Perceptions on the Use of English Movies as an Instructional Material: Basis for a Proposed Teaching Program

Yang Lei*[1], Kevin Arman N. Ramos[2], Mary Grace M. Villaflores[3]
[1, 2, 3] National University, Manila
*Corresponding Author e-mail: leiyangodluckies021@gmail.com

Abstract

Aim: This study examined how senior high school English teachers in two schools in Dingxi City, Gansu Province, China, perceive the use of English movies in teaching. It aimed to identify the challenges encountered, determine the factors influencing their use, and propose a teacher training program as an intervention.

Methodology: Anchored in Dual Coding Theory, the study employed a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews with 20 English teachers. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to capture teachers' perceptions and instructional experiences.

Key Findings: Results revealed that teachers perceived English movies as effective tools for enhancing students' language skills, cultural awareness, and classroom engagement. Nonetheless, challenges emerged in word recognition, meaning construction, and image interpretation due to limited technological access, complex linguistic content, and inadequate teaching resources. Factors such as teacher competence, student proficiency, and institutional support significantly influenced the implementation of movie-based instruction.

Conclusion: A teacher training program was designed to enhance teachers' ability to select suitable materials, develop learning activities, and integrate multimedia tools effectively. The study contributes to the understanding of English movie-*based pedagogy and provides practical directions for improving instructional practices in local high schools.*
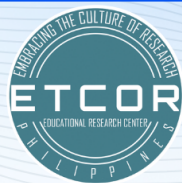
Keywords: *English movies; instructional materials; teacher perceptions; Dual Coding Theory; teacher training*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid globalization of education and technology has reshaped how English is taught and learned across the world. In the digital era, visual media—particularly English films—has emerged as a dynamic pedagogical resource capable of bridging linguistic, cultural, and cognitive gaps among learners. Studies across various educational contexts have demonstrated that integrating film and television materials can stimulate students' interest, foster authentic communication, and enhance comprehension through multimodal input (Pasaribu et al., 2023; Sánchez-Auñón et al., 2023). Such materials expose learners to genuine language use, social nuances, and cultural expressions that traditional textbooks often lack. Globally, teachers are increasingly exploring films as a form of multimodal instruction that combines verbal and visual stimuli to strengthen linguistic proficiency and cultural literacy.

In the Asian context, particularly in China, English language teaching (ELT) continues to evolve under curriculum reforms that emphasize communicative competence, cultural awareness, and learner-centered pedagogy. Despite these reforms, the incorporation of multimedia resources such as English movies remains inconsistent, largely depending on teachers' technological access, professional training, and pedagogical confidence. Studies have shown that while many Chinese educators acknowledge the motivational power of films, they face persistent challenges related to material selection, lesson design, and assessment integration (Huang et al., 2023). This imbalance highlights a continuing gap between theoretical potential and classroom reality in the use of English movies as instructional tools.

From a theoretical perspective, Dual Coding Theory provides a strong cognitive foundation for understanding the benefits of using films in language teaching. It posits that learning occurs more effectively when information is processed simultaneously through verbal and non-verbal channels. English movies, which naturally blend dialogue,

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imagery, and sound, activate both channels and promote deeper comprehension and memory retention. However, despite the extensive body of international research on Dual Coding Theory, limited studies have examined its application in Chinese secondary school contexts, particularly from the perspective of teachers who implement these strategies in authentic classrooms (Zhang, 2025).

At the local level, secondary English teachers in Dingxi City, Gansu Province, encounter unique challenges when integrating English movies into instruction. Variations in teacher competence, technological access, and resource availability shape their instructional decisions and classroom outcomes. Existing teacher training programs have primarily emphasized traditional teaching skills and have not adequately addressed the integration of multimodal and technology-enhanced approaches. Consequently, many teachers lack structured guidance on how to select, interpret, and apply films in ways that align with students' cognitive processes and curricular goals (Benjamin, 2024). This underscores the need for a localized framework and targeted teacher development initiatives that bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Research Gap and Rationale

Although international research supports the pedagogical value of film-based instruction, little is known about how senior high school English teachers in China conceptualize, experience, and apply these materials within the Dual Coding framework. Most existing studies focus either on student outcomes or on tertiary-level instruction, leaving a gap in understanding teacher perspectives at the secondary level (Gazioğlu & Karakuş, 2023). Moreover, limited empirical evidence exists on how teachers navigate multimodal information processing—specifically word processing, semantic coding, image interpretation, and appearance coding—in film-based lessons. Addressing these gaps is crucial to designing professional development programs that respond to real classroom needs and promote sustainable pedagogical innovation.

This study, therefore, investigates how senior high school English teachers in Dingxi City perceive the use of English movies in language instruction, the challenges they encounter, and the factors influencing their instructional decisions. Guided by Dual Coding Theory, the research not only documents teachers' experiences but also transforms these insights into the design of a localized teacher training program. This contribution is technically novel, as it contextualizes an established cognitive theory within a practical, school-based setting, thereby offering both academic and community value.

Significance of the Study

The study holds academic and practical importance for multiple stakeholders. For teachers, it provides empirically grounded strategies to enhance multimodal teaching using English films. For school administrators and curriculum developers, it offers evidence-based insights to inform professional development programs and improve resource allocation. For students, the findings contribute to enriched classroom experiences that foster authentic communication and intercultural competence. Ultimately, the study supports national and institutional efforts to modernize English language instruction by integrating cognitive theory, technology, and pedagogy into a cohesive, research-informed framework.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of English movies in classroom instruction has been widely recognized as a powerful pedagogical approach that enhances students' engagement, comprehension, and exposure to authentic language use. However, the extent to which teachers maximize this tool varies across contexts, often influenced by their perceptions, instructional strategies, and access to relevant materials. Despite the potential of using movies to improve language learning, there remains a gap in understanding how teachers conceptualize, implement, and evaluate this method in senior secondary schools. Moreover, challenges such as limited training, curriculum constraints, and the absence of clear instructional guidelines hinder its effective application. This study addresses these concerns by investigating teachers' perceptions, challenges, and factors influencing their use of English movies as instructional materials. It also seeks to develop a teaching program that enhances pedagogical creativity and promotes meaningful language learning experiences in the classroom.

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Research Objectives

General Objective
To explore the perceptions, challenges, and instructional practices of senior secondary school teachers in using English movies as a teaching tool.

Specific Objectives
1. To determine teachers' perceptions on the use of English movies as instructional materials in terms of:
   a. word processing,
   b. coding as semantics,
   c. image processing, and
   d. coding for appearances.
2. To identify the challenges encountered by teachers in using English movies as instructional materials in terms of the same dimensions.
3. To determine the factors that influence teachers' choice of English movies as instructional materials.
4. To design a teaching program based on the findings of the study that promotes the effective and purposeful use of English movies in classroom instruction.

Research Questions
This study was guided by the following research questions to comprehensively explore the variations in senior secondary school teachers' perceptions and instructional practices when using English movies as a teaching tool.
1. What are the teachers' perceptions on the use of English movies as instructional materials in terms of:
   a. word processing,
   b. coding as semantics,
   c. image processing, and
   d. coding for appearances?
2. What are the challenges encountered in the use of English movies as instructional materials in terms of:
   a. word processing,
   b. coding as semantics,
   c. image processing, and
   d. coding for appearances?
3. What are the factors influencing teachers' choice of English movies as instructional materials in terms of:
   a. word processing,
   b. coding as semantics,
   c. image processing, and
   d. coding for appearances?
4. Based on the findings, what teaching program can be created to enhance instructional effectiveness using English movies?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design
This study employed a mixed-methods research design, specifically the convergent parallel design, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were gathered through a structured survey, while qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Both datasets were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and then compared to provide a more complete interpretation of findings.

The convergent parallel design was selected because a single method alone could not sufficiently capture the complexity of teachers' perceptions and experiences. The survey provided measurable patterns of attitudes and practices, while the interviews revealed contextual and experiential insights. Combining the two strengthened the credibility, depth, and applicability of the results. This design was consistent with the study's objectives of supporting both theoretical exploration and practical recommendations for English teacher training and curriculum enhancement.

Context and Participants
The study was conducted in Dingxi No. 1 High School and Dongfanghong High School in Dingxi City, Gansu Province, China, during the 2024–2025 academic year. These schools were purposively selected for their strong

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multimedia infrastructure and established English language programs, which made them ideal contexts for examining the use of English movies in instruction.

The participants were senior secondary school English teachers who had experience in using or attempting to use English movies as part of their teaching. A total of 50 English teachers participated in the study—25 from each school—for the quantitative phase. For the qualitative phase, six teachers (three from each school) were purposively selected for in-depth interviews based on their willingness to participate and their active experience with multimedia-assisted instruction.

This sampling ensured representation across different teaching levels and years of experience. Participants' involvement provided both breadth and depth of data, reflecting diverse yet comparable pedagogical contexts.

Research Instruments

Two research instruments were used: a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to measure teachers' perceptions and implementation of the Dual Coding Theory (DCT)in using English movies for instruction. It consisted of four dimensions:
1. Word Processing
2. Coding as Semantics
3. Image Processing
4. Coding for Appearances

Each dimension included five items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The instrument was validated by three expert evaluators in English education from the CEAS Graduate Studies, National University of Manila. Pilot testing yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

Interview Guide

The interview guide aimed to gather qualitative insights into teachers' experiences and challenges in using English movies. The questions were aligned with the DCT framework and encouraged open reflection on strategies, content selection, student engagement, and classroom constraints. Sample questions included:
- "How do you help students understand cultural elements in movies?"
- "What factors influence your choice of English movies?"

The guide underwent expert validation by the same panel that reviewed the questionnaire, ensuring content alignment and relevance.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, formal permission letters were sent to the school administrators of the two participating institutions. Upon approval, the researcher personally coordinated the schedule and logistics of data gathering.

Quantitative data were collected first through Google Forms, which allowed participants to complete the questionnaire conveniently and anonymously. Following the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted either online or face-to-face, depending on participants' preferences and availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, was audio-recorded with consent, and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The data collection lasted for ten days, ensuring participants had ample time to respond thoughtfully. Conducting the study in familiar school environments promoted comfort and authenticity, leading to more accurate and reflective responses.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation) to determine trends in teachers' perceptions. Correlation and factor analyses were also employed to explore relationships between teachers' demographic profiles and their practices related to the DCT dimensions.

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Likert Scale Interpretation

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	Strongly Agree (SA)
4	3.41–4.20	Agree (A)
3	2.61–3.40	Neutral (N)
2	1.81–2.60	Disagree (D)
1	1.00–1.80	Strongly Disagree (SD)

The following statistical formulas were applied:

Weighted Mean:

$$WM = \frac{\sum(f \times x)}{N}$$

where f = frequency, x = scale value, and N = total responses.
Standard Deviation:

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(x - \bar{x})^2}{n}}$$

where x = individual score, $|bar\{x\}$ = mean, n = number of respondents.

These analyses provided a clear numerical overview of teachers' perceptions and highlighted the level of implementation of English movie–based instruction.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data from interviews were subjected to thematic analysis, which involved coding, categorization, and theme generation. Recurring patterns and significant statements were identified and grouped according to the four DCT dimensions. This process allowed for a deep understanding of teachers' experiences, perceived challenges, and instructional innovations.

Finally, both datasets were merged and triangulated to confirm findings, clarify inconsistencies, and ensure a well-rounded interpretation of results.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to the ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for participants' rights. Participants received an informed consent form detailing the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

All collected data were treated with utmost confidentiality. Respondents' identities were coded and anonymized during analysis and reporting. Data were securely stored in password-protected files and deleted after the completion of the study.

The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Subcommittee of the institution to ensure compliance with ethical standards. The study upheld the principles of beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, and fairness, ensuring that no participant experienced harm, coercion, or discrimination throughout the research process.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study based on the four research questions. Results are organized according to the dimensions of Dual Coding Theory (DCT): word processing, coding as semantics, image processing, and coding for appearances. Each result is immediately followed by discussion supported by relevant and recent literature to ensure coherence between data and interpretation.

1. Teachers' Perceptions on the Use of English Movies as Instructional Materials

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The results revealed that teachers had highly positive perceptions of using English movies as instructional materials across all four dimensions of DCT. Quantitatively, the overall weighted mean was 4.12, interpreted as *Agree*. Specifically, teachers strongly agreed that movies enriched vocabulary learning (M = 4.14), provided contextual grammar examples (M = 4.08), supported comprehension through visuals (M = 4.17), and promoted cultural understanding (M = 4.10).

These findings were validated by qualitative interview data, in which teachers consistently emphasized that movies helped sustain students' attention, increased motivation, and improved pronunciation and cultural awareness. Teachers observed that learners were more willing to participate when English movies were used as part of instruction. This aligns with Paivio's (1971) Dual Coding Theory, which posits that information processed both verbally and visually enhances memory and understanding. Film-based instruction facilitates multimodal engagement, and that movies contextualize language learning, fostering greater retention of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Thus, the findings confirm that English movies, when properly selected and integrated, serve as powerful multimodal tools in enhancing language learning.

2. Challenges in Using English Movies as Instructional Materials

Despite strong support for the method, teachers encountered several challenges. In the word processing domain, teachers noted difficulties such as rapid speech delivery, diverse accents, and colloquial vocabulary that confused learners. For coding as semantics, idioms, humor, and figurative language often required teacher intervention to clarify meaning. In image processing, some students were distracted by visual effects or misinterpreted scenes due to insufficient background knowledge. Lastly, under coding for appearances, cultural disparities sometimes led to misconceptions or discomfort.

These challenges echo findings by Chen et al. (2022), who noted that while films enrich language exposure, they may also overwhelm learners with excessive input. Language authenticity in films—though beneficial—may hinder comprehension if not supported with pre-teaching or scaffolding strategies. Hence, these challenges point to the necessity of structured teacher training that guides film selection, pacing, and contextual explanation to ensure balanced cognitive processing.

3. Factors Considered in Selecting English Movies for Classroom Use

Teachers reported several major considerations when choosing English movies: linguistic clarity, thematic relevance, visual comprehensibility, and cultural appropriateness. Linguistic clarity was identified as the most crucial factor, as teachers preferred films with standard pronunciation, moderate pacing, and available subtitles. Thematic relevance ensured that the film aligned with curricular goals, while visual support and cultural appropriateness minimized confusion and enhanced understanding.

These criteria reflect a pedagogically informed selection process consistent with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982), which emphasizes comprehensible input as a foundation for language learning. Movie selection must balance authenticity and accessibility—providing real-life communication while maintaining learner comprehensibility. The findings thus highlight that effective film-based instruction is not merely about media exposure, but about intentional, theory-driven material selection.

4. Development of the Proposed Teacher Training Program: FilmED

Based on the findings, a Dual Coding Theory-based teacher training program, titled *FilmED*, was developed to enhance teachers' capacity to integrate English movies in instruction. The proposed program features seven interconnected modules covering Word Processing, Coding as Semantics, Image Processing, Coding for Appearances, Multimodal Lesson Planning, Demonstration and Feedback, and Reflection and Evaluation.

Each module incorporates theoretical grounding, practical workshops, and microteaching components to ensure that participants acquire both conceptual understanding and applied skills. For example, the *Coding as Semantics* module guides teachers in decoding idiomatic expressions and emotional nuances in film dialogues, while *Multimodal Lesson Planning* trains teachers to design lessons combining verbal and non-verbal elements.

This structured approach is supported by Mayer's (2024) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which emphasizes the integration of visual and verbal channels to optimize cognitive processing. By aligning with this theoretical framework, *FilmED* responds directly to the study's findings and provides an actionable framework for pedagogical improvement.

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The study investigated English teachers' perceptions, challenges, and selection factors in using English movies as instructional materials in two senior secondary schools in Dingxi City, Gansu Province, China. Guided by Dual Coding Theory, the study employed a mixed-methods design involving surveys and interviews with English teachers.

Findings revealed that teachers strongly perceived the use of English movies as beneficial to language learning, particularly in enhancing vocabulary, grammar, and cultural competence. However, several challenges emerged, including students' difficulty with rapid speech, idiomatic language, and culturally embedded visual content. Teachers emphasized that appropriate film selection requires careful consideration of linguistic clarity, thematic relevance, and cultural suitability. In response, a DCT-based Teacher Training Program (FilmED) was proposed to address these pedagogical needs and strengthen multimodal instruction.

Conclusions

1. Teachers hold highly positive perceptions toward integrating English movies in instruction. They recognize the films' role in strengthening linguistic, visual, and cultural comprehension, supporting the dual coding process of learning.
2. Pedagogical challenges persist in terms of language complexity, cultural interpretation, and classroom management during film integration.
3. Selection criteria for movies are deliberate and theory-driven, focusing on language clarity, thematic appropriateness, and visual comprehensibility.
4. A structured DCT-based training program is essential to equip teachers with the theoretical understanding and practical skills needed to maximize the educational potential of English movies.

These conclusions affirm that English movie-based instruction, when properly designed, aligns with 21st-century pedagogical frameworks that promote multimodal, student-centered learning.
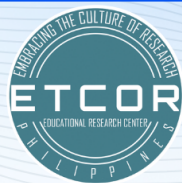
Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Implementation of the FilmED Program: Schools and teacher training institutions may adopt and evaluate the proposed *FilmED* program to strengthen teachers' multimodal pedagogical competencies.
2. Integration of DCT in Curriculum Design: Educational policymakers may incorporate Dual Coding Theory principles in curriculum development and teacher education frameworks.
3. Creation of a Multimedia Repository: Institutions may develop curated repositories of linguistically and culturally appropriate English films for instructional use.
4. Research Expansion: Future studies may investigate the impact of movie-based instruction on students' actual learning performance, motivation, and intercultural competence.
5. Teacher Collaboration and Reflection: School administrators may establish peer mentoring systems or professional learning communities to encourage the exchange of effective film-based teaching strategies.

By implementing these recommendations, schools may enhance the quality of English instruction through the integration of visual and verbal learning channels. The findings underscore that effective language learning extends beyond grammar and vocabulary—it involves cultivating cultural insight, cognitive engagement, and critical interpretation skills. In this light, English movies, when used through informed pedagogical frameworks such as Dual Coding Theory, may serve as transformative tools for fostering communicative competence and global literacy.

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