

Original Article

Watching English Movies with Subtitles: A Phenomenological Study of English Major Students' Language Learning Experiences

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Abstract. Despite the growing body of research on the use of English subtitles in language learning, previous studies have primarily examined specific language skills using quantitative approaches, with limited qualitative evidence on students' lived experiences and perceptions, particularly in the Philippine higher education context. This study explored the lived experiences of English major students in watching English movies with subtitles, focusing on their reasons for watching, the perceived effects on their language competency, and the pedagogical implications of this practice. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design involving eight third-year English major students from the University of Mindanao Digos College, selected through homogeneous purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) method of phenomenological analysis. The findings revealed that watching English movies with subtitles provided meaningful language-learning experiences by supporting vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, listening, speaking, and reading comprehension, while serving as a valuable supplementary resource for language teaching. The study contributes qualitative evidence on students' lived experiences and highlights the educational value of English movies with subtitles in supporting language learning in higher education.

Keywords: English major students; English movies with subtitles; Language competency; Language learning; Phenomenology.

Nowadays, many students still face persistent difficulties learning and using English, which remains a significant educational concern. Studies have shown that students still encounter challenges in areas such as speaking, listening, grammar, and communicative competence, emphasizing the need for more engaging and effective approaches to language learning (Zhuo & Tang, 2024; Le & Phan, 2023). In response to these challenges, audiovisual materials such as English movies with subtitles have gained attention as potential language-learning tools because they provide authentic, contextualized language input. In his study, Rao (2019) discovered that increased exposure to audio-visual technologies, like English movies, enables learners to more readily acquire essential second language skills and make significant progress in English-speaking settings. This suggests that students can learn more when watching a film with subtitles than when watching and listening to the audio only.

In this context, language competency is a multidimensional construct involving listening, speaking, reading,

writing, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, which collectively develop a learner's overall communicative ability. Metruk (2019) pointed out that language proficiency is directly linked to the development of the four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as these skills interact in order to enhance communication ability. Supporting this, Sacal and Potane (2023) found that students who possess high-level language competence, especially proficiency in grammar, show superior skills in speaking and writing, which allow them to communicate their ideas well. Moreover, recent research shows that watching captioned videos helps with learning a second language as it improves listening skills and helps learners pick up new vocabulary (Avello & Muñoz, 2023). The viewing of English-language films is becoming more common among English language learners since they expose learners to real English use and offer opportunities for developing English skills (Sánchez-Auñón et al., 2023).

At the international level, English movies have increasingly been recognized as valuable language learning resources. In China, for example, watching English movies has become a popular method for learners to acquire both language skills and cultural knowledge about different societies and the way of thinking of people from other societies, as movies enable them to understand the language and cultures of those societies (Zayyana et al., 2024). As Amalia et al. (2020) expressed, English films offer stimulating and valuable teaching resources that can inspire students and enhance language acquisition by presenting real-life content and communication in context. This makes it easier for viewers to comprehend what appears on screen and to disambiguate and parse phonemic data.

In the Philippine context, English movies with subtitles have become a popular source of both entertainment and language learning among students. Through subtitles, learners can better understand the context and meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions while following the flow of the story. This exposure allows students to engage with authentic language use in meaningful social and cultural contexts, making language learning more accessible and enjoyable. Supporting this, Reynolds et al. (2022) found that students tend to watch subtitled films because subtitles facilitate the understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary in context and promote more effective vocabulary acquisition.

Despite the growing body of literature on the effectiveness of English subtitles and audiovisual materials in language learning, recent studies have primarily focused on specific language skills such as vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and grammar development, often employing quantitative approaches that emphasize measurable outcomes rather than learners' lived experiences and perceptions (Wei & Fan, 2022; Alotaibi et al., 2023; Reynolds et al., 2022). Furthermore, although audiovisual input has been widely recognized as beneficial for language development, existing studies have largely examined short-term exposure to captioned videos rather than sustained viewing behaviors such as watching English movies with subtitles, leaving limited qualitative evidence on students' perceptions and experiences of this practice in authentic language learning contexts (Sánchez-Auñón et al., 2023). These gaps are particularly relevant in the Philippine higher education context, where further qualitative evidence is needed to better understand students' experiences and perceptions. Therefore, this study explores students' reasons for watching English movies with subtitles, their perceived effects on language competency, and the pedagogical implications of this practice among students at the University of Mindanao Digos College.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore and understand students' lived experiences and perceptions of watching English movies with subtitles and its perceived effects on their language competency. Phenomenology seeks to describe and interpret individuals' lived experiences of a shared phenomenon (Neubauer et al., 2019). This design was appropriate because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' reasons for watching English movies with subtitles, their perceived effects on language competency, and the pedagogical implications of this practice. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to describe their experiences freely while enabling the researchers to ask follow-up questions for clarification and deeper insight.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The study involved eight (8) third-year English Major students from the University of Mindanao Digos College who met the established inclusion criteria. In phenomenological research, a relatively small sample size is

appropriate because the primary objective is to obtain rich, detailed descriptions of participants' lived experiences rather than achieve statistical representation. Previous studies have suggested that a sample of six to ten participants is generally sufficient to reach data saturation and generate meaningful insights in phenomenological inquiry (Bartholomew et al., 2021; Sarfo et al., 2021). Thus, the eight participants included in this study were considered adequate to provide comprehensive accounts of the phenomenon under investigation.

The study employed homogeneous purposive sampling, a subtype of purposive sampling in which participants were intentionally selected because they shared similar characteristics and had direct experience with the phenomenon being explored. The inclusion criteria required participants to be third-year English Major students enrolled at the University of Mindanao Digos College during the Academic Year 2025–2026, aged between 20 and 35 years, and who regularly watched English movies with subtitles. These criteria ensured that all participants had sufficient experience with the phenomenon and could provide relevant, meaningful insights into the perceived effects of watching English movies with subtitles on language competency.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide was developed based on the study's objectives and relevant literature on phenomenological research and language learning through audiovisual materials. It consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore the participants' reasons for watching English movies with subtitles, the perceived effects of this practice on their language competency, and its pedagogical implications. To establish content validity, the researchers' adviser reviewed and validated the interview guide. The adviser evaluated the interview questions for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. The researchers incorporated the comments and recommendations from the validation process into the final version of the interview guide before data collection. The semi-structured interview guide also promoted consistency in data collection while allowing flexibility to obtain comprehensive responses from participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researchers secured approval from the appropriate academic authorities at the University of Mindanao Digos College. They obtained permission from the relevant academic department to conduct the study in accordance with institutional research protocols. Following the approval, participants were selected through homogeneous purposive sampling based on the established inclusion criteria. Eligible participants were informed of the purpose, objectives, and nature of the study, after which informed consent was obtained. They were also informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without consequences. After obtaining consent, the researchers scheduled and conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews at a time and platform convenient for each participant. With the participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to document relevant non-verbal cues and contextual observations. The recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the collected data. Throughout the data gathering process, the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were strictly maintained by assigning participant codes in place of their real names.

Data Analysis Procedure

The qualitative data gathered in this study were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method. The analysis involved seven stages: (a) familiarization with the interview transcripts through repeated reading; (b) identification of significant statements; (c) formulation of meanings from these statements; (d) clustering of meanings into themes; (e) development of an exhaustive description of the phenomenon; (f) formulation of its fundamental structure; and (g) validation of the findings through member checking with the participants. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study observed the criteria of credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through member checking and continuous comparison of the emerging themes with the original interview transcripts. Dependability and confirmability were ensured through systematic documentation of the data analysis process and validation of the interpreted data by an assigned expert data analyst, thereby enhancing the consistency and accuracy of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed established ethical principles in qualitative research to protect participants' rights, welfare, privacy, and dignity (Taquette & Souza, 2022). Before data collection, participants received an informed consent form explaining the study's purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and voluntary nature. They were given

sufficient time to read and understand the information before deciding whether to participate. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any stage without penalty or negative consequences. To ensure participants' safety and well-being, the interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed time and platform in a secure and comfortable environment. Confidentiality was maintained by restricting access to the collected data to the researchers and the research adviser only. During transcription, data analysis, and reporting, participants were identified using participant codes or pseudonyms instead of their real names to protect their identities and preserve anonymity.

Results and Discussion

Reasons for Watching English Movies with Subtitles

The thematic diagram below illustrates the reasons students binge-watch English movies with English subtitles. The following themes were derived based on the responses of the participants on what makes them watch English movies with subtitles.

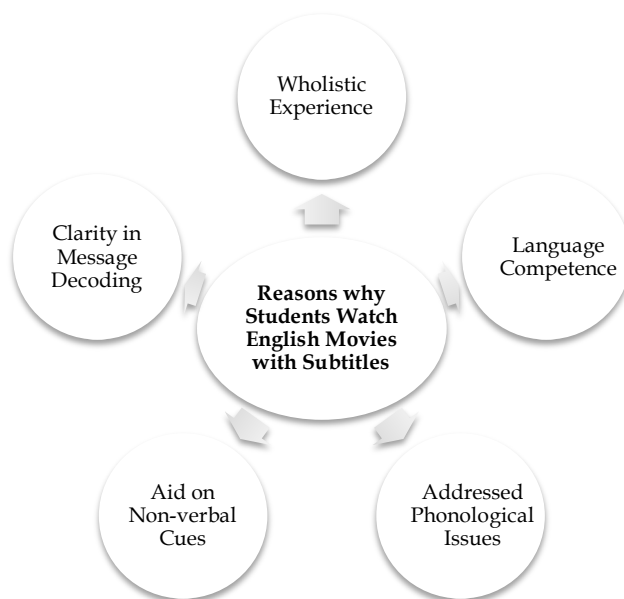


Figure 1. Thematic Diagram on Reasons Why Students Watch English Movies with Subtitles

Wholistic Experience

Participants described watching English movies with subtitles as a wholistic experience that combined entertainment, relaxation, and language learning. They perceived subtitled movies as more than a source of enjoyment, emphasizing that the experience allowed them to improve their English skills while engaging in an enjoyable and meaningful activity.

Several participants described watching English movies as a relaxing activity that naturally supported learning. One participant referred to the experience as a "total package" because it combined enjoyment with opportunities to improve English language skills.

"...watching English movies for me is somewhat like a total package for me, not only in the English language but also, it gives me joy, it gives me fun, it gives me entertainment." – Participant 2, line #24

Similarly, Participant 1 described watching English movies as a personal "comfort zone" (line #2), while Participant 7 shared that the experience helped improve speaking, pronunciation, and enunciation, making movie watching both enjoyable and educational (line #129).

These findings suggest that participants did not perceive entertainment and language learning as separate experiences. Instead, they viewed watching English movies with subtitles as an engaging activity through which

language learning occurred naturally. The combination of authentic language exposure and enjoyable content encouraged continuous engagement with the English language beyond the classroom.

This finding is consistent with Kamaruddin and Azizul Hassan (2025), who reported that subtitled movies provide authentic language input through auditory and visual cues while promoting learner motivation and language development. Likewise, López et al. (2025) found that English movies expose learners to authentic language use while supporting language learning and cultural understanding. Similarly, Opriasa (2024) emphasized that subtitles enhance reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation by making spoken language more accessible to learners.

Language Competence

Participants identified language competence as one of the primary reasons for watching English movies with subtitles. They perceived subtitles as a valuable learning support that enhanced their understanding of spoken English while expanding their vocabulary and exposure to authentic language use.

One participant explained that subtitles compensated for difficulties in understanding spoken dialogue, allowing them to follow the movie more effectively:

"...I am not good enough with listening skills... thanks to subtitles that I am able to understand the movie very well in effective time, efficient." – Participant 1, line #4

Another participant emphasized that, as an English major, watching English movies with subtitles exposed them to unfamiliar words and expressions that contributed to their language development:

"...one of my reasons in preferring it is that considering that I am an English major, I can learn a lot of words I haven't known yet just from watching them." – Participant 6, line #108

These responses indicate that participants valued subtitles not only because they improved comprehension but also because they provided authentic exposure to vocabulary and expressions that they could apply in their own language use. For the participants, watching English movies became an accessible and engaging way to strengthen their language competence beyond formal classroom instruction.

This finding is consistent with Sari and Aminatun (2021), who reported that English movies contribute to the development of overall language competence by exposing learners to the practical use of English in authentic contexts. Similarly, Fage (2020) found that watching English movies with subtitles facilitates vocabulary acquisition and encourages learners to learn new words, phrases, and expressions. This finding also supports Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to meaningful and comprehensible language input.

Addressed Phonological Issues

Participants reported that subtitles helped them overcome phonological challenges encountered while watching English movies, particularly difficulties related to unfamiliar accents, rapid speech, and pronunciation. They considered subtitles an important aid in recognizing spoken words and understanding dialogue that would otherwise be difficult to follow.

One participant explained that unfamiliar accents, particularly British English, made it difficult to identify spoken words without subtitles:

"...especially among like British people or British movies it's really hard to get their accent." – Participant 5, line #92

Similarly, another participant shared that fast speech and pronunciation often affected comprehension:

"...sometimes, I find it hard to understand what is being said because they speak so fast, and it seems like they swallow their words because of their accent." – Participant 7, line #131

Another participant also mentioned frequently replaying scenes because of difficulty understanding spoken dialogue, highlighting the challenges they experienced when listening without subtitle support (Participant 1, line #6).

These findings indicate that subtitles served as an effective aid in addressing phonological difficulties by allowing participants to connect spoken language with its written form. Through this support, they were better able to recognize pronunciation patterns, distinguish unfamiliar accents, and follow rapid speech, making spoken English easier to understand.

This finding is consistent with Tadayyon (2025), who reported that same-language subtitles help learners overcome pronunciation difficulties, unfamiliar accents, and rapid speech by integrating spoken and written language. Similarly, Masrai (2020) found that extensive exposure to captioned videos contributes to the development of learners' phonological vocabulary and listening skills. This finding also supports Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1971), which suggests that language processing is enhanced when verbal and visual information are presented simultaneously.

Aid on Non-Verbal Cues

Participants recognized that, aside from subtitles, non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, body language, and visual scenes also contributed to their understanding of English movies. These visual elements helped them interpret the meaning of conversations, particularly when spoken dialogue was difficult to understand.

One participant explained that even without subtitles, they could still understand parts of the movie because of the characters' non-verbal communication:

"...yes, without subtitles, I could still understand because of the non-verbal communication, that's it." – Participant 4, line #74

Another participant, however, shared that while visual cues were helpful, they still preferred having subtitles to clarify unclear dialogues and fully understand the meaning of particular scenes.

"...I still prefer having subtitles because there are scenes where the dialogue is not very clear, and I read the subtitles to really understand what the characters mean." – Participant 6, line #113

These responses suggest that participants relied on both visual and textual information to interpret movie scenes. While non-verbal cues provided contextual support, subtitles complemented these visual signals by clarifying spoken dialogue, allowing participants to understand the intended message more accurately.

This finding is consistent with Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1971), which proposes that learning is enhanced when verbal and visual information are processed together. Similarly, Kanellopoulou et al. (2019) explained that combining linguistic and visual information promotes better comprehension and recall, supporting learners in interpreting meaning from multiple sources of information.

Clarity in Message Decoding

Participants perceived subtitles as an important aid in understanding the intended meaning of movie dialogues. They explained that reading subtitles while listening enabled them to confirm what they heard and interpret the message more accurately, particularly when the dialogue was unclear or spoken with unfamiliar pronunciation.

One participant shared:

"...subtitles facilitate our comprehension because they present the message the movie wants to convey. They serve as a guide to what we hear, especially when some parts are difficult to understand." – Participant 2, line #32

Similarly, another participant emphasized that subtitles made the intended message easier to understand than relying on listening alone.

"...it is more comprehensible for me if I can read it than if I only hear it." – Participant 3, line #54

Participant 1 likewise noted that subtitles improved comprehension despite differences in articulation, pronunciation, and accent, indicating that written text helped clarify spoken dialogue (line #10).

These findings suggest that participants used subtitles to verify spoken language and interpret the intended meaning of conversations more accurately. Rather than simply displaying dialogue, subtitles supported message decoding, enabling learners to connect spoken and written language while watching movies.

This finding is consistent with Pammu and Sahib (2021), who emphasized that listening involves constructing meaning rather than merely hearing sounds. Likewise, Astika and Kurniawan (2020) reported that subtitles support learners' comprehension by providing access to the intended message, making spoken language easier to interpret during language learning.

Effects in Language Competencies

The illustrated diagram below shows how watching English movies with subtitles affects the student's language competencies – both micro and macro skills.

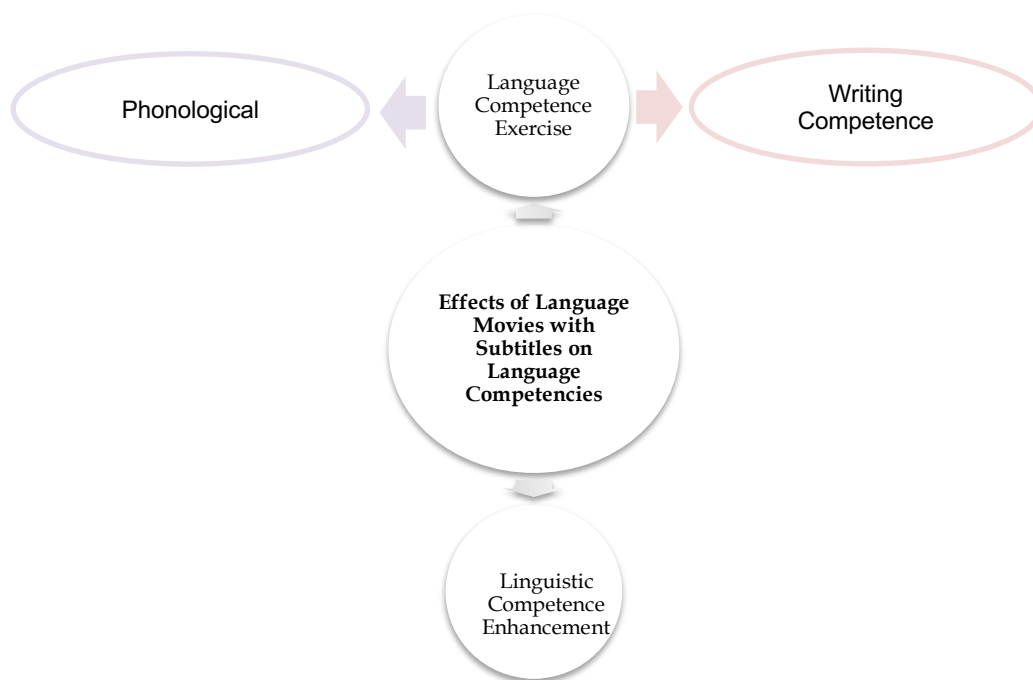


Figure 2. Thematic Diagram on the Effects of Watching English Movies with Subtitles in Language Competencies

Language Competence Exercise

Participants described watching English movies with subtitles as a form of language practice that allowed them to improve different aspects of their English competence. Through repeated exposure to spoken and written language, they reported developing their listening, vocabulary, writing, and sentence-construction skills while enjoying the activity.

One participant shared that subtitles improved listening comprehension by helping maintain attention and understand spoken dialogue.

"It improves my listening skills in a way that it gives me more attention to stay focused on what I am listening to in that movie, like there are instances that...It gives me the entirety of attention; at the same time, it helps me to acquire understanding of what I am watching." – Participant 2, line #34

Another participant explained that vocabulary learned from movies became useful in speaking and writing.

"...I can use the vocabulary words I encounter while watching the movie." – Participant 5, line #101

Similarly, Participant 6 described how repeated exposure to subtitle-supported movies helped them recognize correct sentence structures and phrases, which they later applied in their own writing (line #123).

These findings suggest that participants viewed subtitled movies as an opportunity to practice English beyond classroom instruction. Rather than passively watching for entertainment, they actively connected vocabulary, sentence patterns, and listening skills to their own language use, contributing to the development of their overall language competence.

This finding is consistent with Mahbub (2023), who reported that subtitles facilitate vocabulary learning, pronunciation, and comprehension by combining spoken and written language. Likewise, Wong et al. (2020) found that subtitles enhance listening comprehension by helping learners connect auditory and textual input during language learning.

Linguistic Competence Enhancement

Participants perceived that watching English movies with subtitles contributed to the improvement of various aspects of their linguistic competence, particularly vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and overall language use. Through repeated exposure to authentic language, they became more aware of word meanings, sentence structures, and correct pronunciation.

One participant explained that subtitles helped expand vocabulary and improve grammatical awareness.

"...watching English movies with subtitles helped me encounter unfamiliar words and understand sentence structures, which also allowed me to assess my grammar." – Participant 2, line #42

Another participant emphasized that subtitles improved pronunciation by allowing them to hear the correct way words are spoken.

"As for me, among the four, I can say it is the pronunciation. I am one of the witnesses, and of course, the proof that it is really the pronunciation because yes, you are able to hear the characters speak that word in a manner that is way much more correct than what you expected because, for example, I have remembered this word "epitome, e-pi-tow-mi". It varies from one person to another person." – Participant 1, line #20

Participant 5 likewise shared that repeatedly watching English movies with subtitles helped strengthen grammatical knowledge because it aligned with their personal goal of improving grammar (line #103).

These findings suggest that participants viewed subtitled movies as a valuable source of authentic language exposure that supported the development of multiple linguistic skills. Beyond learning individual words, they became more aware of pronunciation, grammatical structures, and appropriate language use through continuous interaction with spoken and written English.

This finding is consistent with Hafizah et al. (2025), who reported that English films promote vocabulary development, lexical fluency, and communicative competence through contextualized audiovisual input. Similarly, Alotaibi et al. (2023) found that subtitles contribute to the improvement of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills by providing learners with authentic language exposure.

Pedagogical Implications of Watching English Movies with Subtitles

The thematic diagram below introduces the pedagogical implications of watching English movies with subtitles, based on students' perceptions of how it affects their language competency.



Figure 3. Thematic Diagram on the Pedagogical Implications of Watching English Movies with Subtitles

Language Competence Enhancement

The findings suggest that English movies with subtitles can serve as meaningful instructional materials for developing students' language competence. Participants emphasized that repeated exposure to subtitled movies helped them acquire new vocabulary, improve reading comprehension, and become more familiar with grammatical structures, indicating that such materials can complement classroom language instruction. Faqe (2020) reported similar findings, finding that watching English movies with subtitles promotes vocabulary acquisition and exposes learners to new phrases and expressions. Likewise, Reynolds et al. (2022) reported that captioned videos enhance vocabulary learning and reading comprehension by integrating spoken and written language.

One participant explained that repeated exposure to subtitled movies enabled them to acquire new vocabulary, even without consciously trying to learn.

"...the more you watch, the more you unconsciously acquire new vocabulary." – Participant 6, line #139

Another participant emphasized that subtitles improved both vocabulary learning and comprehension.

"Watching movies with subtitles enables students to learn words better and to understand the movie in just efficient time." – Participant 1, line #22

Similarly, Participant 8 shared that subtitles enhanced reading comprehension because they made fast-paced dialogue easier to understand (line #184). Participant 2 also noted that subtitles exposed learners to unfamiliar vocabulary and grammatical structures while encouraging more attentive reading during movie viewing (line #44).

These findings imply that teachers may integrate English movies with subtitles as supplementary instructional materials to support vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and grammar instruction. By exposing learners to authentic language in meaningful contexts, subtitled movies can provide engaging opportunities for language practice beyond traditional classroom activities.

Aid for Audio-Visual Learners

The findings suggest that English movies with subtitles can serve as effective instructional materials for learners who benefit from both visual and auditory input. Participants emphasized that subtitles let students see and hear the language at the same time, making classroom instruction more engaging and easier to understand. This supports the use of subtitled videos as supplementary learning resources, particularly for English language instruction. Similarly, Aloqaili (2014) reported that audiovisual materials promote language acquisition by increasing learners' motivation, reducing anxiety, and creating a more engaging learning environment.

One participant explained that, as a visual learner, subtitles help students follow the lesson and understand unfamiliar English terms more effectively.

"...it is better to include subtitles because students can follow the flow of the video and better understand what is being presented." – Participant 6, line #139

Another participant noted that subtitles allow learners to listen and read at the same time, making discussions more meaningful and supporting the development of English language skills.

"...students can hear the lesson while reading the text on the screen, making the discussion more meaningful and educational." – Participant 5, line #117

These findings imply that teachers may incorporate English movies and other subtitled audiovisual materials into classroom instruction to support learners who benefit from combined visual and auditory input. Using subtitles alongside authentic audiovisual content may enhance student engagement, improve comprehension, and provide meaningful opportunities for language learning beyond conventional teaching approaches.

Fun Learning

The findings suggest that English movies with subtitles can make language learning more engaging and enjoyable for students. Participants believed subtitles encouraged learners to stay attentive, read actively while watching, and participate more meaningfully in the learning process. These findings support the use of subtitled movies as instructional materials that promote student engagement. Similarly, Reynolds et al. (2022) reported that captioned and subtitled videos facilitate vocabulary learning by presenting language in meaningful and motivating contexts. Likewise, Siahpour et al. (2022) found that subtitles increase learner engagement, thereby supporting language learning.

One participant explained that subtitles prevent students from becoming bored during lessons because they provide text to read while listening.

"...it could be very boring, like if they would just listen for the whole time, for the whole duration of the class without something to read upon. So with the presence of close caption, it could make the whole discussion meaningful and more educational in some ways." – Participant 5, line #117

Another participant shared that subtitles encourage students to read while watching, helping them better understand the lesson.

"Having the subtitles, however, will encourage them to read, and this would train them to multitask – while they are watching, they are also reading to understand the video you are showing them." – Participant 6, line #139

However, Participant 1 emphasized that while subtitled movies make learning enjoyable, teachers should not rely on them alone. Instead, movies should be combined with other instructional strategies that encourage students to develop their language skills independently rather than becoming overly dependent on subtitles (line #22).

These findings imply that English movies with subtitles can enhance student engagement and motivation when integrated appropriately into classroom instruction. However, teachers should use subtitled movies as supplementary learning materials alongside varied teaching strategies that promote active participation and gradually develop learners' independent language skills.

Language Learning Strategy

The findings suggest that English movies with subtitles can serve as an effective language-learning strategy by providing learners with authentic language input in meaningful contexts. Participants perceived that regular exposure to subtitled movies helped them develop multiple language skills simultaneously, allowing them to acquire vocabulary, improve comprehension, and apply English more confidently in communication. These findings are consistent with Van der Kolk and Feijoo (2024), who reported that subtitles facilitate incidental vocabulary learning through repeated exposure to words in context. Similarly, Reynolds et al. (2022) found that captioned and subtitled videos significantly improve vocabulary learning and listening comprehension by integrating spoken and written language.

One participant shared:

"...the more I watch English movies with subtitles, the more it improves my language, my English speaking, my grammar, and spelling." – Participant 7, line #162

Participant 5 explained that watching subtitled movies contributed to the development of the four macro skills because learners simultaneously read subtitles, listened to authentic dialogue, and applied newly learned vocabulary and expressions in speaking and writing (line #117). Likewise, Participant 2 emphasized that subtitled movies exposed learners to unfamiliar vocabulary and grammatical structures that could later be applied in real-life communication, demonstrating that language learning extends beyond theoretical knowledge into practical language use (line #44).

These findings suggest that English movies with subtitles can be integrated as a language-learning strategy that complements classroom instruction. By combining authentic audiovisual materials with structured learning activities such as vocabulary exercises, comprehension questions, and reflective discussions, teachers can encourage active learner engagement while providing meaningful opportunities for students to develop their language skills beyond traditional classroom instruction.

Conclusion

This study provides insight into how English major students experience watching English movies with subtitles and how this practice influences their language competency. The findings suggest that subtitles do more than support comprehension. They expose learners to authentic language, help them understand spoken English more effectively, and create opportunities to develop vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and other language skills through meaningful and enjoyable experiences. The participants also viewed English movies with subtitles as a valuable learning resource that can complement classroom instruction and encourage continuous language learning beyond formal educational settings.

The study contributes to the existing literature by presenting the lived experiences of English major students regarding the use of English movies with subtitles as a language learning resource. While previous studies have primarily emphasized the effectiveness of subtitles in improving specific language skills, this study highlights how learners themselves perceive and experience their role in supporting language competency and classroom learning. These findings suggest that integrating English movies with subtitles into language instruction can provide meaningful and authentic learning experiences that support students' language development.

Contributions of Authors

All authors contributed substantially to the study's conception and design, conducted the research, analyzed and interpreted the data, drafted and revised the manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. All authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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Conflict of Interests

No conflict of interest.

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