absent in traditional learning materials. Subtitles further support comprehension by bridging listening and reading, while visual elements enhance understanding of non-verbal cues like gestures and expressions. This method not only engages learners but also enables them to experience the language in real-life contexts, fostering a deeper connection to its use.

The challenges learners often face, such as fast speech, unfamiliar accents, or complex idiomatic expressions, are effectively addressed through the versatility of films. Features like subtitles, replay options, and scene repetition provide learners with opportunities to process the language at their own pace. This transforms potential obstacles into stepping stones for improvement and retention. As learners engage with language dynamically and comprehensively, they embody the Quranic encouragement to seek knowledge through all available resources, striving for excellence in both education and personal growth.

Through the analysis of how cinematic elements in *The King's Speech* contribute to listening skill development, this study underscores the wider potential of films as effective pedagogical tools. The interplay between narrative, sound design, and visual storytelling transforms passive viewing into an active learning process. While presenting obstacles such as unfamiliar accents and challenging speech patterns, the film also offers strategies to overcome these hurdles, enhancing the learner's ability to engage with linguistic and cultural intricacies. Beyond its entertainment value, *The King's Speech* exemplifies how cinema can bridge the gap between art and education, fostering language acquisition, cultural understanding, and listening proficiency in an integrated and dynamic way.

This innovative approach demonstrates that films are more than just a means of entertainment; they are a bridge between knowledge, technology,

and spiritual principles. By using movies like *The King's Speech* for language learning, we harness modern tools to pursue intellectual and personal growth, achieving academic success.

Therefore, this research was conducted to investigate how cinematic techniques in a historically and emotionally rich film can actively support the development of listening comprehension. Despite the growing interest in multimedia-based learning, there remains a gap in studies that specifically analyze the educational impact of individual cinematic elements in authentic English films. By focusing on *The King's Speech*, this study seeks to provide new insights into how audiovisual media can be purposefully used to enhance language learning outcomes, particularly in the area of listening. The findings of this research are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of English language education.

B. Definition of Key Terms

Several key terms relevant to this research are defined and clarified to ensure a clear understanding and to prevent any potential misconceptions:

- 1. Cinematic Language** involves the use of visual and auditory techniques by filmmakers to convey meaning, which can greatly improve listening skills. By paying attention to dialogue, sound effects, and music, viewers become more attuned to auditory details. Filmmakers use sound elements like tone, volume shifts, and background noise to evoke emotional responses, prompting viewers to engage more deeply with the

sound to grasp context and subtle details. This active listening promotes better comprehension and critical thinking. Moreover, the combination of spoken and unspoken communication in the film helps viewers link sounds with visuals, further refining their listening skills. Immersing oneself in a film's soundscape enhances the ability to process speech and recognize different accents and sound patterns. (Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K., 2019).

2. **Improving Listening Skills** involves active engagement and mindfulness during communication. Key strategies include maintaining full attention, minimizing distractions, and observing nonverbal cues such as tone and body language. Practicing empathy by understanding the speaker's perspective and paraphrasing their key points demonstrates comprehension and builds trust. Asking open-ended and clarifying questions encourages deeper dialogue, while avoiding interruptions and judgment fosters a respectful environment. Techniques like summarizing and reflecting on the conversation ensure shared understanding and enhance communication in personal and professional settings (FutureLearn, 2024; Coursera, 2024; Asana, 2024).
3. **Listening Comprehension** is the ability to understand spoken language, which includes recognizing sounds, understanding words and sentences, and interpreting speech in real-time. It involves both cognitive processes like attention, memory, and language knowledge,

and non-verbal elements like tone and context. Strong listening comprehension is vital for effective communication, especially in language learning, as it allows individuals to grasp meaning, understand the speaker's intentions, and participate in conversations. (Goh, Christine C. M., 2000).

4. **Film Analysis** involves examining a movie's narrative, visual style, and technical aspects to interpret its themes, meanings, and cultural relevance. It goes beyond recounting the plot, focusing instead on how elements like cinematography, sound, editing, and mise-en-scène convey deeper messages. This analysis also considers the film's historical and social context, exploring how it reflects or challenges societal norms. By critically engaging with the film's artistic and technical choices, the analysis aims to reveal its broader impact and significance (Alexander College, 2021).
5. **Authentic Input** delivered through multimedia, such as movies, plays a crucial role in language learning by sustaining learner engagement, which is particularly important in online learning environments where maintaining attention can be challenging. Movies provide rich and contextualized language exposure, combining visual and auditory elements that help learners understand meaning more effectively. This combination supports the development of receptive skills, especially listening, by immersing learners in natural language use that reflects

real-life communication. Through this immersive experience, learners are better able to process and internalize language patterns, vocabulary, and pronunciation in a meaningful way, enhancing their overall listening comprehension. (Xu and Wei, 2022).

6. **Non-Verbal Communication** refers to the process of conveying a message without the use of words. It includes various forms of communication such as body language (gestures, posture, facial expressions), eye contact, tone of voice, physical distance (proxemics), and even appearance. This type of communication can often express emotions and attitudes more effectively than verbal communication, as it tends to be more instinctive and less consciously controlled. Non-verbal cues play a crucial role in complementing or contradicting verbal messages, enhancing the listener's understanding of the speaker's true intentions. (Knapp, M. L., Hall, J. A., & Horgan, T. G. 2013).

C. Research Questions

From the explanation of the background that has been stated above, the research question can be formulated to guide this study, as follows:

1. How does cinematic language in the movie *The King's Speech* improve listening skills?

D. Objectives of Study

Based on the research question above the objective of the study in this research is:

1. To analyze how the cinematic language used in the movie *The King's Speech* enhances listening skills by examining its auditory, visual, and contextual elements that contribute to language comprehension and retention.

E. Significance of Study

This research holds relevance on both theoretical and practical levels, particularly in the context of language learning through media. By focusing on the role of film in developing listening skills, it offers valuable insights that extend beyond academic interest. The study's significance can be seen from two main perspectives, which are outlined as follows:

1. The study offers significant theoretical contributions to the field of language teaching, particularly in developing listening skill methodologies through media-based learning. This research highlights how films, as a form of multimodal media combining visual, audio, and

narrative elements, can serve as a strategic alternative within language learning curricula. This approach expands theoretical discussions on the integration of technology in education and emphasizes that language learning does not have to rely solely on traditional, text-based methods. Moreover, the findings of this study pave the way for future research exploring the use of movies in enhancing other language skills such as speaking, writing, and vocabulary acquisition. Thus, the research not only provides insight into the effectiveness of movies in improving listening skills but also enriches the academic literature on media- and technology-based language learning methods.

2. Practically, this research offers tangible benefits to various stakeholders involved in language learning and media production. For students, using *The King's Speech* as a learning medium helps develop listening skills through exposure to authentic English, including diverse accents, intonation, and emotionally rich expressions. This allows students to practice understanding conversations in natural social contexts while increasing motivation through engaging content. For teachers, the study provides an innovative and interactive teaching approach that can complement traditional methods. Educators can utilize selected film scenes to design more contextual and meaningful listening activities. Meanwhile, for filmmakers, the findings highlight that cinematic works are not merely for entertainment but also possess high educational

potential, especially in supporting language learning and cultural awareness. Lastly, for general viewers, this research encourages a new perspective viewing films not only as entertainment but also as reflective tools that enrich understanding of language, culture, and the emotional and social issues portrayed in stories. Thus, this study offers practical contributions across fields, reinforcing the role of film in education and global communication.