The Employment of Documentary Film in Enhancing Arabic Writing Skills Among Non-Native Speakers From the Experts' Perspective

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Nowadays, having access to authentic material for language learning, such as documentary film programs is very easy for all students and teachers around the world. The importance of this comprehensive input was emphasized by Krashen. At the same time, many studies have highlighted the linguistic, informational, and pedagogical purpose of documentary film in language skill learning. The base of the studies is the cognitive theory of multimedia learning. Accordingly, the present study has two main objectives, firstly to highlight the importance of using documentary film in enhancing the learning of Arabic as a second language (ASL) writing skill. Secondly, to analyse and discuss local experts' views on the utilization of documentary film in the ASL classroom. For this purpose, a questionnaire was distributed among 12 experts in the field of ASL in Malaysian public universities. Their responses were collected and analysed based on closed-ended and open-ended surveys. The findings and discussion indicated that strong recommendations are given to the credit of the research question. The ASL experts recommend types of documentary films to be utilized, the category of writing skill that can be developed and the appropriate instruction technique to be used in the classroom.

Keywords: Arabic language, Arabic as a second language (ASL), documentary film, writing skill, authentic learning

Introduction

Having access to language input is very important for learning any language especially for learning Arabic as a second language (ASL). This issue was highlighted by Krashen in describing the role of input hypothesis in second language acquisition. By understanding that input which contains structure at a higher level, progress along a natural order, where the structure is a bit beyond the current level of competence is achieved. Input is the essential environmental ingredient. Not all input heard by the student will be processed for language acquisition (Krashen, 1985). Krashen (1985) suggested that comprehensive input as a potential type of language input is the main features in all cases of effective second language acquisition (SLA), where by more quantities of this input seem to cause faster or better SLA, while lack of access to comprehensive input causes

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little or no SLA (Bahrani, 2013).

The base of the studies using documentary film is the cognitive theory of multimedia learning, which can be defined as the presentation of material using both words and pictures (Mayer, Heiser, & Lonn, 2001). In this theory, the student engages in three important cognitive processes which are selecting, organizing, and lastly integrating (Mayer & Moreno, 1998). Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) stated that writing is viewed as a complex cognitive skill, a decision-making, and a problem-solving activity from the cognitive perspective. So, the cognitive writing process presented attempts to account for the major thinking processes and constraints during writing. The act of writing involves three major elements that are reflected in the three units of the model: the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the writing processes (Flower & Hayes, 1981). In this research, the role of the documentary film as authentic input in writing process satisfied the role of the task environment, one of the three units of cognitive process theory (Abdul Rahman, Chik, & Sahrir, 2015).

Literature Review

Documentary Film as Authentic Input in Language Learning

Many studies have highlighted the linguistic, informational (Morley & Lawrence, 1971), and pedagogical purpose of documentary film for facilitating language skill learning. The linguistic purpose is to provide advanced students with opportunities for live practice in the four skills of language.

Peacock's (1997) study recommended that lecturers begin to use appropriate authentic materials in their classroom, as they may increase their students' levels of on-task behaviour, concentration, and involvement in the target activity more than when using artificial materials. In order to capitalize on a student's inherent interest in the Italian culture, Joynt (2008) used documentary film in her language study. Bernardo (2011) believed that documentary films were chosen as a learning tool, because they are a potent medium for enhancing higher order thinking skills. Using documentary film in English oral interpretation class drew some important findings, indicating that the use of documentary films in class can easily meet the need for authenticity and communication (Soong, 2012). In Shin and Cho's (2015) study, they found that the students' experience changed in cognition and emotions from fear to pleasure.

Documentary Film and Writing Skill

There are some studies proving that employing documentary films in second language writing class has value, for example "Tsunami Japan" was an effective documentary film for use in a writing class (Basri, 2011) and natural disaster and technology documentary films are helpful for writing news text (Haris & Abdullah, 2013). In addition, "natural and environment" documentary films (Rohman, 2014) and documentary films about animals, plants, the city, and the last natural disaster (Hutahaean & Ernidawati, 2013) help students in writing report texts. In other studies, Snow (2012) used four types of documentaries, which are expository, observational, interactive, and reflective to explore the similarities between all these types of documentary film and essay composition. Morley and Lawrence (1971) reached the conclusion that there is mutual interdependence between listening ability and writing ability and it seems likely that students who are taught how to listen will more easily learn how to communicate their ideas in writing. Critical thinking in writing exposition also mentioned by Kasper (2000), who found that film imagery enables students to visually process comparative and casual relationships between and among issues and events and encourages student to support a

point of view on that issue.

Some studies have been done to prove a relationship between film and writing skills. Baratta and Jones (2008), proved that the selected films *Halloween*, *Diamonds are Forever*, *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sixth* (2005), helped university students in writing in terms of introducing students to concepts, such as textual cohesion and coherence. Indrasari (2010) concluded that the film *The Postman Pat and Surprise Present* improved students in the aspect of social function and generic structure of narrative text. Tristy (2010) proved that the "All about animals" VCD is very useful for teaching students writing report text. Anggraini, Yasin, and Radjab (2014) highlighted an improvement in narrative text writing in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics from the video multimedia.

Instructional Model in Employing Documentary Film to Enhance Writing Skills

The way to use this type of multimedia material in writing class needs a model. Morley and Lawrence (1971) suggested that five steps for using documentary film in enhancing the four language skills among second language students. Step one is preparation for aural comprehension and the next step is aural comprehension and class discussion. These two steps cover listening and speaking skills. Step three is advance preparation for writing and the next step is composition exercise. These two steps cover writing skills. The last step involves supplementary reading of selected articles (Morley & Lawrence, 1971). Another instructional model is proposed by Jeremiah (1987), who suggested that 12 steps for employing the news segment and documentary films in writing sentences and content for an essay topic. This study suggested that the teacher can complete a lesson in duration 45-60 minutes.

Next intructional model is by Baratta and Jones (2008), whose first step is the students watching the film opening and then answering two writing-guide questions before writing the introduction of the essay. The second step is to locate the thesis statement and watch the film, and after that the students answer two writing-guide questions before determning unity and sentence cohesion. Lastly, students watch a section of the film and students answering two writing-guide questions before determining structure and coherence (Bilal, 2013). Berk's (2009) model is the fourth instructional model which proposes utilizing multimedia aids in the classroom. From his 12 steps, we can benefit from his research in the aspect of giving stimulus for learning activities in class by practicing open-discussion, small group collaboration, and think-pair-share activities among students. The last instructional model is suggested by Basri (2011), who allocated 45 minutes for each class for each step. The first step is let the student watch a documentary film and ask them to make notes of the events. Next, the teacher explains generic structures and students watch the documentary video again, before the teacher asks them to discuss the generic structure of the documentary film in pair. Then, the teacher explains lingustic features and students watch the documentary video again, before the teaher asks them to analyze the documentary film. In the last step, the teacher makes a revision of the previous lessons before the students complete the composition task.

Research Objectives and Methodology

This paper aims to highlight the studies on using of documentary film as multimedia aids in writing skills classroom. The specific research objectives are:

1. To highlight the importance of using documentary film in enhancing ASL writing skill;
2. To analyse and discuss local Arabic subject matter expert's (SME) views on the utilization of

documentary film in the ASL classroom.

This study employs the quantitative and qualitative data collection methods within survey design. In this cross-sectional study, the researchers examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices of SMEs regarding the use of documentary films in the writing skill classroom. A mailed questionnaire seeking responses was sent to the SMEs consistly of a cover letter to invite participants to complete the questions, and a constructed instrument of appropriate length that contains an opening beginning with demographic questions, a series of closed-ended questions, and closing statements for comment (Creswell, 2012). To answer the two objectives, this study chose intentional and convenience samples, because the 12 SMEs near to where the researcher is conducting the data collection. It is also affordable and easy, and the SMEs are readily available (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Table 1

The Demographic Data of Subject Matter Experts (SME)

No.	Specialization	University
1	Arabic linguistics studies	International Islamic University Malaysia (Kuliyyah of Languages and Management)
		Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
		Universiti Putra Malaysia
2	Arabic language education	Institut Perguruan Islam Bangi
		Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
		Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor
		Kolej Universiti Insaniah
3	Arabic language	Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin
		Universiti Malaya
		Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia
4	Instructional technology (Arabic)	Universiti Teknologi MARA
		International Islamic University Malaysia (Kuliyyah of Education)

There are four specializations involved in this survey, from 11 selected public and private universities and college university in Malaysia which offer the Bachelor of Arabic language program in their institution (see Table 1).

Result and Findings

These results of this study are presented by using qualitative and quantitative data and the interpretation of results are done based on a key to understanding the average as proposed by Rebecca Oxford. When the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) mean is between 3.5 and 5.0, the interprétation is high. When the mean SPSS between 2.5 and 3.4, the interprétation is medium. When the mean SPSS between 1.0 and 2.4, the interprétation is low.

The Contribution of Documentary Film Texts Employment in Enhancing Writing Skills

From the responses, it is obvious that all the SMEs agreed with the six items and the interpretation result with mean between 3.92 and 4.58 (high) (see Table 2). This result shows that Arabic SMEs in Malaysian Institutions agreed with the contributions of documentary films as authentic input in language learning, as stated in some studies done in other language settings (Bernardo, 2011; Soong, 2012; Morley & Lawrence,

1971; Shin & Cho, 2015; Peacock, 1997; Joynt, 2008).

Table 2

Closed-Ended Results From Part A

No.	Items	Mean	Interpretation result
1	Help students to employ the vocabulary and terms	4.58	High
2	Provide students with information	4.50	High
3	Demands of language origin and communication	4.25	High
4	Motivate students in learning	4.17	High
5	Enlightenment of the culture of the community and the targeted language	4.17	High
6	Enhance critical thinking	4.08	High
7	Interaction between cognitive and emotional change	3.92	High

Table 3

Open-Ended Results From Part A

Expert	Responses
Expert 1	She said that the application is excellent, but with some considerations: 1. Are Arabic documentaries available on Malaysian TV channels? 2. How can students obtain documentary film texts benefit from them? 3. Do these documentary film texts appear on the screen to give students the opportunity to read and take advantage of the texts? 4. Are these documentary films translated into Arabic, and do translated texts appear on the screen?
Expert 2	He said that this is good work and recommended to be implemented.
Expert 3	He said that no doubt the authentic text from documentary film's is important and has a positive role in improving writing skills, in that the text provides students with new vocabulary and also areas of new knowledge. The good writer who increases this reading area.
Expert 4	He said that watching documentary films needs more focus and training on listening because usually the reporter explains in speed speaking.
Expert 5	He agreed with the employment of documentary films in the writing skills class.
Expert 6	He said that there are a need to carefully choose the documentary films to make sure that the objective is achieved.
Expert 7	He said that documentary films will provide students with a lot of language input.
Expert 8	She said that documentary film will provide students with cultural information, specific terms, and also academic expressions. All of these will benefit the student with the right guidance according to levels.
Expert 9	He said that the employment of documentary film is good, and should be presented in teaching to add to the variety of writing skill teaching methods.
Expert 10	He said that the documentary film is one of the very important media for enhancing the four language skills.
Expert 11	He said that documentary films will benefit students with good preparation.
Expert 12	She said that researchers have to search for this information from literature reviews, especially in peer-reviewed journals written in the field of teaching and learning English as second or foreign language.

From the responses, it can be seen that SMEs suggested to look for types of documentary film either they have the texts or subtitles (see Table 3). They also agreed that documentary films as authentic input will contribute to new knowledge and acquired vocabulary, cultural information, and academic expression; but the teachers and students need more focus and training in utilizing this type of media during the learning and teaching process.

The Writing Skills That Can Be Developed Through Documentary Film Texts

From the responses, it is obvious that the SMEs agreed with 30 items of adopted writing skills (Mohamed & Hussaini, 2011; Atiyyah, 2007; Toiema, 1998) and the interpretation results with a mean of between 3.50 and 4.67 (high) (see Table 4). It is also clear that the skill in using standard Arabic and avoid slang words, the

skill in choosing words and structures that carry ideas, the skill in linking ideas are among the highest mean. The predicted result that learning from documentary films will help more in terms of suitable vocabulary and choosing ideas related to the writing topic.

Table 4

Closed-Ended Findings From Part B

No.	Items	Mean	Interpretation result
1	Skill in using standard Arabic and avoiding slang words	4.67	High
2	Skill in choosing words and structures that carry ideas	4.58	High
3	Skill in linking ideas	4.50	High
4	Skill in choosing ideas	4.33	High
5	Skill in developing ideas	4.33	High
6	Skill in using correct ideas and information	4.33	High
7	Skill in using correct syntax	4.25	High
8	Skill in using correct writing style	4.25	High
9	Skill in presenting unified essay	4.25	High
10	Skill in writing conclusions	4.17	High
11	Skill in using the right grammar and language rules	4.17	High
12	Skill in choosing a topic	4.08	High
13	Skill in recording observations	4.08	High
14	Skill in writing short report about a problem or an issue	4.08	High
15	Skill in sequencing ideas	4.08	High
16	Skill in using a paragraph for each idea	4.08	High
17	Skill in expressing ideas clearly	4.00	High
18	Skill in completing structure elements	4.00	High
19	Skill in citation using literature evidence	3.92	High
20	Skill in imaginative capacity	3.92	High
21	Skill in declaring ideas	3.92	High
22	Skill in using accurate conjunctions	3.92	High
23	Skill in speed writing and accuracy	3.83	High
24	Skill in power argumentation in defending an opinion	3.75	High
25	Skill in intellectual dialogue and accepting views	3.75	High
26	Skill in identifying points of strength and weakness in others' idea	3.75	High
27	Skill in writing about sensitive issues regarding Arab culture	3.75	High
28	Skill in using footnotes correctly and consistently	3.67	High
29	Skill in using punctuation marks	3.50	High
30	Skill in showing respect for others' opinions	3.50	High

Proposed Documentary Film Areas to Be Used in the Experimental Study

From the responses, it is stated that the SMEs agreed with five areas of documentary films divided by Aufderheide (2007) and Bilal (2013), and the interpretation results with a mean of between 4.25 and 4.83 (high) (see Table 5), while item 6 had a medium interpretation result of mean 3.42. We can see that all areas were agreed with by the SMEs with a high interpretation except government propaganda.

In the responses, the SMEs suggested other areas of suitable documentary films, such as science and technology, battle of nations, social entertainment, etc. (see Table 6). Besides that, teachers should look consider the student level and their interests.

Table 5

Closed-Ended Findings From Part C

No.	Items	Mean	Interpretation result
1	Nature and environment	4.83	High
2	Memories and history	4.75	High
3	Advocacy	4.42	High
4	Ethnographic	4.33	High
5	Public affairs	4.25	High
6	Government propaganda	3.42	Medium

Table 6

Open-Ended Findings From Part C

Expert	Responses
Expert 1	Science encyclopaedia, world atlas, religious lecture, knowledge session, political news, culture, social, women, children, technology, Internet, newspaper
Expert 3	Film of social entertainment
Expert 6	Battle of nations documentary film
Expert 10	Film of science and technology
Expert 12	You should look for the student level and their interest in choosing the type of film, because their self-motivation is the keywords for the successful research.

Instructional Model to Be Used To Employ Documentary Films Texts in the Development of Writing Skills

Table 7

Closed-Ended Findings From Part D

No.	Items	Mean	Interpretation result
1	Hasan Basri (2011)	4.25	High
2	Berk (2009)	4.00	High
3	Baratta and Jones (2008)	3.91	High
4	Jeremiah (1987)	3.67	High
5	Morley and Lawrence (1971)	3.58	High

From the responses, it is clear that all five items were accepted by SMEs with a high interpretation result and a mean between 3.58 and 4.25 (see Table 7). We can say that all of the instructional model suggested the highest mean marks are for Hasan Basri, who includes the time allotment for every step in his instructional model. All these five instructional models were discussed in the previous literature review.

Table 8

Open-Ended Findings From Part D

Model	Responses
Morley and Lawrence (1971)	-
Jeremiah (1987)	The way to present the film is not clear.
Baratta and Jones (2008)	Need to limit the minimum and maximum time for film presentation.
Berk (2009)	Collaborative activity is very important after students watch the film and its text.
Hasan Basri (2011)	The topic is good and needs more focus during implementing the expérimental study.

From the open-responses, it is understood that there is no comment on the first model, while the second and third models both have comment about the way to present the film and the time allocation (see Table 8). Collaborative activity is credited in the fourth model while it is suggested that experimental study be done on the fifth that instructional model.

Table 9

Results From General Comment for Part D

Expert	Responses
Expert 1	I suggest mixing three models: Jeremiah, Baratta and Jones, and Berk (If possible).
Expert 6	I hope that the researcher can apply the experimental study to two groups (control and experimental) in this research.
Expert 8	The steps will be more effective when the film is divided some scenes during the analysis exercise.
Expert 9	The researcher must to combine all these steps and come up with a new model which is better than before.
Expert 10	Design the suggested model from the researcher's perception after making observation on the previous models and utilize the modern tools in the application.

From the general comment, it is clear that every model has its own strengths and weaknesses (see Table 9). Thus, SMEs predicted that the researchers can develop a new model by taking into account the five instructional models. Finally, one SME suggested the use of two groups of control and experimental in the experimental study.

Discussion of Findings

From a review of the literature, it is clear that the input of documentary films in language classes has been used for years and its effectiveness has been proven by some studies in the field of second language learning, whereas this paper highlights and promotes the use of documentary films in the writing skills classroom based on Arabic as a second language.

Discussing the contributions of authentic texts from documentary films, the SMEs suggested looking for the certain types of documentary film, and whether or not they had the texts or subtitles, they also agreed that documentary films as authentic input will contribute to new knowledge and vocabulary, cultural information, academic expression, but there is a need for more focus and training in utilizing this type of media during the learning and teaching process.

For other areas of documentary film, the SMEs suggested science and technology, battle of nation, and social entertainment. Regarding the instructional model to be used in implementing the documentary film in class, it can be understood that every model has its own strengths and weaknesses, thus the SMEs predicted that the researchers could develop a new model based on all these five instructional models.

Conclusion

The paper presents an analysis of 12 experts of ASL in Malaysian universities on the role and importance of documentary film program as multimedia language input in enhancing writing skills among ASL learners. The findings indicated that the SMEs recommended types of documentary film that is recommended to be utilized, category of writing skill that can be developed and appropriate instruction technique that should be used in the classroom. Some studies in the field of English as a second language have employed this multimedia input in their language teaching and learning process. Hence, this study is contributing at its employment in teaching and learning Arabic as a second language among non-native speakers.

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