

Preface

Over the last several decades, English language movies (and television shows) have probably had a greater influence on spreading English world-wide than any other mechanism. Viewers around the world regularly watch English-language movies, and many ELT professionals advocate using such movies in the classroom to teach and model natural conversation. However, other professionals caution that movie language is not natural conversation, and thus not an accurate model for language learners.

Surprisingly, this issue has not been previously investigated empirically. But in this important book, Forchini does exactly that, using large-scale corpus analysis to compare the linguistic characteristics of movie dialogues with spontaneous face-to-face conversations. Forchini applies a variety of research approaches, including detailed consideration of individual lexical phrases and linguistic features, as well as Multi-Dimensional Analysis, and also compares the characteristics of movie comedies and dramas. The results will surprise some readers, indicating that movie dialogues are in many ways very similar to spontaneous face-to-face conversations with respect to a wide range of linguistic characteristics. In conclusion, Forchini discusses the implications of these findings for ELT professionals looking for ways to help their students acquire natural conversational skills.

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