THE USE OF ENGLISH-SUBTITLED MOVIES IN IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

SUZULAIKHA MOHAMED*
Universiti Selangor
suzulaikha@unisel.edu.my

KHODZAIRE KOSIM
Universiti Selangor

MAXWILSON MACKRY
Universiti Selangor

NURRUL HUWAINA RIDZUAN LOTFI
Universiti Selangor

Abstract

English-language films have gained prominence in Malaysian English classrooms with their dual role as educational and entertainment resources. This study investigates the impact of English-subtitled movies on students' English proficiency at the Faculty of Education and Social Science (FESS) at the University of Selangor (UNISEL). A Google Form-based questionnaire collected the data from 250 FESS students. The result demonstrated that 38.4% of the participants watch English-subtitled movies daily, while 22.4% do so 2 to 3 times weekly during their free time. Descriptive analysis revealed a mean score of 4.46, indicating a positive perception among students that English-subtitled movies significantly correlate with improved English skills, particularly in reading comprehension. The main factor with the mean score of 4.39 proved that FESS students agreed that they could enhance their English proficiency by watching English-subtitled movies rather than English non-subtitled movies. The findings highlight the utility of English-subtitled movies in language acquisition, suggesting that such films are more than mere entertainment. The implications are substantial for educators advocating for integrating English-subtitled films as a pedagogical tool in language instruction. The study encourages students to dedicate more time to watching English-subtitled movies to bolster their language skills and proficiency.

Keywords: Perceptions, English-subtitled movies, English movies, English subtitles.

INTRODUCTION

English films have been a source of entertainment, teaching tools, and marketing attraction as they generate a narrative model that reflects human expressions (Blasco et al., 2006). Raniah's (2016) study on Malaysian students shows that the routine of watching English movies bolsters the motivation to master the English language. Subtitles play a critical role for non-English speaking audiences, enriching their viewing experience by bridging the language gap and allowing for full enjoyment and comprehension of the content. According to Rastislav (2018), subtitles are ubiquitous and provide a valuable tool to enhance the viewers' reading and comprehension skills. This highlights the multifaceted utility of English films as they evolve to meet educational and linguistic needs in addition to their traditional entertainment value.

In Malaysia, the challenge of English language acquisition is compounded by a learning ecosystem confined largely to the classroom. With Bahasa Malaysia being the lingua franca across Malaysian communities, English proficiency inevitably declines due to limited opportunities for practice beyond academic settings (Nguyen, 2018). Students frequently grapple with the scarcity of suitable interlocutors for English conversation, often reverting to Bahasa Malaysia for everyday interactions. This preference for the native language over English in daily communication forms a substantial barrier to language acquisition, impacting overall English proficiency (Perez, 2016). Malaysia's cultural and social milieu of Malaysia further exacerbates this issue; despite having a foundation in English, many lack the motivation to advance their proficiency, as English is not woven into the fabric of their daily lives. Mastery of English, therefore, remains underutilised and fails to progress due to a deficiency in both exposure and impetus for improvement (Christopher, 2016). The synthesis of these factors paints a vivid picture of the linguistic hurdles Malaysians face, emphasising the need for innovative strategies to integrate English into everyday use.

This study investigates the impact of film subtitles on students' English language learning journey. In the Malaysian educational landscape, where British English prevails, the absence of subtitles may pose a barrier to comprehension as students struggle to follow movie narratives. Subtitles demystify the storyline and facilitate language learning (Raniah, 2016). This research evaluates the efficacy of subtitles in bolstering English proficiency among learners, shedding light on their potential as an educational resource. The research poses two questions to navigate this inquiry: What motivates Faculty of Education and Social Science (FESS) students to engage with English-subtitled movies? Secondly, how do these students perceive the influence of English-subtitled movies in advancing their English language skills? These questions aim to uncover the underlying factors driving the consumption of subtitled content and its perceived benefits in enhancing English proficiency among FESS students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Krashen Comprehensible Input i+1

Stephen Krashen (1982), an eminent scholar who used his intellectual competence, created a noteworthy theory that emphasised the physiological impact and affective factors, which significantly possess a strong relationship with learning. He theorised that every learner can 'acquire' a language. Based on one of the theories, 'Comprehensible Input', he thoroughly stated that everyone has a present degree of fitness (stage i) of capability. It can turn into a higher level (i+1) with a proper learning transition at this stage. A "natural order" approach is

perfect for labelling the mentioned process (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). However, there should be a form of academically beneficial material that needs to be put into proper planning to achieve that level. To reach this potential, one must genuinely comprehend the studied material's gist and develop a specific goal for a mental process.

Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

With visual or textual representation technology, the mentioned process can be entirely formed with the consistent accompaniment of words and pictures. This encourages digestible information to be mentally attractive to students (Krashen & Terrel, 1983). This theory applied Mayer's thought that illustrated an accepted display demonstrating multimedia's effect on the act of second-language securing below.
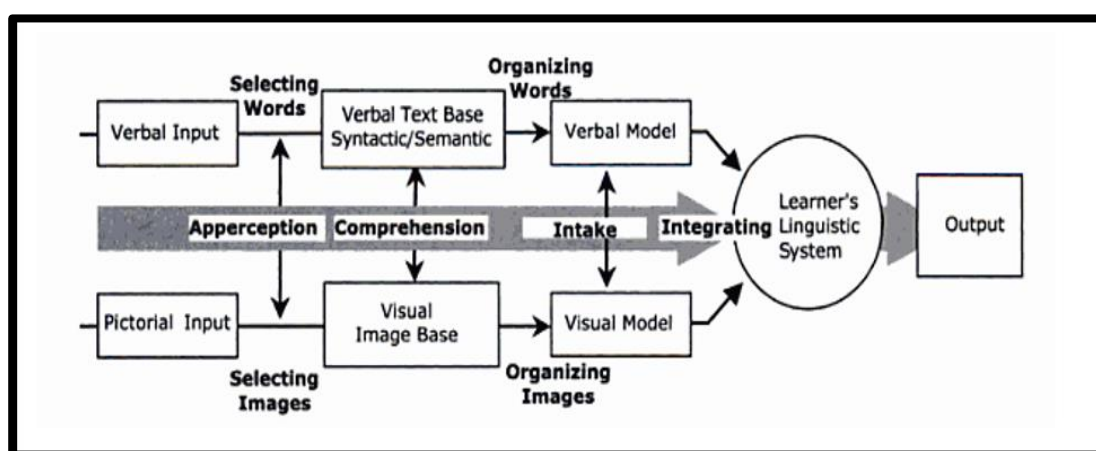

Figure 1: Mayer's (2001) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

Aside from that, there was a study done by Baltova (2006), who thoroughly experimented with whether the continuance of effort in putting visual information with the application of a second language can be productive. Based on his study, the two major English skills, writing and vocabulary comprehension, were in proper intellectual development. This was possible due to the progressive combination of verbal information, printed content, and virtual-displayed data delivered in the form of entirety.

Interestingly, Krashen (1983) also made a hypothesis emphasising the function of an 'affective filter' toward learning a second language. This hypothesis proposed that intellectual observation can be satisfyingly achieved with positive inspiration. It also means that one can face a form of disability in a learning process if he or she is put in a stressful state of mind, especially if one is struggling to enhance language proficiency (Krashen et al., 1983). Based on his hypothesis, the true process of academic observation should occur in a relaxing and comfortable condition. In the end, anxiety and positive inspiration can affect a student's learning, especially how they approach a new language (Krashen et al., 1983).

Multimedia is a perfect fit for truly engaging students in learning or enhancing a second language. This is because multimedia is constructed with the complete elements of an authentic medium that can be very relatable in their everyday life. For instance, an animation occupied with visual texts delivers an ill-stressful process of learning for students to feel engaged with whilst indirectly securing the amount of knowledge they need to obtain (Hayati & Mohammadi,

2009; Alipour et al., 2012). Experiencing movies or colourful animations is always appreciated by the beauty of the complexity, which is generally fun to digest by younger learners. Aside from the mesmerising experience, it encourages productivity and deeper engagement toward the mentioned materials. For example, real-life-based movies offer a set of comprehensive learning procedures through creative contexts. The observed information can be a meaningful exposure, especially to inexperienced young learners (Sherman, 2003 & Cami, 2006).

English Movies Improve Students' English Proficiency Level

English language subtitles in authentic English films revealed a significant difference between English and native subtitles. Rastislav's (2018) study, which compared English and native language subtitles, shows that English videos with a second-language subtitle enhance reading comprehension. Similarly, Asma (2018) found that students who watch English-subtitled movies have positive behaviour towards learning the language with extra enthusiasm. English-subtitled movies motivate learners to learn new idiomatic expressions by watching English-subtitled movies.

Furthermore, a study by Eva Faliyanti and Mira Arlin (2018) reported a positive correlation between English-subtitled movies and the proper process of vocabulary mastery. The study concluded that the correlation that involved vocabulary mastery was significantly high. Generally, decent mastery of vocabulary helps students advance their language learning. The researchers argued that learners could identify various vocabulary based on the dialogue and meanings in the English movies they watched and the meanings. Another study by Robert et al. (2018) also agreed that incidental second language (L2) vocabulary learning is possible through an English movie occupied by an English subtitle. The study reported that students can recall selected words from a movie they watched. It is also suggested that movies are a good supplementary learning tool to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition.

According to Nur and Muhammad (2018), subtitle films help students to stay motivated to listen better and improve their listening skills. They also quoted that teachers should make subtitle films while conducting listening classes. This study is supported by Carmona (2018), who concluded that the learners accompanied by English captions could outperform a group that does not use English captions. The performing group can have a higher ground to be well aware of the film's content compared to the other group. He suggested that teachers consider the positive impacts of English subtitles on watching videos.

A study conducted by Gomathi et al. (2017) proved that students are exposed to vocabulary learning through a movie taught by the supplementary subtitles. He concluded that there is a noticeable improvement in utilising the benefits of vocabulary exposure. The study also suggested that applying movies to English learning is enjoyable and good for vocabulary learning. Putra (2012) found that the adequacy of utilising the subtitles to adopt new vocabulary was positive. It indicated that the students truly acquired new vocabulary after watching the chosen movie 'Hotel Transylvania' with bimodal subtitling. He also concluded that video technology is a powerful teaching tool in helping students to acquire new vocabulary.

In addition, Rokni et al. (2014) claimed that students who viewed a movie with English subtitles improved their speaking skills compared to the students who did not have English subtitles in their movie. He also concluded that students who use English subtitles could also manage to write down some expressions and phrases in their notebooks while watching the film. In terms of listening skills, Sari, Armilia, and Bastian Sugandi (2015) highlighted the

improvement in listening skills as subtitles help students to listen to a native speaker better, even if they happen to speak too fast. Besides, the study mentioned how English subtitles assist the students in viewing how the words are academically written while listening to new phrases and idioms. The study concluded that movies are one of the audio-visual media that can be very helpful in improving students' English performance.

METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study was a quantitative study method. This method aims to gather the correct quantitative data from the respondents. According to Blackstone and Amy (2018), in quantitative research, the objective frequently is to test speculations created from a hypothesis. Convenience sampling was used in this study.

The respondents of this study were selected from the Faculty of Education and Social Science (FESS) at the University of Selangor (UNISEL). Two hundred fifty respondents were willing to take part in answering the study's questionnaire. The materials used in this study were mainly Google Forms. It was specifically designed to help the respondents express their agreement and disagreement toward two main questions related to the study's research objectives. The total population of students in the Faculty of Education and Social Science is two-thousand-three-hundred (2300). However, this study only took 15% of that number. Hence, 250 respondents were accurately gathered. The respondents were strictly hailed from the Faculty of Education and Social Science (FESS) students.

The researchers designed the questionnaire for this study via Google Form, which contained academically constructed questionnaires for students from the Faculty of Education and Social Science (FESS) to answer. The questionnaire has three parts: Part A, B, and C. Part A focuses on asking about the respondents' backgrounds. Part B is focused on analysing the students' factors for watching English movies. Lastly, Part C analyses the students' perceptions of the effects that can be gained while watching English-subtitled movies. Five points of the Likert Scale were applied to Part B and C. This means indicating how far they agree and disagree with a particular statement in the questionnaire. In this scale, the respondents must choose an answer in every given statement in the questionnaires. A questionnaire scales whether they strongly agree or disagree.

The data in this study was gathered and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25. SPSS software was applied in this study to calculate the exact standard deviation and mean score for each question the study had designed. This study managed to gather the descriptive statistics for each question in the questionnaire.

RESULTS

The questionnaire via Google Forms received 250 respondents (n=250) with a response rate of 100%. The mean score is interpreted as shown below. A higher value means better. It indicates the number of average answers that a particular statement received.

Table 1: Mean Score and Value

Mean Score	Value
1.00 – 2.00	Very Low

2.01 – 3.00	Low
3.01 – 4.00	Moderate
4.01 – 5.00	High

Graph 1 below shows the exact percentage of the respondents' habit of watching English-subtitled movies per week. This is the third item in Part 1: Background of Respondents. It indicates that 38.4% of respondents watch English-subtitled movies, the most noticeable among the four options in the graph.
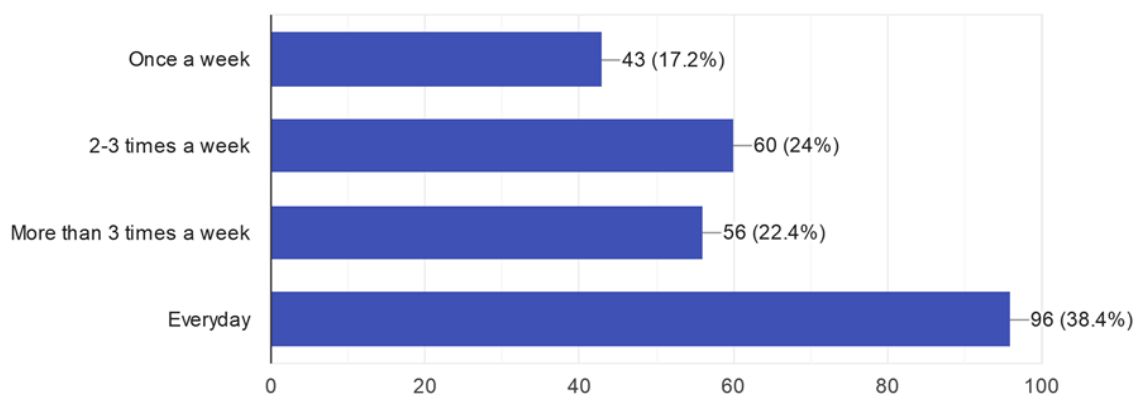

Figure 1: Frequency of Watching English-subtitled Movies Weekly

Factors that Lead Students to Watch English-subtitled Movies

Table 2: Factors of Watching English-subtitled Movies

Questions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I prefer watching English-subtitled movies because I can improve my English proficiency than English non-subtitled movies.	250	4.3880	.80001
I prefer watching English-subtitled movies because they are more enjoyable.	250	4.3520	.80417
I prefer watching English-subtitled movies because of my friends' influence.	250	4.2960	.89644

38

Table 2 shows the most significant findings on the factors affecting respondents' decision to watch English movies with subtitles. Most of them positively perceived that by watching English-subtitled movies, they could improve their English proficiency level compared to English non-subtitled movies, with a mean score of 4.39. It indicates that for this reason alone, the English subtitles act as a tool to enhance their ability to use English despite the variety of English movies' content.

The respondents also tend to indulge themselves in an enjoyable mood. They admit that doing so makes them feel more satisfied and entertained while experiencing the action mentioned in the table below. A mean score of 4.35 indicates that the respondents are comfortable enjoying their movies without stressing about any language barriers that might occur while watching English movies.

The other findings that can be seen in Table 2 show that the respondents were influenced by their friends before discovering the better presence of subtitles. A mean score of 4.30 indicates that they are likely to receive influences from their friends. This means they want to share their experience with their friends while diverting their attention toward the mentioned form of multimedia.

Students' Perceptions on the Effects of Watching English Subtitled Movies in Improving English Language Proficiency Level

Table 3: The Effects of Watching English Movies with English Subtitles in Improving English Language Proficiency Level

Questions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
It improves my reading comprehension skills because I can easily understand words and connect them with subtitles.	250	4.4560	.71140
It improves my listening comprehension skills as I can simultaneously understand and make sense of the subtitles with the spoken language.	250	4.4120	.74598
It improves my English communication skills as I can listen and visually learn to deliver messages effectively.	250	4.4120	.77761
It improves my grammar as I can refer to the subtitles to	250	4.4000	.73359

identify and understand verb types, tenses and phrases.			

Table 3 displays the most noteworthy findings, with a mean score of 4.46. It proves that respondents believe it can drastically improve their reading comprehension because they can easily understand words uttered by connecting them with subtitles. This means that they find English subtitles to be vitally helpful in helping them to digest new pronunciations along with the text without putting effort into stressfully learning them in a complex manner.

Two items remarkably share an equal result. With a mean score of 4.41, they indicate that students can initiate a form of effort to improve their listening comprehension and English communication skills. Meanwhile, English subtitles are viewed as a tool to simultaneously create a more sensible process of comprehending the spoken language. English subtitles can improve their English communication skills as they can listen and visually learn to deliver messages effectively. This means that students are utilising English subtitles to help with their English communication skills without going out and interacting with random strangers. Hence, this is seen as a safer method of exposing themselves to good English communication examples by merely watching English movies if they are shy or are not used to conversing with native speakers.

The result in Table 3 is deemed the most surprising finding in Part C. The mean score of 4.40 indicates they admit that English subtitles help them to identify whilst understanding verb types, tenses and phrases. This means that the respondents use English subtitles to figure out the variety of verbs, tenses and phrases that exist in the English language. They can easily learn the frequent verbs or tenses in English movies by referring to the English subtitles.

DISCUSSION

One of the interesting results from the analysed data revealed that English-subtitled movies effectively enhance students' English proficiency. Based on the findings, the respondents agreed that one of the factors was to enhance and improve their English proficiency level. This finding is accurately aligned with Napikul (2018), who found that students acquire exposure to English use better with the help of subtitles. This study also revealed that subtitles are an impactful tool that helps students become more immersed in any movie through English captions. Subtitles allow students to guess the definitions of foreign words through body gestures. This proved that students can improve their English comprehension and learn and comprehend new words effectively with the help of visual and audio features offered in English-subtitled movies. This finding also aligns with Krashen's Comprehensible Input Theory (1982), which states that implementing words and pictures significantly facilitates students' comprehension while using multimedia as entertainment and education.

The second finding of this study indicated that the respondents were eager to progressively advance their listening ability by watching English-subtitled movies, which is aligned with Hosogoshi (2016), who stated in his study that learners may tend to visualise information to enhance their understanding of the idea and to summarise information to organise such understandings. For university or tertiary level students who probably need to listen to long lectures and conversations, using these imagery and summarisation skills might be essential to process a volume of incoming linguistic information to understand the gist.

According to the Krashen Comprehensible Input Theory (1982), giving students this sort of information causes them to learn language normally instead of learning it deliberately.

The next significant findings from this study revealed that English-subtitled movies sufficiently assisted students to comprehend English communications in English movies effectively. This finding shares the same relevance with a study done by Shevchenko (2017) who academically claimed that genuine subtitled motion pictures in English provide realness in the students' watching experience and give more prominent relevance to the genuine conversations because of the existence of authentic sounds, securing every one of its characteristics namely genuine feelings, clashes, senses of humour, bona fide elocution and pitch, complements, explicit lexis, and colloquialisms. With such movies or films, students can find regular varieties in the correspondence of the English speakers of the unknown dialect which they study or non-standard structures independent from anyone else without tuning in to the educator's guidelines and, all the while, improving their social and cultural mindfulness. The mentioned theory in Shevchenko's study aligns with this study's findings, stating that such multimedia provides necessary comprehension input with the systematic visual representation of both images and linguistic features designed to increase an ample amount of understanding of a discussed matter.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that English-subtitled movies are a means of pure enjoyment that leads to entertainment and a tool to develop English proficiency. Apart from this, watching English-subtitled movies allows the learners to listen and read the dialogues in English while the movie is being played. Students can also improve their English comprehension, be exposed to new words, and effectively comprehend new words with the help of visual and audio features offered in English-subtitled movies.

One of the limitations of this study is that there is only a relatively small sample size, which would be more useful if it is done on a larger sample size. However, the findings of this research can benefit academicians like course designers, instructors, and students. It is also recommended that English-subtitled movies be considered one of the learning tools that can be used inside or outside the classroom. English-subtitled movies are also proven to help enhance students' English proficiency levels. It also can motivate students to learn English meaningfully as it offers an enjoyable and pleasurable experience where the English language is learned inductively.

The findings of this study can be impactful, especially for instructors who want to incorporate English movies as a teaching tool in language classrooms. It may also encourage students or learners to commit more time to watching English-subtitled movies to help them improve their English language skills and proficiency.

REFERENCES

Abdolmanafi, S. J., & Ataee, A. J. (2014). Movies in EFL classrooms: With or without subtitles. *The Dawn Journal*, *3*(1), 715–726.

Abdolmanafi, S. J., & Ataee, A. J. (2014). The effect of movie subtitles on EFL Learners' Oral Performance. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, *1*(5), 201–215.

Alipour, M., Gorjian, B., & Kouravand, L. G. (2012). The effects of pedagogical and authentic films on EFL Learners' Vocabulary Learning: The role of subtitles. *Advances in Asian Social Science*, *3*(4), 734-738.

Ashcroft, R. J., Garner, J., & Hadingham, O. (2018). Incidental vocabulary learning through watching movies. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *1*(3), 135-147.

Azizah, N. Z., & Yaumi, M. (2018). The influence of subtitle film on students 'listening motivation. *Eternal (English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal)*, *4*(1), 117-126.

Baltova, I. (1999). Multisensory language teaching in a multidimensional curriculum: The use of authentic bimodal video in core French. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 56*(1), 31-48.

Blasco, P. G., Moreto, G., Roncoletta, A. F., Levites, M. R., & Janaudis, M. A. (2006). Using movie clips to foster learners' reflection: Improving education in the affective domain. *Family Medicine-Kansas City-, 38*(2), 94.

Blackstone, A. (2018). *Principles of sociological inquiry: qualitative and quantitative methods*. Saylor Foundation. https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_principles-of-sociological-inquiry-qualitative-and-quantitative-methods/

Carmona, D. O., & Richter, S. (2018). Tracking the distribution of non-professional subtitles to study new audiences. *Observatorio (OBS*), 12*(4), 064-086.

Christopher, A. A. (2016). Overcoming impediments to learning the four language skills using note books. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *7*(1), 161-167.

Ebrahimi, Y., & Bazaee, P. (2016). The effect of watching English movies with standard subtitles on EFL Learner's Content and Vocabulary Comprehension. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, *3*(5), 284–295.

Faliyanti, E., & Arlin, M. (2018). The Correlation Between Students' habit in watching English movies and vocabulary mastery in the sixth semester at English Education Study Program In Muhammadiyah University Of Metro. *Intensive Journal*, *1*(2), 94-102.

Gomathi, B. S., Geetha, T. S., & Raa, M. R. R. (2017). A study of vocabulary learning using film as a media – a case study of the undergraduate engineering students ". *Veda's Journal of English language and literature-JoEll*, *4*(4), 111-117.

Hayati, A. M., & Mohammadi, M. (2009). Task-based instruction vs. translation method in teaching vocabulary: The case of Iranian-secondary school students. *Iranian Journal of Language Studies, 3*(2).

Hosogoshi, K. (2016). Effects of captions and subtitles on the listening process: Insights from EFL Learners' Listening Strategies. *JALT CALL Journal*, *12*(3), 153-178.

Iranmanesh, A., & Darani, L. H. (2018). Effects of movies and gender on learning English idiomatic and everyday expressions among Iranian EFL Learners. *MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, *6*(3), 1-11.

Kabooha, R. H. (2016). Using Movies in EFL classrooms: A study conducted at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdul-Aziz University. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(3), 248-267.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Prentice-Hall.

Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach: language acquisition in the classroom.* Alemy Press, Hayward, California.

Kusumawati, E. (2018). The effect of watching English movies with subtitles on ESP Students' Content and Vocabulary Comprehension: A study conducted at an Indonesia Polytechnic Engineering. *Science, Engineering, Education, and Development Studies (SEEDs): Conference Series*, *2(2)*, 139–150.

Mayer, R. E. (2001). *Multimedia learning*. New York, NY.

Mayer, R., & Mayer, R. E. (Eds.). (2005). *The Cambridge handbook of multimedia learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Metruk, R. (2018). The effects of watching authentic English videos with and without subtitles on listening and reading skills of EFL Learners. *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, *14*(6), 2545-2553.

Napikul, S., Cedar, P., & Roongrattanakool, D. (2018). The effects of film subtitles on English Listening Comprehension and Vocabulary. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, *7*(6), 104-111.

Nguyen, H. T. M., Nguyen, H. T., Van Nguyen, H., & Nguyen, T. T. T. (2018). 12 Local challenges to global needs in English language education in Vietnam: The perspective of language policy and planning. In *Un (intended) language planning in a Globalising world: Multiple levels of players at work* (pp. 214-233). Sciendo Migration.

Perez, C. P., & Morrison, S. S. (2016). Understanding the challenges of English language learners and increasing college-going culture: Suggestions for school counsellors. *Ideas and Research You Can Use: VISTAS,(18)*, 1-12.

Putra, I. P. B. (2012). Learning vocabulary using English movies with subtitles in SMAK Santo Yoseph. *English Educational Journal of Udayana University*, *1*(1), 1-8.

Rokni, S. J. A., & Ataee, A. J. (2014). Movies in EFL classrooms: With or without subtitles. *The Dawn Journal*, *3*(1), 715-726.

Sari, A., & Sugandi, B. (2015). Teaching English through English movie: Advantages and disadvantages. *The Journal of English Literacy Education: The Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language, 2*(2), 10-15.

Shevchenko, M. V. (2017). The role of subtitles in teaching English with videos at Technical Universities. *Young*, *52*(12).

Shing, S. R., & Yin, L. K. (2014). Using films to teach speaking in the ESL Classroom: A case study. *UNISEL Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *1*(1), 50–56.