

# A Study of EFL Learners' Preferred Types of Saliences and Categories in Movie English

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is twofold: (1) to observe EFL learners' preferred types of saliencies in Movie English and (2) to examine which language categories are mainly salient. The types of saliencies are based on Schmid and Günther's (2016) 4 types of saliencies, with categories of grammar, individual words, chunks, and messages. This is a case study of five college students majoring in English all with TOEIC scores higher than 800. The study was divided into a self-heuristic group of three students and a category-presented group of two students. The self-heuristic group was instructed to find out what they found salient and noticeable in a movie, without the terms salience and category being mentioned. The category-presented group was directed to find out what they found salient and noticeable in the movie, based on given categories. The results showed that the two groups preferred surprise and novelty. Both groups preferred different categories, however. The self-heuristic group mostly focused on chunks, with a preferred order of chunks, grammar, words, and messages. The category-presented group mainly focused on words, with a preferred order of words, chunks, messages, and grammar. Pedagogical implications will be discussed in more detail in this paper.

**Keywords:** Salience; Surprise; Novelty; Perceptual, Semantic-pragmatic phenomenon

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## 1. Introduction

Recent linguistic theories have largely rejected Chomsky's claim that the human brain is equipped to acquire language and is therefore automatically equipped with creative linguistic abilities. Instead, usage-based theories (UBT) argue that human creative linguistic abilities emerge from a lifetime of language experiences<sup>[1-4]</sup>. Chomsky (1957) argued that relying on external inputs to develop language competence does not adequately account for the creative use of language<sup>[5]</sup>. He argued that the language acquisition apparatus that children are born with represents the creative use of language and this led to a new cognitive revolution<sup>[6]</sup>. From here, linguistics tends to be divided into minimalism and maximalism. Minimalism emphasizes the syntactic basis of sentence meaning and consequently becomes rule-oriented, leading to minimalism. Maximalism, on the other hand, emphasizes the pragmatic properties of utterance meaning, which leads to the involvement of many variables, and thus leads to maximalism<sup>[7]</sup>. Among the representatives of maximalism, Jaszczolt (2016) argues that maximalism is correct because many variables such as interaction between speakers and context work together to understand meaning in dialogue<sup>[8]</sup>.

This study will adopt the UBT-based maximal attention to observe foreign language learning. Currently, the focus is not on understanding the meaning of sentences based solely on rules, but on comprehending meaning through various variables. Consequently, learners face a demanding period that

requires significant effort. Foreign language learning relies entirely on incoming input perceived by the ears; therefore, success in learning can be attributed to the ability to concentrate attention on the input and increase saliency.

In general, saliency is the degree to which something stands out in a crowd or attracts attention<sup>[9]</sup>. For example, if someone is wearing black alone in a group of people dressed in white, they will be noticed quickly<sup>[10]</sup>. Or, when we encounter new knowledge that is different from what we know, we tend to be drawn to it<sup>[11]</sup>. It is worth exploring this effect because saliency can multiply its effects in L2 learning. For example, it is worth exploring whether a language has naturally salient elements or whether it requires artificial devices to increase saliency<sup>[12]</sup>.

However, the definition of saliency is surprisingly complex, with Schmid and Günther (2016) identifying four different types of saliencies<sup>[13]</sup>. What is needed in educational settings is to determine which type of saliency learners prefer. Knowing learners' preferences will help teachers assist students in effectively processing input in the classroom.

In this study, we aim to observe the salient factors, or preferred saliency, that capture the learners' attention when learning English through movies. Given the vast amount of input provided in a single movie, learners may find it challenging to cope with it all. Teachers who instruct movie-based English lessons typically divide the movie into scenes or expressions, but the criteria for teaching are often determined by the teachers themselves. Language expressions that learners prefer should be modified to facilitate their learning. To achieve this, it is essential to understand learners' preferences regarding salient features, collect relevant data, and allow them to concentrate on language expressions of their preference. By identifying which specific saliency types, as categorized by Schmid and Günther (2016), learners concentrate on the most, both teachers and learners can expect more effective and rewarding lessons<sup>[13]</sup>. Therefore, this paper aims to explore which expressions students pay attention to and for what reasons while interpreting movie scripts in an English movie course.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Types of saliencies

Although the concept of saliency is used in many fields, there is no unified definition of saliency in linguistics, for example, saliency in sociolinguistics<sup>[14]</sup> and saliency in second language acquisition (SLA)<sup>[15]</sup>. However, the purpose of this study is not to unify the definition of saliency, as it has been used in SLA. We will base our understanding of attention on the existing meaning used in SLA.

Although there is no unified definition for saliency, examining the categorization provided by Schmid and Günther (2016) allows us to comprehend how saliency is currently perceived. The following is a description of their work on this matter<sup>[13]</sup>.

1. Highly familiar and strongly entrenched
2. Highly expected in a given context
3. Highly unexpected in a given context
4. Totally unfamiliar

The first definition of saliency suggests that regardless of the context, something that is familiar and firmly embedded in memory is considered highly salient. Studies that make this claim include Giora (2003) and Keysar et al. (1998)<sup>[16,17]</sup>. According to Giora (2003), the first thing that comes to mind is something already well-known and deeply entrenched in memory, even before the context demands its meaning. For example, in the sentence “the townspeople were amazed to find that all the buildings had collapsed except the mint” (Giora, 2003, p. 15)<sup>[16]</sup>, we know that “mint” is related to “money” in the context, but “candy” is more salient because it is already embedded in our minds. The second definition relates to what Geeraerts (2017) calls onomasiological saliency<sup>[18]</sup>. In English, if we mean “man in general,” we use the word “man.”

But if we mean “male human being,” we still say “man.” It all comes down to context. The third aspect of salience is when something is highly salient in a given context due to unexpectedness, often referred to as surprise <sup>[10,19-21]</sup>. Surprise is an emotion that arises when there is a mismatch between expectations and actual events <sup>[22]</sup>. In learning, this mismatch can increase salience and trigger interest <sup>[23]</sup>. The fourth is novelty. Novelty is the surprise of seeing something that is not stored in one’s memory, and this is where saliency comes in. Some studies have lumped novelty and surprise together, but they are not the same thing. Novelty is a memory-dependent feeling, while surprise is a context-dependent feeling <sup>[22]</sup>.

In addition, Schmid (2007) distinguishes salience into cognitive salience and ontological salience <sup>[24]</sup>. Cognitive salience is related to the activation of concepts in actual dialogue, which is divided into two mental processes: the first is when a concept is brought to the attention of the speaker and used in linguistic processing, and the second is when the activation of one concept facilitates the activation of another concept. This kind of salience is called temporal salience because it operates when the concept is used. Ontological salience, on the other hand, is literally permanent and unchanging salience. For example, a noise in a quiet moment is an ontological phenomenon. There are also top-down and bottom-up salience <sup>[25]</sup>. The former is similar to cognitive salience and the latter is similar to ontological salience. Recent research suggests that adults use top-down saliency, which is more dependent on cognition and context <sup>[26]</sup>. Salience can also be divided into semantic-pragmatic salience <sup>[27,28]</sup> and perceptual salience <sup>[29,30]</sup>.

## 2.2. Attention in linguistics

Stimuli that attract attention are called salience <sup>[11,27]</sup>, so it is logical to understand attention in order to understand salience. The relationship between language and attention has been well articulated: if language helps us to express our thoughts, then attention helps us to select the most appropriate language to express our thoughts <sup>[31]</sup>. Recent literature suggests that problems with attention may be associated with delays in language development <sup>[32]</sup>. There is also evidence that attentional mechanisms influence how humans process language <sup>[33, 34]</sup>. The importance of attention in second language learning is no exception <sup>[35]</sup>, so research on saliency is essential.

In terms of what makes a person pay attention, Divjak (2019) suggests that attention is drawn to stimulus properties such as loudness or intensity of light, or to goals that represent events that help humans survive <sup>[36]</sup>. Examples of events that help us survive are responses to stimuli such as being hungry or suddenly feeling severe pain. Avoiding these stimuli would be an important goal for the survival of humans or other organisms <sup>[37,38]</sup>.

One school of linguistics that considers attention as an important component is cognitive linguistics. Langacker (1987) described attention as a cognitive function related to language, and cognitive linguistics developed as a field that looks at language from a linguistic perspective <sup>[39,40]</sup>. In this field, language functions are recognized as the result of basic human cognitive processes <sup>[41]</sup>. Specifically speaking, linguistics denies the existence of a separate language acquisition device and asserts that language is learned through general cognitive abilities of humans. Therefore, since there is no distinct language acquisition device, humans must make efforts to learn language. One of the functions responsible for this task is precisely attention or focus.

## 2.3. Surprise and wonder

Generally, when talking about salience, people often tend to think primarily of bottom-up salience and top-down salience. This belief is because the power to capture attention is mainly thought to depend on bottom-up and top-down salience. However, recent experiments have shown that surprise and wonder are also highly effective in capturing attention, not less so than general salience <sup>[42]</sup>. While the idea that surprise and wonder can capture attention has been studied before <sup>[43]</sup>, the above-mentioned experiment is valued for its

more scientifically advanced methodology. Horstmann and Herwig (2016) also used the term “a third category” (p. 69) to emphasize that surprise and wonder are the most important and prominent aspects among the types of saliences, warranting special attention <sup>[44]</sup>.

In the context of learning environments, surprise-induced salience occurs when something is revealed to be different from what I already know. It commonly arises in ambiguous expressions where multiple interpretations are possible. On the other hand, wonder-induced salience arises from encountering something that is not stored in my memory <sup>[13]</sup>. However, both surprise and wonder rely on the premise that they stimulate curiosity. According to the theory of intrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation arises solely from curiosity, without any external rewards. Curiosity about surprising or novel stimuli or events is essential <sup>[22]</sup>.

Surprise plays a significant role in a top-down saliency <sup>[45]</sup>. When encountered with knowledge that contradicts expectations, surprise occurs. Horstmann (2015) describes the surprise-attention link as follows <sup>[46]</sup>.

“Research on the surprise-attention link pursues a different route. It is based on the assumption that stimuli can be either expected or unexpected. An expected stimulus is a stimulus whose presence and features are predicted on the basis of previously acquired information, where top-down attentional-control settings are applied to known stimulus characteristics. [...] Involuntary attention is necessary mainly because situations change and because knowledge about the current situation is incomplete, rendering planning and predictions fallible (p. 106).”

According to Horstmann (2015), surprise occurs when a situation changes and the knowledge we have is insufficient to complete the context <sup>[46]</sup>. For example, in the sentence “I don’t buy it,” if we approach “buy” with the basic understanding of “to purchase,” the content becomes odd, but if we interpret it as “to believe,” it fits the context. When we learn new knowledge, there is a high likelihood that surprise will automatically occur because the connection between the existing knowledge and the new knowledge is made cognitively, resulting in bottom-up salience.

Furthermore, since surprise-induced salience is context-dependent <sup>[22]</sup>, the meaning of a word is prone to change with different contexts. When words attach to contexts from a common origin, their basic meaning is bound to change, leading to polysemy <sup>[47]</sup>. Polysemy is when a single word has multiple meanings, and it is common in high-frequency vocabulary <sup>[48,49]</sup>. From this perspective, it is more likely for surprise to be predominant in bottom-up salience, which exhibits semantic and pragmatic phenomena.

When we describe surprise-induced salience as arising from the context, wonder-induced salience, on the other hand, is rooted in memory <sup>[13]</sup>. Being rooted in memory means that wonder is more likely to occur when there is no prior knowledge about incoming input. Wonder is related to memory, and depending on the level of information stored in memory, it can be categorized into short-term novelty, long-term novelty, and complete novelty <sup>[50]</sup>. Sometimes, wonder is also divided into absolute novelty and relative novelty <sup>[50]</sup>. This indicates that research on wonder has been present for a long time.

Ranganath and Rainer (2003) provide a fun example to illustrate novelty <sup>[43]</sup>. If you are in a classroom during the school day, you may not be bothered by various behaviors such as many students taking notes next to you, but if a naked person suddenly enters the room, your attention will be drawn to them. The connection between the classroom and the naked person is so unexpected that it falls under the category of novelty. Of course, this is only an extreme example of novelty, but suddenly the phone rings, someone calls your name, or a dog lunges at you while you’re walking, are all events or stimuli that we experience in our daily lives and are not at all expected or prepared for <sup>[51]</sup>. The occurrence of novelty triggers neural networks involved in perception, attention, learning, and memory <sup>[43]</sup>. When students encounter unknown knowledge, the act of being surprised helps them remember the associated linguistic expressions.

It can be said that L2 learners are primed to experience novelty when they learn a new language. Just

like how infants perceive everything in the world as new when they are born, L2 learners encounter a similar sense of novelty when learning a new language. The reason why young children pay good attention to new information is due to their sensitivity to novelty <sup>[52]</sup>. Early research by Berg and Sternberg (1985) explored responses to novelty and identified two fundamental aspects of wonder <sup>[53]</sup>. One aspect is motivational, focusing on whether encountering something new induces enough interest and motivation. The other aspect is related to memory, investigating whether the new information will be remembered and compared to previously stored information. However, as these studies are still in their early stages, there is ongoing value in conducting further research on the topic <sup>[52]</sup>.

It can provide positive aspects to teachers and students by providing scientific and psychological evidence for understanding students who may be at slower stages of learning. Analyzing slow responses to wonder can lead to seeking methods to accelerate their reactions, which can be more effective for memory retention.

### **3. Experimental design**

#### **3.1. Objectives**

The case study sets two main objectives: firstly, to explore the salience types preferred by students in an EFL classroom. To achieve this, the study will use the four types of saliences outlined by Schmid and Günther (2016) as a basis <sup>[13]</sup>. Secondly, the study will observe the salience exhibited in different language items. It will consider four categories: grammar, individual words, chunks, and messages.

In this case study, two different treatments were conducted to achieve the objectives. The subjects were divided into two groups: the self-discovery group and the explicit instruction group. In the self-discovery group, the subjects were guided by the researchers to interpret the materials and discover salient language forms on their own. It can be described as an implicit salience discovery activity. On the other hand, the explicit instruction group was informed by the researchers about four categories: grammar, individual words, chunks, and messages. They were then asked to select language forms they considered salient based on these four categories. The researchers no longer actively participated in the subjects' activities, and the subjects engaged in the activity of interpreting and identifying salience based on the given items. This can be referred to as an explicit salience discovery activity. By analyzing the results of both groups' activities, the main goal of the experiment is to find appropriate methods for guiding salience in the classroom. Specifically, the study aims to determine whether implicit or explicit salience guidance by teachers is more effective. If implicit guidance proves to be effective, the study aims to identify strategies that stimulate subjects' salience effectively. Conversely, if explicit guidance is more effective, the study will explore the level of explicit instruction required. Lastly, the study seeks to assess the pros and cons of guiding salience in the overall English classroom.

#### **3.2. Participants**

Of the five subjects, three belong to the self-discovery group and two belong to the category-presented group. All of them are university students majoring in English and have official TOEIC scores exceeding 800 points, indicating advanced proficiency. Since they are interpreting movie scripts and require reading skills, their reading comprehension (RC) scores are as shown in **Table 1**.

The subjects' RC scores indicate that their reading comprehension is not impaired and that they are adequate enough to identify salience.

**Table 1.** TOIEC scores of subjects

| Self-discovery group |           | Category-presented group |           |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Subjects             | RC scores | Subjects                 | RC scores |
| A                    | 450       | D                        | 470       |
| B                    | 350       | E                        | 385       |
| C                    | 420       |                          |           |

### 3.3. Teaching materials

The textbook used in this experiment is the romantic comedy film *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* <sup>[54]</sup>. The story is set during World War II when Germany and Britain were engaged in aerial combat, and Germany was launching fighter plane attacks on British airspace. The protagonist, Miss Pettigrew, is the daughter of a clergyman and accidentally ends up in a place completely different from her upbringing while searching for a job. This place is marked by materialism, contrasting with her religious background. Throughout the day she spends there, she discovers the true meaning of love and ends up receiving genuine love from a wealthy designer named Joe.

This film was chosen because it's easy to identify instances of salience. The movie is set during World War II in England, and the characters are associated with high society, resulting in the usage of English that might be unfamiliar to many. For example, instead of saying "who the hell are you?" they use "who the devil are you?". The film captures an old-fashioned atmosphere, with many expressions from the British upper class, which may seem outdated as it is about 80-90 years behind the present time. Naturally, unfamiliar expressions can be expected. The movie portrays a high society where polished expressions are often used, favoring the passive voice over the active voice and presenting language in an elegant manner. For example, when Pettigrew introduces herself for a job, she doesn't say "My agency told me that you would know I was coming," but "I was given to believe you were expecting me." If you compare the two expressions, you'll notice that the latter is euphemistic and gives a sense of respectfulness. Students who are accustomed to American English may be unfamiliar with the passive voice of upper-class British English. The presence of novel expressions such as these increases saliency <sup>[55,9,11]</sup>. Therefore, the film is a suitable teaching material for this experiment.

### 3.4. Experimental procedure

The self-discovery group interprets the script along with the researcher, explaining and discussing the expressions that the subjects are curious about, but refraining from making any explicit reference to salience. When submitting their reports, the subjects simply choose the expressions they found appealing. Since no specific categories such as grammar, words, chunks, or messages were provided, there remains a possibility that the chosen distribution may not be uniform. The reference group, on the other hand, were presented with four categories, so subjects are somewhat guided in what to do. However, there was no assistance or discussion provided by the researcher. Nevertheless, with English subtitles available and the subjects' advanced reading skills, they were able to comprehend the content well without the researcher's help. Due to the pandemic situation, the study was conducted via Zoom over five sessions, and both groups submitted reports after each session.

## 4. Results and analysis

The self-discovery group will conduct a detailed data analysis, while the standard presentation group aims to provide numerical results only as a comparison. Since the analysis process for the self-discovery group is extensive and contains overlapping information, it is unnecessary to repeat a similar process for the

standard presentation group. In the first report, the self-discovery group will present results in detail for each subject, but from the second to the fifth report, only the results will be provided.

#### 4.1. Analysis of the first report

In **Table 2**, Subject A in the self-discovery group chose three expressions. One from grammar, one from chunk, and one from content. In grammar, they noticed the difference between “adapt to verb” and “adapt to preposition.” Subject A noted that they were familiar with the verb “adapt,” but it was their first time encountering it followed by an infinitive and a preposition simultaneously, which caught their attention. In the chunk category, they were intrigued by the difference between “if you take meaning” and “refer to” compared to their usual understanding of these phrases. As for the content category, they said that they chose the expression because the overall meaning “touched his heart,” explaining that it signifies an emotional connection or something impressive based on their personal experiences. In summary, for Subject A, the salience occurred when familiar expressions were used in different contexts, and they paid more attention when the message conveyed resonated with them emotionally.

**Table 2.** The first observation of Subject A

| Category | Example  |
|----------|--|
| Grammar  | Out clients don't <u>adapt to</u> suit your needs, you <u>adapt to</u> them! |
| Chunks   | <u>If you take meaning,</u><br>Can you <u>refer to</u> her file to me?       |
| Content  | Our clients don't adapt to suit your needs, you adapt to them!               |

In **Table 3**, Subject B in the self-discovery group only found significance in the grammar items. It seems that they had learnt about the pragmatic value of passive voice in the lectures and was reminded of its value by the repeated appearance of passive voice. Subject B's salience occurred when he learnt something he had never known before.

**Table 3.** The first observation of Subject B

| Category | Example   |
|----------|---|
| Grammar  | <u>I was warned</u> of your stubbornness and ~<br><u>I'm owed</u> a week's ages |

In **Table 4**, Subject C in the self-discovery group identified expressions that stood out to them in the grammar, word, and chunk items. He identified recurring patterns in the grammar: “of your + NP” and “S + found + O + rather difficult.” For words, they found it interesting to hear the stress on “police” in the expression “police.” In the chunk category, Subject C mentioned struggling to understand how the subject “I” combined with “(not) be a moment” based on their grammatical knowledge, so they chose to recognize it as a whole unit. Subject C experienced salience when patterns were repeated, distinctive sounds were heard, and when encountering sentences that couldn't be grammatically interpreted. They grouped such expressions as one chunk, perceiving them as a single unit of salience.

Summarizing the results of the first test, Subject A experienced salience when familiar knowledge was used differently (surprise), Subject B when encountering entirely new knowledge (novelty), and Subject C when observing repetitive patterns, distinctive sounds (perceptual), and encountering expressions that couldn't be interpreted. This is summarized in **Table 5**.

**Table 4.** The first observation of Subject C

| Category | Example  |
|----------|--|
| Grammar  | I was warned <u>of your stubbornness and impertinence</u> .<br>I had no idea <u>of your utter unsuitability</u> .<br>She found you rather difficult. <u>I found her rather difficult</u> . |
| Words    | Ambulance called. Police called.   |
| Chunks   | I won't be a moment.   |

**Table 5.** The results of the first report of self-discovery group

| Subjects | Grammar  | Words        | Chunks      | Messages               |
|----------|--|--------------|-------------|------------------------|
| A        | 1 pattern (perceptual)                             | 0            | 2 surprises | 1 emotion <sup>1</sup> |
| B        | 1 pattern (perceptual)                             | 0            | 0           |                        |
| C        | 2 patterns (4 items <sup>2</sup> )<br>(perceptual) | 1 perceptual | 1 novelty   |                        |

In the context of this study, patterns are considered perceptually salient because they are visually observed and confirmed. Ultimately, there are 2 patterns that are perceptually salient, and 3 instances of surprise. Emotion is considered to be a form of surprise<sup>[22]</sup>, so it is included within the category of surprise. In a broader sense, there are 2 instances of upward salience and 3 instances of downward salience.

#### 4.2. Analysis of the second report

**Table 6** summarizes the results of the second test for the self-discovery group, showing that, as in the first test, Subject A exhibited salience when their known knowledge transformed into different knowledge (surprise) and when they compared and integrated new knowledge with their existing knowledge. They also showed salience when considering incomprehensible expressions as chunks to be included in their memory. Subject B, similar to the 1st test, showed salience only in response to learning new knowledge (novelty). Subject C primarily exhibited salience in response to repetitive patterns (perceptual). Summarizing the 2nd reports, the participants showed 2 instances of perceptual salience, 3 instances of surprise, and 4 instances of novelty. Surprise and novelty are both downward salience phenomena, resulting in 2 instances of upward salience and 4 instances of downward salience.

**Table 6.** The results of the second report of self-discovery group

| Subjects | Grammar                | Words       | Chunks                   | Messages |
|----------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------|
| A        | 0                      | 0           | 1 novelty<br>2 surprises | 0        |
| B        | 0                      | 2 novelties | 1 novelty                | 0        |
| C        | 1 pattern (perceptual) | 1 surprise  | 1 perceptual             | 0        |

#### 4.3. Analysis of the third report

Based on the results of the third test as shown in **Table 7**, Subject A experienced salience only when their known knowledge expanded its meaning into different knowledge. On the other hand, Subject B, similar

<sup>1</sup> The reason for using the term “emotion” in Message 1 is to demonstrate that the content of the text can evoke feelings of being moved or result in emotional changes.

<sup>2</sup> One pattern consists of two or more items coming together, so the two patterns ultimately comprise of four items.



to what was observed in previous tests, heightened salience when comparing new knowledge to their existing knowledge, especially in cases where they were unaware of the knowledge. This pattern was also observed in Subject A. Subject C, who was primarily sensitive to repetitive patterns, seemed to find positive appeal in how their known knowledge created unique meanings in a new context. In summary, the reports in **Table 7** showed 12 instances of surprise and 1 instance of novelty. Overwhelmingly, there were more instances of surprise. Most participants confirmed that their known knowledge changed depending on the context, which could be interpreted as a significant finding.

**Table 7.** The result of the third report of self-discovery group

| Subjects | Grammar    | Words      | Chunks      | Messages |
|----------|------------|------------|-------------|----------|
| A        | 0          | 1 surprise | 2 surprises | 0        |
| B        | 0          | 0          | 3 surprises | 0        |
| C        | 1 surprise | 1 novelty  | 5 surprises | 0        |

#### 4.4. Analysis of the fourth report

In **Table 8**, the results of the fourth test for the self-discovery group show that Subject A felt salience in chunks they knew but couldn't use, and also in unknown expressions that they grouped into chunks, indicating that salience was still observed as in the second test (**Table 5**). For Subject B, they continued to experience salience with unknown expressions. The new expressions that had a practical aspect and were used in everyday life, such as the pattern "adj + noun" with the expression "We're on a deadline," left a deep impression on them. Subject B seemed to have broadened their perspective on expressions in the fourth test. Regarding Subject C, there are several noteworthy points. They selected various areas, and grammar became a place where they experienced rediscovery. In the chunk area, they demonstrated the ability to adapt appropriately to the surrounding environment by receiving new feelings rather than new knowledge. Most importantly, their responses in the message area were remarkable. As the material used in the study was a movie, the researchers expected that the story would have an impact on the learning process. Subject C incorporated two expressions into the message area, and it's worth mentioning that Subjects A had also chosen the message area once in **Table 2**.

Looking at **Table 8**, there were 9 instances of surprise, 1 instance of novelty, and 2 instances of message. The distribution showed a predominance of cognitive-oriented salience with no visible perceptual salience. Additionally, participants focused heavily on the chunk area.

**Table 8.** The result of the fourth report of self-discovery group

| Subjects | Grammar    | Words | Chunks                     | Messages   |
|----------|------------|-------|----------------------------|------------|
| A        | 0          | 0     | 4 surprises                | 0          |
| B        | 0          | 0     | 2 surprises<br>3 novelties | 0          |
| C        | 1 surprise | 0     | 2 surprises                | 2 emotions |

#### 4.5. Analysis of the fifth report

**Table 9** summarizes the five tests for the self-discovery group, showing that Subject A increased salience by comparing new knowledge to what he knew when it appeared. Subject B, like Subject A, increased salience by learning new knowledge based on what he remembered, and Subject C, like Subjects A and B, started from what he knew and focused on the new knowledge. In addition, even if there was no change in

terms of knowledge, Subject C seemed to increase salience by focusing on the different feelings in the new environment.

The self-discovery group was particularly attentive to chunks of items, as they were the most easily recognizable parts of the language. One possible explanation for this is that language is organized into chunks. Additionally, it was evident that the participants tended to adopt a strategy of memorization when they couldn't interpret certain expressions, which might have led to an increase in the number of chunks.

The second phenomenon that emerges is that when something new appears, subjects mobilize the knowledge in their memory to process the new knowledge. This is the so-called surprise phenomenon, which is characterized by a tendency to process the new by comparing it to the old.

The last phenomenon, which was only seen in Subject C, was the discovery of patterns in repeated expressions. When they appear repeatedly, he shows salience, which belongs to perceptual salience. If the above-mentioned salience is a semantic-syntactic phenomenon, then Subject C's salience in grammar is a perceptual one, corresponding to upward salience. In addition to this, when the knowledge is interacting with the environment around him, he feels a sense of novelty.

To summarize **Table 9**, there was 1 perceptual salience, 8 surprise, and 1 curiosity. None of the subjects showed any interest in the message. It is surprising that the subjects were so interested in the language when the story was taught as a textbook. The teacher made several references to the film story during their time together, but to no avail. I can see that the more advanced students may be too focused on language learning and neglect the content aspect. This is something to keep in mind when using films in the classroom in the future.

**Table 9.** The result of the fifth report of self-recognizing group

| Subjects | Grammar    | Words | Chunks                     | Messages |
|----------|------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|
| A        | 1 surprise | 0     | 1 surprise<br>1 novelty    | 0        |
| B        | 0          | 0     | 3 surprises                | 0        |
| C        | 0          | 0     | 1 perpetual<br>3 surprises | 0        |

#### 4.6. Comparison between the self-discovery group and the instructed group

The self-discovery group was not provided with the categories, while the instructed group had four categories informed in advance. Looking at the results in **Table 10**, the self-discovery group showed a significant amount of salience in the chunk category. Analyzing this, it could be due to the language having a higher number of chunks and experiencing more difficulty in interpreting them. The word and message categories showed unusually low salience. The lack of emphasis on the message category could imply that the participants were not particularly interested in the story. It might be because they focused on the language or the movie used in the experiment lacked excitement.

**Table 10.** The total observations of self-recognizing group

| Subjects | Total utterances | Grammar | Words | Chunks | Messages |
|----------|------------------|---------|-------|--------|----------|
| A        | 17               | 12%     | 6%    | 76%    | 6%       |
| B        | 18               | 11%     | 11%   | 78%    | 0%       |
| C        | 29               | 31%     | 7%    | 55%    | 7%       |

The control group in **Table 11** was deliberately instructed to focus evenly on the four items. Although there is no significant difference in the grammar category between the self-discovery and instructed groups, it can be said that the presence of the teacher had an effect on how the instructed group approached grammar. The self-discovery group seemed to neglect the word category, while the instructed group scored considerably higher in the word category. The higher salience in the word category for the instructed group might be attributed to the teacher's guidance. However, it is somewhat surprising that the instructed group showed a lower focus on the chunk category, considering that they were also proficient English learners. This suggests that some guidance might be necessary in dealing with chunks. The results in the message category are also unexpected. Despite the absence of teacher guidance, the instructed group participants attempted to analyze the story. Conversely, in the self-discovery group, where the teacher covered the story, the results turned out differently. It cannot be entirely ruled out that the teacher unconsciously induced the participants to focus on language. On the other hand, the fact that the instructed group focused on the story indicates that some level of direction might be necessary during the lessons.

**Table 11.** The total observations of category-presented group

| Subjects | Total utterances | Grammar | Words | Chunks | Messages |
|----------|------------------|---------|-------|--------|----------|
| D        | 16               | 6%      | 31%   | 38%    | 13%      |
| E        | 52               | 13%     | 48%   | 19%    | 19%      |

## 5. Conclusion

To develop English language skills through movies in the classroom, it is essential to establish a theoretical basis and demonstrate the effectiveness of handling numerous expressions found in movies for students' ultimate language development. Moving beyond the limited perspective of considering movies as a mere primary multimedia tool, continuous efforts should be made to prove their effectiveness as a natural language learning resource in the EFL environment. As part of this endeavor, this paper utilizes UBT and cognitive linguistics theories. Language learning should occur through general cognitive abilities, encouraging students to experience language as much as possible in their surroundings<sup>[1]</sup>. However, since it is challenging to process the vast array of expressions in movies all at once or simultaneously, students need to be guided in a selective manner to handle these expressions effectively.

To achieve this, it was necessary to investigate students' preferences and identify expressions that generate high perceptual salience. Focusing on highly salient expressions would allow students to concentrate their efforts effectively. Since movies require an intermediate to advanced level of English proficiency to perceive salience more easily, a case study was conducted targeting advanced English major university students.

The results show almost no preference for perceptual (bottom-up) salience, except for Subject C, and most preference for semantic and pragmatic (top-down) salience. In the case of the self-discovery group, the majority exhibited high salience in surprise and novelty, meaning that salience was observed in parts where interpretation was challenging. A notable exception is grammar, which Subject C focused on when similar structural patterns were repeated. Understanding grammar typically requires significant cognitive effort, but Subject C was able to do it visually, i.e., increase perceptual saliency. Two discoveries were also made in the chunks. The self-discovery group particularly exhibited high salience in chunks, as understanding them was not easy, leading to the conclusion that they were perceived as highly salient. It was unexpected that participants adopted the strategy of considering linguistically complex expressions as chunks. This phenomenon suggests the need for further research in understanding how participants perceive and consider challenging language expressions as chunks.

An interesting aspect is that there was little salience observed in the messages. When dealing with movies in the classroom, one would expect students to show interest in the story and context, but the results were contrary to expectations. Of course, different results may arise when using other movies. Participants from the self-discovery group reported finding the movie used in this study uninteresting. However, it is nearly impossible to select a movie that every student in the classroom would enjoy. As experienced educators in teaching movie-based English, they would know that it is wiser to focus on teaching the movie in an engaging way rather than solely choosing a movie based on students' preferences. As the movie's content is emotion-based, remembering the content would have an effect on remembering related expressions. Similar to the impact of song lyrics, students are more likely to efficiently memorize lyrics of songs they enjoy. Since having diverse language experiences is emphasized in recent language acquisition theories, teachers should make efforts to help students memorize expressions they find appealing.

Through the standard prompt group, we were able to achieve a certain level of coercion. The fact that the word and message items showed higher salience than the self-discovery group suggests the effect of coercion. Although it was unexpected that word items showed higher salience than chunks, the fact that the standard prompt group showed more interest in messages than the self-discovery group indicates the effect of coercion.

Indeed, the results from the standard prompt group suggest that it is necessary to teach important chunks in language use rather than leaving it to students' autonomous learning. Unlike the self-discovery group, the standard prompt group did not use the term "chunks," but they seemed to have realized the significance of word groupings through studying with the researchers. It appears that even though the standard prompt group had good English proficiency, they were not consciously aware of the necessity of chunks.

Absolutely, when using movies in the classroom, it is essential not to overlook the importance of interpreting the movie script. Students' perceptual salience mainly arises from unfamiliar language expressions. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to provide various interpretive activities that allow students to participate directly in the interpretation process. These activities can contribute to enhancing the perceptual salience for language development. Moreover, during interpretation, it is important not only to emphasize linguistic aspects but also to generate interest among students in the cultural and other valuable aspects worth learning. By incorporating cultural elements and meaningful content into the message, we can expect an increase in perceptual salience for the entire speech output.

### **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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