Using Popular Films as Text in English Language Teaching

Films entertain us and educate us. They are the most popular topics of our daily conversations. Even if some of us don't want to talk about films, very often we hear what others have to speak about them. In visual media i.e., television, it could be an entertainment channel or a news channel there are many promotional activities, interviews with actors and exclusive shows on films. Almost all newspapers and magazines carry special supplements or designed colour sections on films. As Ali Nihat Ekan points out, 'Film stars can appear anywhere unexpectedly: not only in many youngsters' dreams, but also on the wall of their bedrooms, or on the T-shirts they wear. Thus films provide a rich and popular context for people to talk together and exchange ideas… An examination of the relevant work in ELT and Media studies indicates that films, along with other authentic media forms and video materials, are used for different purposes, and that when chosen and exploited in a principled manner, they play an important role in modern English language teaching'.

According to Amanda Nevill, Director of British Film Institute, Film is arguably the most important influence and it shapes our lives. Films open our eyes to issues, lives and places that aren't known before. Value of a film as text has often been ignored, but films are also texts. They tell stories. They have characters. They contain messages. They should be used in the classroom just like any other text. Films offer a source of authentic language. They are an excellent medium to communicate cultural values, attitudes, and behaviours. I believe the teacher who uses films in the classroom will find that the use of authentic language combined with thought-provoking issues broadens cultural competence and improves the learning of English language.

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