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Movies to enhance listening comprehension in the EFL classroom

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Abstract:
Movies are an occurring feature in EFL classrooms in Sweden, as well as exercises seeking to practice listening comprehension, although, there are few studies which combine the two together. The aim for this literature review was to analyse the use of film for listening comprehension development in EFL classrooms. The results show that movies can help students reach higher levels of listening because students felt more motivated and they became more active. The results also show further that teachers can help students reach higher levels of listening comprehension by using various features such as pauses, activities before, during and after the movie etc. The results also show that listening comprehension is a somewhat “taken for granted skill” which needs to be researched more about, specifically the importance of listening comprehension in the context of the other skills.

Keywords:
EFL education, moving images, listening comprehension, film, upper secondary school, secondary school
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1. Introduction

“To truly listen means to transcend your autobiography, to get out of your own frame of reference, out of your own value system, out of your own history and judging tendencies, and to get deeply into the frame of reference or viewpoint of another person. This is called empathic listening. It is a very, very rare skill. But it is more than a skill. Much more.” (Covey, 2004, p. 194).

When learning a second language, various skills are taught and four significant skills are covered in upper secondary schools in Sweden: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are important tools when acquiring a second language and different methods can be used to teach them those when learning a new language.

Listening comprehension is the most complex and difficult skill to learn of the four skills, as out of the three it is the least explicit (Vandergrift, 2004). To acquire listening comprehension, several approaches can be used in the EFL/ESL classroom. The different methods have more or less positive approaches because of the method used to approach movies for listening comprehension. One approach is to incorporate films to support and develop listening proficiency. According to the Swedish syllabus of English in upper secondary school, students should be taught English to encourage students to feel confident when participating in conversations, writing, and so on (Skolverket, 2011). Listening comprehension is an important skill for participation in conversations and participants must understand each other to actively contribute to a conversation. Therefore, students should also be given opportunities in an appropriate learning context to develop listening comprehension skills:

Students should be given the opportunity, through the use of language in functional and meaningful contexts, to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills cover both reception, which means understanding spoken language and texts, and production and interaction, which means expressing oneself and interacting with others in speech and writing, as well as adapting their language to different situations, purposes and recipients (Skolverket, 2011, p.1).

Listening comprehension is one of the most frequently used language skills in student-teacher communication. Listening was previously regarded as a passive activity, but now the consensus from research into listening comprehension views it as an active activity (Vandergrift, 2004, p.3). The skill of listening comprehension has been shown to be one of the most important aspects that a student must successfully develop or acquire within a second or foreign language. For a student to develop listening comprehension, a beneficial learning environment is important as well as choosing the methods to teach listening comprehension. Moving images such as feature films as a pedagogical tool to teach listening comprehension can be engaging and effective as feature films are watched by students in their spare time. Feature films have developed substantially in their formats to keep up-to-date with the digitalization movement driven by the need to produce internet content that is both online and offline. Even DVD films follow a digitalized format pattern common to online film and video sites. Many DVD films can be watched with or without subtitles and they can be shown as episodes or extracts through a scene choice option included in the DVD format. In addition, students can listen to background interviews with directors and actors and much more. The options available in just a DVD format create opportunities for a teacher to use feature films in the EFL/ESL classroom in Sweden. These different options affect what is being taught to students.

The use of movies and other forms of moving images as a pedagogical tool in EFL/ESL classrooms is one method to help students develop listening comprehension skills. Through movies, students develop this skill by listening to language in various social contexts shown in
movies. Teaching listening comprehension through movies can therefore help students acquire the skills needed to participate in conversations in real life. Students are familiar with movies due to them watching them in their private lives, and teachers can use movies as forms of realia to acknowledge the students’ familiarity with movies. In addition, teachers can develop the students’ familiarity with film by further expanding the movie’s language contexts. Ur (1984) argues that using movies can be a usable medium to teach listening comprehension through an entertaining method. Learning is inspired in many different ways and learning through entertaining methods can help students gain useful practices in listening comprehension.

2. Background
Increasing digitalisation in and of society has provided more opportunities and numerous ways to practice listening comprehension. Students can easily watch movies outside the classroom whenever and wherever they desire, which has often led them to become interested in fictional movies. Fictional films will often show social contexts which students can relate to. In addition, technology as part of the digitalization of society changes the way viewers watch film, for instance, movies and TV programs in foreign language can be watched with subtitles in the viewer’s native language. A viewer can also opt to watch a movie or television program without subtitles. Because of increasing digitalization in our societies, in the near future in Sweden, the consequences of digitalization will affect how a teacher plans his/her classroom lessons. Digitalisation brings challenges for teachers in terms of selecting movies to use in the classroom as some are more suitable than others. Another challenge for teachers who want to use movies in the EFL classroom is to find movies that students have not already watched as the selection online is wide. By watching movies at home, students can pick up on slang, accents and words which increase their speaking ability, but when they watch movies at home, they can more or less be forms of entertainment (Vandergrift (2004)). Teachers should therefore find a way to incorporate movies in the classroom as an educational tool as opposed to using them as sources for entertainment in the classroom.

In Swedish upper secondary schools, listening comprehension has traditionally focused on what textbooks bring to help students improve and develop listening comprehension. Listening comprehension is often trained with the help of a CD or audio track accompanying the language textbook adjusted for an EFL classroom in Sweden. From the author’s own experience, movies are often used as a part of a reading project or used as a time-filler in a Swedish EFL classroom. This means the potential of movies to teach listening comprehension is not always used at maximum capacity.

As mentioned above, the use of moving images in the Swedish classroom is limited as an accompaniment to English language textbooks or as time fillers in the classroom. Moving images can be used to develop spoken and written language skills. In the context of my study, I have found that there is little mentioned about listening proficiency in the Swedish syllabus which can be problematic since this skill is of importance to students’ ability to understand instructions and participate in conversations in English. The Swedish syllabus list five main features students in upper secondary schools in Sweden should be taught. Only one of the five deals with listening comprehension. Listening comprehension is a key factor for understanding and participating in English language conversations (Skolverket, 2011). However, for this to happen, students must develop listening comprehension, and this, out of all the language learning skills, is the hardest skill to practice in the EFL classroom according to Vandergrift (2004).
To practice listening comprehension is salient for a student in Sweden which is increasingly becoming a part of the globalized and digitalized world. According to the Swedish syllabus (Skolverket 2011), students should feel an urge and lust to learn. The issue is that students sometimes do not understand enough of a spoken language at its natural occurring speed and contexts, if they are not provided with visual aids to help understand the spoken conversation. There is little mentioned in the Swedish syllabus about listening comprehension which can be seen as problematic because it is needed to understand and participate in conversations in a foreign language such as English.

In the EFL classroom, lessons should be mainly conducted in English, and students should be introduced to varieties of spoken English. In addition, the content of the lessons should be relatable to students:

Teaching should as far as possible be conducted in English. In teaching students should meet written and spoken English of different kinds, and relate the content to their own experiences and knowledge. Students should be given the opportunity to interact in speech and writing, and to produce spoken language and texts of different kinds, both on their own and together with others, using different aids and media. (Skolverket, 2011)

The Swedish syllabus mostly focuses on students’ learning and practicing their speaking and writing skills and that English should be conducted in English, although there is a contradiction with the syllabus concerning listening comprehension. Teaching should, as far as possible, be conducted in English, but have teachers helped students to learn how to listen or is this a skill that is taken for granted, as it is in the quotation above? Some studies and research into films in the classroom indicate that feature films in the EFL classroom are seen as time consuming and inefficient because of a movie’s length. However, in the Swedish context and in reference to Skolverket above, since lesson content should be relatable to the students, teachers can choose movies that have plots or themes to which students can relate. Incorporating films in a lesson plan can open opportunities for different teaching approaches and the methods a teacher adopts in using films are just as important in choosing the right movie.

To use a visual aid to help students develop and acquire listening comprehension can be successful for those who experience difficulties in the learning process of acquiring a foreign language, although some researchers argue that movies can cause a student to forget the teaching context in which he/she is in as well as the purpose of watching a movie. Using films in the classroom can cause a student to forget to listen actively throughout the whole movie. Despite the criticism, the usage of visual aids plays an important role in teaching and this is in line with an incidental learning and natural learning approach developed by Stephen Krashen (1988).

2.1. Research Questions and Aim
Based on the background rationale given above, my study focuses on the following questions about the use of moving images in an EFL classroom in the Swedish education context.

- What does research say about a teacher’s use of fictional movies to help students develop their listening proficiency?
- What does research say about what students can develop regarding listening proficiency by watching fictional movies at school?
The aim of this project focuses on listening comprehension by analysing the effectiveness of using moving images to develop this language skill in an EFL classroom in upper secondary school. Previous research will be analysed through application of Covey’s (2004) paradigm of five listening stages to demonstrate the argument that using moving images as a pedagogical tool in an EFL classroom can be a method of introducing way to explore students to spoken English. Moving images as a pedagogical tool can become an “excellent medium to give students some entertaining and useful listening practice” (Ur, 1984:67).

3. Theoretical framework
As my study is an analysis of literature of language learning and listening, my chosen theoretical models will be applied to the literature review to demonstrate my research aims and preliminary argument concerning the development of students’ listening comprehension. The main theoretical context for my chosen theories is Krashen’s natural approach. The other chosen theories for this study include or have their base in Krashen’s approach in different ways and therefore, the main analysis will use Covey (2004), Vandergrift & Baker (2015), Ur (1984, 2012) and King (2002) but Krashen (1995) is the overall framework. A common ideology in the chosen approaches to listening comprehension is that they share a background in the natural approach of learning developed by Stephen Krashen during the 1980’s as a way of helping students acquire a language. Krashen’s theory separates learning a language as a conscious action and acquiring a language as an unconscious action. Krashen’s theory forms the overall framework for the chosen teaching approaches to listening comprehension for this study.

According to Krashen’s theory (Krashen, 1995), acquiring a language means a student gains knowledge of the target language without being fully aware of the process. The main principle behind this theory is the idea that knowledge is acquired in stages, but the input or methods used to teach language knowledge must always be comprehensible to the student. It can be argued that film is a comprehensible input or method of teaching as most students are aware of film as a genre. Therefore, using film to develop listening comprehension has the potential to increase a student’s knowledge of listening comprehension as a skill and as a practice. For this to happen, a student must be willing to learn, be aware that knowledge is not instant and must be developed, and that this is part of the learning process. The theory has been criticised from different angles. One criticism is Krashen’s use of the term comprehension as being too vague. Another critique concerns application of the term comprehensible input. At the same time, Krashen’s theory on language acquisition has had substantial impact on SLA, and it has become increasingly relatable for readers to understand.

Within Krashen’s theoretical framework of second language acquisition, the key role of listening comprehension is as something learnt in a natural way, meaning it is acquired in conversations, watching movies, listening etc. Vandergrift & Baker (2015) specifically focuses on the role of listening comprehension whom provides guideline variables regarding listening and reading knowledge. They state that listening and reading knowledge share similar characteristics as both need:

“Receptive language processing, which involves decoding and interpretation. Both processes, therefore, use two basic knowledge sources: linguistic knowledge (e.g. Vocabulary and syntax) and world knowledge (e.g. topic, text structure, schema, and culture) for purposes of text comprehension” (Vandergrift & Baker, 2015, p.392).

An approach to help students acquire a language could be providing visual aids such as feature films to situate and contextualize spoken language. Based on Vandergrift’s and Baker’s criteria
above, students’ previous knowledge of language through their exposure to film is important for a teacher when planning an EFL/ESL lesson. By using moving images such as feature films as part of his/her lesson, a teacher can help students understand aspects of language usage such as language tone used in specific contexts which enhance students’ listening comprehension.

As an extension to Vandergrift’s and Baker’s point of taking advantage of a students’ inherent linguistic and world knowledge, Ur (1984) points out there is no value in practicing listening skills in isolation. According to Ur, listening to a conversation and then having students do tasks such as deciding the number participants in a movie, or watching a movie and then describing emotions and relationships might be fun, but the tasks themselves do not improve understanding of foreign language discourse. This a controversial claim, but the point Ur makes is that listening skills cannot be taught and learnt without a context. This falls within Vandergrift’s and Baker’s criteria of assumed knowledge in language learning.

Ur (2012) notes that using movies can be an entertaining way to develop listening strategies, and the enjoyment of feature films with contemporary plots can trigger students’ motivation to listen actively compared to practicing listening strategies through traditional methods such as textbooks with audio back up. A key to successful language acquisition through watching movies is what the teacher chooses to do with the movie. Ur outlines practical methods such as watching a film in 15 minute blocks. Pauses in watching a film provide moments for students to write down what they have watched, what they understood, and what they found difficult to understand. Through this method movies can be used to teach and practice listening comprehension. The same movie should not be watched for more than three weeks, as students forget the context of the film and the purpose of using film becomes lost. Ur (1984) proposes several approaches and practical tools for the EFL classroom, and, therefore because of this, Ur is used as part of the theoretical framework for this study. This approach combined with Covey’s paradigm of five layers of listening show that active listening is a key factor in developing listening skills. Active listening is needed for active participation in conversations and in understanding what others are saying in a foreign language. To use feature films to develop listening comprehension can be effective.

As Krashen’s approach to learning processes is that they are natural processes, Covey’s five layers of listening can be used as a pedagogical approach. According to Covey (2004) we have a five-layer listening approach to what we hear. Covey’s approach helps define the term ‘listening comprehension’. This approach is based on a principle that humans listen on five different levels based on their skills in the target language. In this approach, the five different levels of listening are:

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<th>Table 1. Covey’s five layers of listening.</th>
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Covey, 2004, p. 192.
The lowest level of listening begins at 1 and works progressively up to the highest level number 5, Covey (2004).

At the first four levels, a listener hears from his/her own point of view and from his/her own mindset. Therefore, communication is difficult, and is almost impossible to participate in. At the fifth level, the listener has moved away from his/her own mindset and perspective and as such is able to understand and see the other person’s perspective. This breakdown in self-perception and mindset is where communication through listening occurs.

At the first level, the listener is not paying attention to the other party in the conversation and no listening takes place. At this stage, it is important to separate ignorance from hearing difficulties. Hearing difficulties do not mean that the listener is ignoring the person speaking. A person with a hearing difficulty is unable to hear a person speaking.

At the second stage when someone pretends to listen, he/she gives the impression that he/she is an active participant in the conversation through indicators such as nodding or short responses, but that person is not actually listening; therefore, conversation does no take place.

At the third stage, a listener is, to some extent listening, to the other who is speaking as the listener is often interrupting or finishing the speaker’s sentences. Such a person chooses specific parts in the conversation that he/she listens to, but that person is not engaging in the conversation.

At the fourth stage, signs of a conversation can be found, but they are not substantial enough for a spoken dialogue to be called a conversation. At the attentive stage, the listener offers his/her time and attention, but he/she is not seeing things from the other persons’ perspective; the listener is not putting him or herself in the other person’s situation.

At the fifth stage, the empathic stage, conversation takes place. At this stage, the listener is engaged and committed in the conversation and listening at this stage is intentional. The listener is actively listening to more than utterances coming from the other person. The listener is listening what is actually being said and the meaning of what is said according to the speaker’s perspective. Here, the listener is willing to give time and attention to the speaker,

“To truly listen means to transcend your autobiography, to get out of your own frame of reference, out of your own value system, out of your own history and judging tendencies, and to get deeply into the frame of reference or viewpoint of another person. This is called empathic listening. It is a very, very rare skill. But it is more than a skill. Much more.” (Covey, 2004 p.192).

Based on Covey’s point above, teaching listening comprehension is important as it is a key characteristic for conversations. It takes more than people ‘showing up’ to a conversation; it takes commitment and active listening. One weakness of Covey’s five layer approach is that it is not created for a pedagogical context; it is created for use within a business context. Despite this, the business context and the Swedish EFL/ESL classrooms share commonalities; they both include multi-cultural and multi-lingual interaction. Therefore, these commonalities justify the use of Covey’s five layer paradigm in a pedagogical context

The application of Covey’s paradigm to a pedagogical setting leads to another potential weakness, namely teacher awareness and identification of a students’ level of listening. Teachers often have many students at the same time and being aware of all students’ listening levels can be difficult. Therefore, it is important that teachers are active by asking questions
and follow-up questions to the students to help them develop and remain active listeners through a movie. Another example of a method to check the students’ active listening levels is to randomly pause the movie to provide opportunities for a teacher to ask students questions or have the students do an activity based on the movie. Therefore, through such activities, the weakness of Covey’s approach in a pedagogical context is manageable and the benefits are many.

As a last extension of the theoretical framework, King connects acquisition with motivation. Previous research conducted by King (2002) shows that the use of feature movies in EFL classroom can enhance students’ language skills on several levels. Besides enhancing listening comprehension, use of films in the classroom can also help with vocabulary and speaking. In addition, it can motivate students to begin writing in the foreign language. King’s work also shows that students’ attitude towards learning a language increased when the teacher incorporated DVD feature films in the lessons. Student motivation increased, and therefore, students regarded lessons more positively than lessons using the traditional approach of textbooks and audio. King notes that this traditional method demotivates students learning compared King’s findings also suggest that subtitles increases a student’s ability to understand a movie, but he also notes that watching subtitles is not ideal when the goal is to practice listening comprehension.

Covey’s paradigm of five layers of listening comprehension suggest that an active listener is a key factor to understand another person. His paradigm also implies that understanding includes actually listening to what someone is saying and not just, hearing words and utterances that are spoken. To listen and understand are important to achieve emphatic listening. The use of Covey’s approach in a pedagogical setting is supported by the teaching concepts of listening comprehension from Ur, Vandergrift, Baker and King, all within the natural learning process framework of Krashen. Therefore, to reach the appropriate level of listening comprehension to students, teachers can use movies in an EFL/ESL classroom, but films must be used effectively and be used in combination with activities before, during and after watching a movie. The theoretical principles and guidelines from Ur, Vandergrift, Baker, Covey, and King suggest an approach in using movies to teach listening comprehension, and a five layer listening approach to help students listen at higher cognitive levels compared to the traditional methods of listening traditionally used in a Swedish classroom context.

4. Method
A systematic literature study is a study based on previous research and knowledge from which questions arise and are dealt with as part of a literature review. The first step in a literature study is reflection and searching information, evaluation of the results, analysis, presentation of the analysis and the results, spreading the study and last, applying the study (Eriksson Barajas et al. 2013, p.70). The articles used in my literature review are also presented below.

4.1. Selection
The selection for this literature review began with developing suitable key words and search terms to find appropriate studies for analysis. Movies and listening comprehension in upper secondary school proved to be a narrow subject. Therefore, the researcher parameters had to be extended by expanding the search terms and key word list. Key search words included, among others: moving images, visual aid, listening proficiency, second language acquisition, films, fictional films, pedagogical tools, EFL, English second language. To find alternative terms, the
The thesaurus in the database ERIC was used. It took time to find the appropriate terms and combinations to find articles and previous research within the topic of movies and listening comprehension.

The database used is ERIC (ebsco) and the search engine Google scholar was used to broaden the search because of the narrow topic of this study. After an initial search for articles, a research proposal was sent to the supervisor for approval and from there advised guidelines and tips were used to find appropriate research articles. No Swedish articles were found that matched the criteria and therefore, this study does not include any research from Sweden but from a wide range of countries.

5. Presentation of articles

  
  o The aim of the study was to research how a learner centered approach in combination with a curriculum based on video materials could effectivise Taiwanese college students learning regarding listening comprehension, oral performance and sense of autonomy in English as a second language. The results show that there was a slight difference between the experimental group and the control group although, the results indicate that low-proficiency students can benefit by the use of movies to practice listening comprehension.

- Kabooha, Ramiah Hassen (2016) Using movies in EFL classrooms: A Study Conducted at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdul Aziz University.
  
  o The aim for the study was to research attitudes of Saudi English as a foreign language learners as well as teacher attitudes towards incorporation of movies in the lessons as a tool to develop language skills. The study was conducted on preparatory university level in Saudi Arabia with only female participants. The results of Kabooha’s study shows student consensus that integration of movies in an EFL classroom could increase their listening skill as well as motivation to learn a foreign language.

  
  o Inan Tekin and Ramazan Sukru Parmakasiz conducted a study that examined “whether using feature films in video lessons influences the development of listening skills, or not” (2016, p. 200). The study was conducted in a Turkish context at a state university. The results show that category of the chosen film did not matter to the language development.

The aim of Ahmed’s study was to show that technical aid is crucial in using visual aid in the classroom. The data was collected from multiple secondary schools in Bangladesh. Results show that unless the four basic skills are equally emphasized, language learning can never happen. Therefore, schools should arrange listening comprehension practice with the help of movies for example.

  - The aim of the study was to research students’ beliefs of them developing listening comprehension more efficiently when they watched movies with subtitles or listened to songs as “regular” ways of teaching listening comprehension. The data was collected from different high schools. The result indicates that school grade and gender were signifiers in the autonomy of the participants, their self-evaluation and achievement level.

- Goh, Christine (1997). *Metacognitive awareness and second language listeners*  
  - Goh’s study is a diary-based study. The diaries were written by 40 second language learners and the study shows that listening comprehension is important in the development of a student’s foreign or second language. The data was collected in China and the informants had an average age of 19 years.

- Markham, Paul (1999). *Captioned videotapes and second language listening word recognition.*  
  - The study aims to show that visual aid help students perform better than without visual aid. Results of this study show that visual aid significantly improved ESL students’ ability to recognize words on videotapes that also appeared on the subsequent audio-only multiple-choice tests. Data was collected in USA and informants were ESL learners with different first languages.

  - The data was collected from informants between the ages of 18 and 25 studying at South East European University. The study aims to show that movies itself are developing to some extent regarding language proficiency, the importance for second language acquisition is the activities the teacher and the students do before, during and after watching a movie. Results shows that movies attract students’ attention, present language in a more natural way than found in course books. The results also show differences between the experimental group and the control group on integrated skills and the visual aid that movies provide, the results showed that that helped students understand more and helped them develop listening comprehension.

5.1. Ethical aspects

Ethical aspects are important when conducting research. According to Eriksson Barajas et al. (2013) a researcher needs to take different aspects into consideration when performing a systematic literature study. The researcher must use studies approved by an ethical committee or include a careful ethical consideration in the thesis. Another aspect of ethical consideration is the presentation of the articles included in the literature study and that these articles are archived safely for ten years. The last consideration is the results of the articles used in the study. The results must never be changed or tampered with in order to fit the researchers study.
This literature review has collected data through a systematical method where most articles are found through the database ERIC. To widen the search, some of the articles were found through the search engine Google scholar. The theories in this literature review are presented above. There are no articles based on a Swedish context but the articles deal with EFL/ESL in various countries.

6. Results
In a Swedish context, listening proficiency has proven to be a difficult skill to successfully learn. The ability to actively listen is a key factor for EFL/ESL learners in order to participate in discussions with other English speakers. For EFL/ESL students in Sweden, globalization has made English more important since almost all students will have to read or speak English in different contexts such as travelling or through business. This section is based on the articles presented and is divided into themes arising from their findings.

6.1. Watching fictional movies at school and listening proficiency development.
Lin’s study (2002) focused on attitudes of EFL towards acquiring a foreign language when movies were incorporated into the lessons. By adding visual aids in the form of a movie, students listening results improved slightly, but not enough to say that movies are more effective than audio material. Lin’s study indicates that students with high language proficiency showed modest improvement in their listening ability when they practiced listening comprehension through movies compared to audio files. On the other hand, students with low language proficiency developed higher levels of listening ability and acquired listening comprehension in the foreign language more successful through movies than through audio clips without visual aids. Therefore, it can be assumed that fictional movies can help more students than audio files can, based on the results of Lin’s study, particularly among low proficiency students who showed most improvement when movies were used as a source of education. Although Lin’s study is from a Chinese context, the results are applicable in a Swedish context, like a Chinese pedagogical context English is a foreign language in both contexts.

Ismaili (2012) on the other hand, proves the inference of visual aid improving listening comprehension through the thorough literature review and empirical study in his work. Ismaili’s study shows that movies can help EFL students acquire listening proficiency because movies work as a visual aid to help provide context to the spoken language. Also, the study shows that students became more active and aware listeners than without visual aids. Markham’s (1999) work infers that students who practice listening proficiency with visual aids improved listening comprehension and therefore, reached higher levels of listening comprehension. The use of movies to teach listening comprehension shows good support as they trigger student motivation, activity and interest. These factors are important when practicing listening comprehension as they enhance student activity.

By using feature films and video aid when practicing listening comprehension, students who have a hard time learning a foreign language can gain from using visual aids when practicing listening comprehension. In a Swedish context, students are supposed to have influence over their own education (Skolverket, 2011). Three studies (Lin (2002), Yuksin and Toker (2013),
and Ismaili (2016) support the argument that use of fictional movies can help students acquire a higher level of listening proficiency. This verifies the use of movies in the EFL classroom, and in relation to motivation, movies in an EFL classroom could activate students by helping them actively listen to a spoken foreign language. Therefore, movies create situations where actual listening takes place. Motivation has proven to be a factor for successful acquisition, and a motivated student is more active and can generate a higher level of listening. A student has opportunities to acquire the fifth level of listening according to Covey’s paradigm. All research in the study that has been analysed agrees that from a student perspective, movies can develop listening comprehension because they become a motivational factor for acquiring a foreign language and they can practice how to be active listeners.

All the studies in the literature review agree that motivation, attitude and learning strategies are important factors when acquiring a foreign language. They are also in agreement that movies can enhance these factors among students. Kabooha (2016) contributes with a study showing that motivation among students increased when they watched movies as a medium for learning. They remembered more and learned faster compared to language proficiency classes without movies. According to Kabooha’s (2016) study, listening to natural speech of the target language motivated students. This is evidenced by their showing improved listening comprehension and by their remembering more. These were achieved by their watching movies to practice listening skills. Despite whether the students’ success was due to their being more motivated or whether they receive language support through watching movies and visual support is unclear in the study. However, Kabooha points out that film is a way to motivate students to learn a foreign language.

To develop listening proficiency for EFL students in Sweden, students need to be active and motivated as these factors have been proven to be important when acquiring a foreign language. According to the studies discussed above, when fictional movies are added to lessons, students’ motivation increased, although Lin’s (2002) study indicates that there is little support indicating that movies are more efficient than more traditional learning strategies regarding listening comprehension. Nevertheless, Lin’s study does show support that using fictional movies increased students’ motivation to learn a foreign language, and therefore, the argument of movies in the EFL classroom should be used to help develop an active listener in order for that listener to successfully achieve listening proficiency. Despite Lin’s contradictory results, his study supports the claim that students who watched feature movies showed a positive attitude in learning the target language. Lin’s results between the test and placebo group during an academic year showed marginal results. It should be noted that in Lin’s study, low proficiency language students in an EFL classroom showed measurable results compared to high proficiency language student when movies were used to practice listening comprehension. This supports the argument that movies trigger students to be more aware and active listeners, but the largest benefit is among low proficiency language students.

Movies can be watched with or without subtitles. According to Ur (1984, 2012) in the theoretical framework discussed above, students should not be provided with subtitles if the goal is to develop a higher level of listening. Subtitles develop an understanding of the movie, but if the goal is to acquire listening comprehension, subtitles should not be used as they detract attention from oral communication to written versions of the spoken dialogue. Goh (1997) and Markham (1999) promote the use of subtitles arguing that they increase a student’s ability to understand more of the movie although more recent research shows that by using subtitles, students forget about the actual speech and focus on the text at the bottom of the screen. According to Ur (1984, 2012), the practice of listening comprehension becomes lost. According
to Covey (2004) students need to be active listeners for successful listening comprehension development, and therefore, they need to be aware of their own learning process and the context (Goh, 1997). In the Swedish EFL classroom, students should be aware listeners in order to fulfill the general outcomes of language acquisition in the Swedish school curriculum which are that students should feel confident in taking part in discussions in English and feel comfortable in contexts where English is the first language.

This section has provided an analysis with a student point of view. The analysis shows that visual aid helps students with understanding more of the language and it can help them reach higher levels of listening comprehension. Motivation has also shown to be an important factor for students to reach higher levels of listening as well as how activities can provide more opportunities to activate listening comprehension and the importance of an active listener. The following sub-section will focus on teachers and what they can do to help students develop the higher cognitive skills of language learning according to Covey's five layers of listening paradigm.

6.2. Teacher’s use of fictional movies to help students develop listening proficiency.

For an EFL teacher in Sweden, globalization has made the English language more important since almost all students will have to read or speak English in different social contexts. To teach listening comprehension, a teacher needs to provide practical help to enable a student to develop the ability to listen so that he/she can successfully participate in discussions in English. Lin (2002) found that teachers should provide students with visual aids to practice listening comprehension. As mentioned above, students who benefited most from visual aids were low language proficiency students as they showed better results when provided with visual aids. A criticism of Lin’s study is that it does not suggest any activities around the movie compared to other research in this study. Using fictional movies in EFL classrooms and assuming that students acquire listening proficiency is not enough. The way teachers use fictional movies to teach listening comprehension has also proven to be an important factor. By using movies as a medium for teaching listening comprehension, teachers can help low proficiency EFL students achieve higher levels of listening, according to Covey’s paradigm, because movies provide visual complements to spoken English. Therefore, students can see the context in which the language is used.

Ahmed’s study focused on visual aids in the EFL classroom for general use in language teaching and learning. Listening comprehension is included in which there was an improvement in listening through visual aids. According to Ahmed (2012), teachers should use visual aids when teaching listening comprehension as there is more development of this skill compared to not using visual aids; however, Ahmed does not support this with an empirical study or with enough literature references. Instead, Ismaili (2012) demonstrates that visual aid improves listening comprehension through a thorough literature review and empirical study in her study.

Ismaili’s study can be used to specifically focus on visual aids and listening comprehension which was noticed in Ahmed’s study. Ismaili’s study shows that movies can help EFL students acquire listening proficiency because movies provide visual aid and context to the spoken language. Also, the study showed that students became more active and aware listeners through the use of visual aids. Markham (1999) suggest that students who practice listening proficiency with visual aids improved listening comprehension and, therefore, reached higher levels of listening. The use of movies is shown as providing good support in teaching listening
comprehension as it triggers student motivation, activity and interest. These factors are important when practicing listening comprehension as they enhance student activity during lessons.

Vandergrift (2004) argues that movies can be used because of linguistic and world knowledge; although Vandergrift argues that using films incorrectly such as showing long clips assumes too much linguistic and world knowledge of students. If Covey’s five layer approach to listening comprehension was applied in teaching listening comprehension, teachers can help students reach a level of listening where they understand what is said, but the teacher needs to think about how to use movies as well as the type of movies to be shown.

Tekin and Parmakazis’ (2016) study shows when teachers incorporated long videoclips in an EFL classroom, students became confused and did not respond positively to these videoclips. Students in their study tended to become too focused on what they did not understand instead of being active listeners of spoken English in the films, and, therefore, they did not reach a higher level of listening. Therefore, Tekin and Parmakazis’ study does not support full-length movies in the EFL classroom without pauses and without activities to follow up what students watched. Tekin and Parmakazis’ study supports the idea of visual aids helping students become active listeners in order to achieve higher levels of listening. However, Tekin and Parmakazis’ study advises the use of short video clips of up to a maximum of five minutes. Yet, fictional movies are often more than one and a half hours, and the approach of using shorter video clips in the classroom would be time-consuming for teachers. This is a critique mentioned mostly by Ismaili whose own study supports the element of time as something teachers are often stressed about as well as their criticism of using movies being too time-consuming.

Ahmed and Ismaili focused on the use of visual aids in language learning that included listening comprehension. But Tekin and Parmakazis study focusses on how visual aids should be used. Ur (1984, 2012) suggests shorter clips of movies in the EFL classroom and that movies should be carefully used to fit the EFL classroom’s context. It is important to think about, according to Ur, that movies should not be used as entertainment but as a source to develop listening skills if that is the teacher’s intention. Other suggestions are to use activities such as pauses with brief discussion when using movies. Tekin and Parmakazis’ study is from a Turkish context, and the students in the study were rather new to English as a foreign language even if they were at upper secondary school. In the Swedish EFL classroom context, Swedish students in upper secondary school may be able to watch fictional movies for longer time periods since they are not beginners of English as a foreign language. However, the teacher could still incorporate pauses in the movie to check students listening activity by asking questions and having students think about what they watched. Because Swedish students can be seen as they have more linguistic knowledge as defined by Vandergrift (2004), they can attain higher levels of listening comprehension according to Covey’s model. Tekin and Parmakazis’ study indicate that activities around and during a movie is important, but they do not go into detail about how to practically incorporate movies in the EFL classroom which is a weak point in their study as they suggest shorter clips but not any practical advice They also argue that listening strategies is of importance, but here as well, they do not go into detail about this fact which is another weakness in the study.

Various activities are suggested in some of the studies as ways to further incorporate pedagogical approaches to watching movies in the EFL classroom. While Tekin and Parmakazis do not provide activities in their study, Goh’s (1997) study suggest the use of listening diaries as an activity around watching movies, an activity which could be used in the
Swedish EFL context. By providing students with the task of writing listening diaries, teachers helped students become more aware of what they watched and what was said, and teachers helped students be more active if they were given opportunities to think about what they had listened to. Goh’s study argues that students’ awareness is another factor important for acquiring a foreign language and appropriate activities can help students develop contextual awareness. Although Goh suggest diaries, no further suggestions can be found in the results. Another activity is suggested by Markham (1999) who suggests a teacher can help with pre-knowledge about a film’s plot. This pre-knowledge would be provided in a student’s native language, which can be beneficial for listening comprehension. To support this Ismaili (2012) states watching a movie after a pre-movie activity is effective in listening acquisition Pre-movie activities can, for example, be reading a summary of the movie, key word lists, going through difficult phrases, watching shorter scenes or reading about the characters.

Post-movie activities are, according to most studies, also of importance regarding listening comprehension. Activities suggested by Ismaili (2012) is story telling based on the movie, picture descriptions from the movie, open-ended questions and group discussions. This, a can be a way to make the use fictional movie in the classroom effective, so a teacher becomes less stressed about the time spent on watching the movie. Ismaili suggest another post-movie activity to further help an EFL teacher teach listening comprehension. Ismaili suggests an activity in which students hold conversations among each other to help them listen to the spoken foreign language from other contexts than those in the movie they have watched. By having students discuss parts of a movie, they demonstrate their understanding of the movie, and in addition, they practiced listening skills through a topic with which they were all familiar.

6.3. Main findings
The analysis shows that movies can help develop listening comprehension in a Swedish EFL classroom. Visual aid is proven to be an effective aid in providing students the skills needed to reach higher levels of listening as suggested in Covey’s model. Although, it is important to help students acquire higher levels of listening comprehension to help students understand what is said and to develop the skills they need. Teachers need to actively activate students listening levels. Furthermore, teachers should also choose movies carefully. Movies are a pedagogical tool in the classroom, they should not be used as forms of entertainment, which sometimes is the case, thus, the purpose of practicing listening comprehension is lost. Activities before, during and after the movie show that students tended to be more active; hence, their listening levels can increase, and they can reach higher levels of listening comprehension if teachers use movies to their maximum potential and capacity.

7. Discussion
The following part discusses the findings of the results through the theoretical framework given above as well as the background.

7.1. Main findings
From the analysis, there is evidence that films are effective in language learning, but there are very few studies of film and listening comprehension either internationally or nationally in Sweden. Some studies focused on how to effectively use film, and among them was debate about using subtitles, the length of movies clips to be shown in a classroom, and the effect of films on student motivation. Any information about the relationship between film and listening
comprehension is found in studies of film and language proficiency which indicated an improvement in listening comprehension.

The common element in all the literature was a focus on the relationship between general language proficiency and visual aids, or how to use visual aids in language comprehension. But, again, listening was an implicit or “take it for granted skill” in many of the studies. However, the studies are in agreement about movies as an effective method to increase student motivation. Some studies argue that student can become more active in the lessons and listen better by watching movies compared to listening to audio recordings taken out of context. The findings were inconclusive regarding listening comprehension. However, this inconclusively, indicates a gap in the current literature about the importance of listening comprehension. Application or discussion of the theoretical models in the literature review shows how they can be used to specify discussions on listening comprehension and visual aids as well as provide concrete guidelines for both students and teachers.

From the literature review above, there is evidence that movies as visual aids can help students reach higher levels of listening comprehension. According to Covey, students need to be active listeners for actual listening to take place. By using films as visual aids, students achieve higher levels of understanding. The literature analysis also shows that low proficiency students performed better when they practiced listening comprehension through movies.

According to the Swedish syllabus, lessons should be, as far as possible, be in English, and movies comply to this recommendation as well as to the idea of how EFL classrooms should be in Sweden. However, there is little mention of listening comprehension in the Swedish syllabus. This means a contradiction where movies are used as a medium to practice one language proficiency skill because of the time needed to show the film. Meanwhile, studies show that visual aids such as a film can be used as a medium to help students develop their listening levels easily.

The Swedish syllabus states that teachers and schools should aim for students to be active, motivated and eager to learn. According to the findings of the literature review above, movies positively activated students because they got to see and hear the spoken foreign language in a context. The context can also be consciously chosen by the teacher so that students can relate to the content and the plot to activate them. Being an active listener is key in reaching higher levels of listening, according to Covey, and the results from the literature above show that students’ motivation and activity did increase with movies. Therefore, it can be said that movies can be used to help students reach higher levels of listening.

The studies above agree that visual aids help develop listening comprehension, but they offer different approaches and solutions to develop this skill. Therefore, it raises questions such as: are the results valid? Can they be combined, or are there gaps in knowledge which lead to different suggestions and results? One example where the studies are not in agreement is the question about subtitles. Two of the studies argues that subtitles help with understanding the language while two other studies argue that subtitles take away too much focus from listening and as such the purpose of using movies in an EFL classroom is lost. This is in line with the theory (King, 2002) that subtitles increase comprehension of a movie, but if the goal is to practice listening comprehension, subtitle should be avoided, although subtitles are not an issue in Sweden where English is a second language, movies intended for older ages are not dubbed to Swedish compared to other countries. Another possible issue with relying on subtitles is that they are seldom accurate compared to the spoken English in the film; they translate the language
to fit the context and not the language itself. Because of this, subtitles could potentially slow listening comprehension development as students can misunderstand words because the subtitles do not match the spoken language.

According to Lin (2002), Kabooha (2016), Yuksin & Toker (2013) and Ismaili (2012), students found movies as fun and motivating, and they believed that they learned a foreign language by watching fictional movies. This can be a factor to movies’ success in the EFL classroom; they trigger motivation and increase listening activity. However, some of the studies’ results show that activities before, during and after a movie is necessary for listening development. This is important within the context of the Swedish syllabus as it states students should feel encouraged and motivated to learn. Yet having noted this, listening comprehension must be incorporated more in the Swedish syllabus to reach such goals.

Active students are a goal for a Swedish teacher, and according to the studies result, motivation and activity during lessons improved with movies in the lessons. Movies prove to be an entertaining feature to use in the Swedish EFL classroom. To go beyond a film’s entertainment level, students are should be encouraged to be more active if teachers add pauses, a film can develop students’ listening comprehension levels even further. One study shows that this is a good way to incorporate movies into the lessons. Tekin and Parmakazis (2016) argue for five-minute clips or less for the students in their study. But the informants in that study were rather new to English as a foreign language. At upper secondary schools in Sweden, students have learned English for several years, and they should be able to watch more than five minutes before pauses. Pauses occurring too close together can be more of a distraction for Swedish students as they have been exposed to English for a longer time. Ur (1984, 2012) argues for 15-minute clips which fall more in line with a Swedish context than Tekin and Parmakazis’ time suggestion. Although, both studies share the common fact that pauses in films activate students and as such are preferable. The questions are whether to use pauses but how often should they be used when watching a film. Only one study researched the issue of shorter versus longer clips to practice listening comprehension, namely that of Tekin and Parmakazis.

Teachers can do more to help students reach higher levels of listening comprehension such as incorporate activities to activate students listening levels. However, time is an issue for most teachers as it is limited while another issue is that the curriculum needs to be followed. To use movies, and to avoid the lesson stress over time constraints, movies can be used to practice more than listening comprehension but the original intention of practicing listening comprehension should be maintained. By using movies with contexts that students can relate to, as Ur argues, is necessary for students in upper secondary schools in Sweden as the literature review shows that teachers can link activities and the movie better to students. Some textbooks in the Swedish classroom comes with suggestions of movies to use. Due to time, constraints, teachers often use the suggested movie, which may or may not be enough of a learning challenge for students. Movies can be an extension of textbooks or as other tasks to actively practice listening comprehension which can be linked with textbooks or used specifically to practice listening comprehension.

Activities and pedagogical awareness by the teacher are important when helping students acquire listening comprehension in the EFL classroom. This is achieved by activities before the movie to give students pre-knowledge about the plot, difficult words and phrases. Other activities could be by providing a summary of the movie, a word list, or both. Pre-knowledge can be in students’ native language and in the foreign language being taught. In Swedish
schools, a classroom is multicultural and multilingual so English is the main language for these types of activities.

None of the studies can state that by using movies in the EFL classroom, students will perform better with moving images compared to using audio clips. Although, the studies do indicate that movies can help students reach higher levels of listening since students became more active during lessons with movies and activities around watching it.

7.2. Suggestions for further research
The literature review shows gaps in knowledge and further research is needed in the area of listening comprehension, in particularly the use of subtitles and the consequences of using them to develop listening comprehension. There were limited studies in listening comprehension and how to be successful in developing listening skills. Another interesting feature to further develop is how different strategies can help students with learning a foreign language.

In addition, further investigation in the use of movies to reach a higher level of listening layer according to Covey’s theory would be interesting. The question to bear in mind would be how the teacher would be able to check the listening levels of all the students in the classroom. Further research can also include more research between low proficiency students and high proficiency students and their development with movies as a pedagogical tool in the classroom. Further research should also be conducted within the Swedish EFL classroom context. This suggests that more research in Sweden is needed on listening comprehension development. Such research should include a historical overview such as how students learned to understand a spoken language 40 or 50 years ago as well as a contemporary overview as to how students learn now. Such research would also lead to research into how digitalised technology can be used to help develop listening comprehension.

Also, there is another important aspect of Swedish classrooms to include in further research. That aspect is the increasing numbers of refugees in the EFL classroom. Some may have some experience of English while others may not have had or learned English in a school context. Also, refugees arriving in Sweden also need to learn Swedish, and what are the consequences of them having to learn two potentially new languages at the same time? An aspect to research could, therefore, be what movies can help to develop in the English classroom where refugee students are participants. From a teacher’s point of view, they can no longer take for granted that all students should or can use Swedish to learn English. This puts pressure on teachers to help students in a language with which they have no or little experience, therefore it could be another aspect to research how movies can help teachers to educate refugees in an English context.

8. Conclusion
This literature review’s purpose was to explore and analyse previous research about using movies as a pedagogical tool to develop listening comprehension. These questions were used to further contextualise the aim:

- What does research say about a teacher’s use of fictional movies to help students develop their listening proficiency?
- What does research say about what students can develop regarding listening proficiency by watching fictional movies at school?
The study shows that movies can increase students’ motivation to learn and, therefore, help students become more active and, as such reach higher levels of listening based on Covey’s listening comprehension model. However, the literature review does not definitely that visual aids are more successful than audio clips or another approach to teach and learn listening skills in a foreign language. Although, there is enough evidence to prove that through visual aids in an EFL classroom, more students developed higher levels of listening comprehension. Other factors that support movies in the EFL classroom is that they motivate and activate students more than audio clips which are usually taken out of context and usually come without visual aids to help build a context. Movies can be used as a medium to develop a variety of activities to develop listening comprehension levels. The studies do show that activities before, during and after watching a movie gives more time and opportunities for the students to develop higher levels of listening levels.

There were no Swedish studies on the link between movies and listening comprehension development, which is a weak point in this literature review. Part of the issue was adapting studies in the literature review to the Swedish context. Yet, all the studies dealt with English as a foreign language, similar to Sweden and because of this, the results of the studies discussed above could be applicable to the Swedish context. If teachers decide to incorporate movies into their lessons, which has proven to be a positive approach to teach listening comprehension, teachers have greater flexibility in developing a variety of activities. The studies advise on different activities that could be used. The studies agree that activities around movies are beneficial in the EFL classroom.

9. References


