
Students' Perceptions Toward the Impact of English Movies on Students' Vocabulary Knowledge

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Abstract

This study explores students' perceptions of the impact of watching English movies on vocabulary acquisition. The research involved interviews with seven 12th-grade students from one state high school in Jakarta, focusing on their experiences with English movies and their effects on vocabulary acquisition. The findings reveal that watching English movies offers significant benefits for language learning, including vocabulary enrichment, contextual learning, and improved pronunciation and accent. Participants showed preferences for specific movie genres such as comedy, romance, and science fiction, which aligned with their interests and motivated them to continue engaging with English media for learning purposes. Despite encountering challenges such as understanding dialogues and accents, students found diverse exposure to language contexts beneficial for enhancing linguistic competence. Strategies such as using subtitles and note-taking were highlighted as effective methods for maximizing vocabulary learning. Overall, personal preferences in movie genres played a crucial role in motivating students and increasing enjoyment in the language learning process. This study provides insights into the positive impact of English movies on vocabulary acquisition and suggests practical strategies for incorporating movie-based learning approaches in language education.

Keywords: English movies, vocabulary knowledge, student perceptions



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1. Introduction

Having a wide range of vocabulary is essential for effective communication in any language. The more extensive a student's vocabulary, the higher their proficiency in reading, influencing their comprehension of discourse and overall reading skills. It allows learners to convey their thoughts and ideas accurately, as well as understand the thoughts and ideas of others. McCarthy as cited in Hestiana (2022), mastering vocabulary is critical in language learning because it is the foundation for all language skills. Among various media options, movies are considered one of the most effective ways to teach English as a second language since they can capture students' attention and focus more effectively compared to other auditory or visual media. Movies offer a wealth of knowledge and captivating visuals that are impactful for language learning, and they have become a common pastime for many individuals. As noted by Mulyadi & Mutmainnah (2015), the impact of English movies as a teaching and learning tool can enhance students' language skills by making the learning process more engaging and enjoyable for both teachers and students. Roy and Sujit (2018) suggest that films can have a positive impact on various areas of language instruction, such as writing, oral skills, grammar, vocabulary, and cultural understanding. Film or movies are an engaging medium that aids students in acquiring vocabulary, (Simamora and Oktaviani, 2020).

By bringing the learning environment to life in the classroom, students can find inspiration in acquiring new English vocabulary through cinematic experiences. Sabouri et al. (2015) suggest that movies play a crucial role in addressing various learning challenges, such as comprehension issues, limited vocabulary, slow reading, poor grammar, and inadequate conversational skills. The appeal of movies extends beyond mere entertainment; the process of learning through watching is not only more enjoyable but also offers numerous advantages. Furthermore, the accessibility of movies is not confined to theaters; students can easily watch them anywhere, whether on a laptop via the internet or CD, or even on a smartphone. Ayu (2020) emphasizes that online movies provide a convenient means for students to learn English effortlessly at any time and from any location.

To investigate the impact of using movies on learners' vocabulary knowledge, Kord et al. (2022), developed a list of vocabulary words for every ten minutes of a movie. The teacher then presented this list to the class during the ten-minute clip, followed by an explanation of the meanings of the words. This approach can be a practical and effective method for

incorporating movies into language instruction and improving learners' vocabulary. Paul and David as cited in Lail (2019), employing instructional media in teaching can enhance the learning process. Therefore, careful consideration and effective utilization of these media should be prioritized, underscoring the significance of teaching media in the overall learning experience. Teachers can utilize movies as authentic learning materials to enhance language acquisition. Through watching movies, learners can encounter new vocabulary words, learn how to use them in different situations and understand their meaning and usage in context. Additionally, the impact of watching English Movies can help learners improve their vocabulary knowledge, as well as their ability to pick up on nuances of the language.

Perception is crucial to study in the present research because it influences how individuals interpret and respond to their environment. Perception is the unique way an individual sees and understands something, and this perspective can differ from person to person. Furthermore, Langton et al. (2014), perceptions are described as the process through which individuals arrange and decipher their sensory impressions to impart significance to their surroundings. According to Harahap (2016), it is asserted that students are complete individuals who exert effort to enhance their potential, often with the guidance of educators or adults. Therefore, Senior high school students are at a critical stage in their language learning journey, as they are preparing to enter higher education or the workforce. Thus, providing them with effective and engaging language learning methods is essential to help them achieve their language goals. English movies offer a fun and exciting way for senior high school students to improve their vocabulary knowledge. Students respond positively to the incorporation of English movies in the classroom, particularly in enhancing their vocabulary acquisition (Mazlan et al., 2022).

Some previous researchers found that the impact of English movies was effective. According to Hoti (2021), English language films have a significant positive impact on students' English language skills in university context, improving by around eighty percent compared to those who do not watch them. Additionally, English students at the university were positively influenced by English films, improving their language skills markedly. Supporting this finding, Fidelia and Rohmah (2023) observed that regular exposure to English-language movies enhanced students' listening comprehension and speaking fluency. In a study focusing on vocabulary acquisition, Teng (2022) found that learners could acquire vocabulary incidentally through watching movies, with greater gains observed in learners who watched movies with captions. Ismaili (2013) reported that using movies in EFL classrooms not only improved students' language skills but also increased their motivation and cultural awareness. Furthermore, Kabooha (2016) demonstrated that incorporating English movies into the curriculum significantly enhanced students' vocabulary knowledge and retention, particularly when combined with targeted vocabulary exercises. These studies

collectively highlight the multifaceted benefits of using English movies in language learning, ranging from improved language skills to increased motivation and cultural understanding.

Some studies already elaborate the impact of English Movies on students' vocabulary knowledge, Sari & Aminatun (2021) found that research brought positive perceptions from students toward the use of English Films to improve vocabulary mastery. In addition, Alolaywi (2023) states that watching movies helped students acquire a great deal of vocabulary. Furthermore, Sabouri et al. (2015) proved that there were significant differences between males and females in learning vocabulary when watching English movies.

Based on the previous studies above, research shows the positive impact of English-language films on students' language skills, with an increase of around eighty percent. This is also seen in university settings, where English language students show significant improvements in language proficiency. English language films are also effective in improving vocabulary mastery, with students providing positive responses. Overall, the use of English films in language learning provides real benefits, especially in improving language skills and vocabulary mastery. The significance of the study could be useful in developing better strategies for learning English words, especially by using movies as a learning tool. These studies inform that English movies can be a valuable, multifaceted tool in language education, potentially offering benefits in vocabulary, overall language skills, and student engagement, while also highlighting areas for further research such as gender-based learning differences. Also, this study has a unique context and involves different individuals, conducted in high schools in Jakarta, and with specific participants.

The purpose of this research is to find students' perspectives on the impact of English movies on students' vocabulary knowledge. In this regard, the following research question is "How do students perceive the impact of English movies on their vocabulary knowledge?" The result of this research should show the students' perspective on the impact of English movies on students' vocabulary knowledge. Understanding students' perspectives on the impact of English movies on their vocabulary knowledge is crucial for several reasons and offers significant contributions to the field of language education. This approach is important as it centers on the learners' experiences, potentially enhancing motivation and engagement in the learning process. It provides real-world validation of the effectiveness of movies as a learning tool and offers unique insights into how students internalize vocabulary through this medium. The contributions of such a study are far-reaching: it can inform teaching practices and curriculum development, justify resource allocation for movie-based learning methods, and aid in developing more personalized and effective vocabulary instruction. Furthermore, it bridges the gap between theoretical research and practical benefits perceived by students. In the specific context of Jakarta, this study could provide valuable cultural insights, serve as a basis for comparative studies in different educational settings, and contribute to improving self-directed learning strategies. Ultimately, by focusing on students' perspectives, this

research can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how English movies impact vocabulary acquisition, potentially resulting in more effective and enjoyable language learning experiences for students.

2. Method

This study used a qualitative design to explore students' perspectives on the impact of English films on their vocabulary knowledge. The research process begins with initial observations to select suitable participants to be interviewed in depth. The initial observation stage was carried out in one state high schools in Jakarta, with a focus on grade 12 students. Researchers observed students' behaviour regarding their use and interest in English language films during the observation period. Aspects to pay attention to include the frequency of watching English language films, enthusiasm in discussions about the film, and indications of the use of English acquired from films in daily conversation. These observations helped researchers identify students with substantial experience and interest in watching English-language films and demonstrated the potential of using films for vocabulary learning.

Based on the results of initial observations, seven participants (four women and three men) were selected to be interviewed. This selection was based on their willingness, availability, and level of experience with English language films seen during the observation. Selected participants were labelled R1 to R7 to protect their identity. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with the seven selected participants. These interviews used open-ended questions that allowed participants to explain their views in detail about their experiences of watching English-language films and their impact on comprehension knowledge. Data analysis was carried out through a systematic coding and thematic analysis process. The data from the interviews was analysed and organized into categories using deductive coding methods, following the themes identified (Naeem et al., 2023). To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this research used several strategies.

Member checking was carried out by asking participants to check the accuracy of the interview transcript and the researcher's interpretation. Peer debriefing is also carried out by discussing the findings with colleagues who are not involved in the research. The entire research process is documented in detail in the form of an audit trail. In addition, data triangulation was carried out by comparing initial observation data and interview data to increase the credibility of the findings. This research method is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how students perceive and use English language films for subject acquisition. By combining initial observations for participant selection and in-depth interviews, this research aims to provide a holistic and in-depth picture of the phenomenon under study.

3. Results and Discussion

In accordance with the research inquiry, the seven participants have been asked to come up with results that can be described and explained. The interviews uncovered important insights concerning the participants' viewpoints, the benefits of watching English-language films for vocabulary enhancement, preferred film genres for language learning, potential challenges in comprehension, strategies for maximizing vocabulary learning, and the influence of personal preferences on motivation to continue watching English films for learning. The following is a narration that includes themes and sub-themes from the data that has been obtained.

3.1. *Benefit of watching English films*

The first findings related to the benefits of watching English films, and most of the students responded that they got the benefits of watching English Films. It enhances vocabulary enhancement, contextual learning and pronunciation accent improvement. Furthermore, the films serve as an enjoyable reservoir of information on diverse subjects. However, students have different answers regarding the sub-theme.

3.1.1. *Vocabulary enhancement*

The findings from participants R1 and R4 underscore the positive impact of watching English films on vocabulary enrichment.

Watching films exposes viewers to a more complex world with uncommon expressions and phrases, enriching their vocabulary and phrases in English, which they find highly beneficial. (Participant 1)

Watching English-language films offers significant benefits for expanding their vocabulary, particularly vocabulary not typically taught in a school environment. (Participant 4)

3.1.2. *Contextual learning*

R3 and R7 explain the benefit of watching English films which emphasizes the connection between the material learned and their condition when learning English by watching English movies.

Watching English-language films is an effective and beneficial method for enhancing vocabulary and films often introduce words rarely encountered in everyday conversations, particularly in formal settings such as schools. (Participant 3)

The advantageous aspect of watching films, especially within the realm of English-language films, where profound meanings often go unnoticed by many. (Participant 7)

3.1.3. Pronunciation and accent improvement

R6 stated the benefit of watching English films, pronunciation, and accent improvement.

Through visual and auditory experiences while watching English-language films, one can directly grasp the pronunciation of words and the meanings of expressions used in specific contexts. (Participant 6)

The students' positive responses regarding the benefits of watching English films underscore its effectiveness as a supplementary learning tool for language acquisition. English films offer a dynamic and engaging approach to vocabulary enrichment, contextual learning, and pronunciation improvement. Beyond traditional methods, English online teaching using original film as teaching resources demonstrated the effectiveness of this method in improving students' learning state and final exam scores compared to traditional online teaching (Jacobs & Maidwell-Smith, 2022). Additionally, the potential of audiovisual media to enhance student learning can make the learning process more enjoyable and easier for students (Bastian et al., 2020). As such, students tend to point out the benefits of the power of movie media to foster overall language proficiency among students and see it as a stimulating and interactive educational activity.

3.2. Types of films

The second findings concern Preferred Types of Films for English Language Learning. Some participants showed similar preferences for certain types of movies, which illustrates a certain pattern in the selection of learning materials. Participant R7 highlighted the tendency of comedy films to provide enjoyable learning experiences. Moreover, Participant R3 expressed a preference for romantic films due to their simpler language and entertaining narratives. Furthermore, Participant R2 revealed that films offered light entertainment and could enhance interest in learning English.

Preference for comedy movies, citing their enjoyment of the amusing and entertaining language used in such films. (Participant 7)

Romantic movies depict everyday life due to their easier-to-understand language, noting that the films they favor often employ language conducive to learning. (Participant 3)

Science fiction or historical films for vocabulary enrichment, suggesting that such genres likely contain numerous unfamiliar words whose meanings could be learned from context, thereby expressing a preference for learning through these types of films. (Participant 2)

Based on the findings, students highlight the importance of considering factors such as linguistic difficulty, personal interest, and the relevance of the theme to everyday language use in selecting effective learning materials. Students are motivated to learn English through

movie genres that offer entertainment, humour, and accessibility. According to Hamdan Alamri Victoria Lowell & Watson (2020) Personalized and interest-based approaches can be an effective strategy for increasing learning engagement and motivation. Comedy and romantic movies provide learners with a fun and engaging way to learn English, Daneshfard et al. (2021) agree that comedy and romantic movies are often cited as a fun and engaging way for learners to improve their English proficiency, particularly for advanced learners who prefer to watch movies without subtitles. On the other hand, science fiction movies are considered a more challenging and interesting way to learn vocabulary, offering a unique opportunity for learners to expand their vocabulary and engage with complex themes and ideas (McCracken, 2023). These genres seem to cater to different learning styles and preferences, highlighting the importance of considering individual differences in language learning motivation.

3.3. Challenges in comprehension

The third findings relate to potential challenges in comprehension. This point explains participants who faced various challenges, including difficulty understanding certain dialogues, encountering unfamiliar words, and lacking subtitles. Watching movies can have both positive and negative impacts on language learning and comprehension. On one hand, exposure to films can introduce learners to new vocabulary and phrases, thereby enriching their linguistic repertoire. Participant R6 highlighted This exposure to new vocabulary within different contexts contributes significantly to their language proficiency development. This point underscores the importance of varied exposure to language, indicating that even familiar words can take on new nuances when encountered in diverse contexts. Additionally, Participant R4 noted challenges such as difficulties in understanding accents and rapid dialogue pace.

Watching movies, especially previously produced ones, often introduces new vocabulary that was previously unknown. Although the meaning may be similar to familiar words, they are often heard or seen in different contexts. (Participant R6)

One of the barriers faced was difficulty understanding the accents in some British action movies. However, being more comfortable with movies that feature American accents or more commonly understood English, did not hinder the comprehension process too much. (Participant R4)

The finding shows that sheds light on the multifaceted nature of language learning through movie watching, particularly concerning comprehension challenges. Participants highlighted various obstacles they encountered, including difficulty understanding certain dialogues, encountering unfamiliar words, and struggling with accents and rapid dialogue pace (Bawden, 2021). These challenges underscore the complexity of language acquisition and the diverse linguistic environments presented in movies. As Kramsch (2014) posits, that

language learning is inherently complex and influenced by various factors, including exposure to diverse linguistic contexts. While watching movies can be beneficial for language learners by exposing them to new vocabulary and phrases, it also presents certain hurdles that can impede comprehension. Participant R6 emphasized the positive aspect of movie watching, noting that exposure to new vocabulary within different contexts significantly contributes to language proficiency development (Elmagasabi et al. 2020). The importance of varied exposure to language, as encountering familiar words in different contexts can deepen understanding and broaden linguistic competence (Al Zoubi, 2018). However, Participant R4's experience highlights the negative aspect of comprehension challenges, particularly concerning understanding accents and rapid dialogue pace. Despite these difficulties, comfort with certain accents or commonly understood English mitigated the hindrance to comprehension (Lin et al. 2013).

3.4. Specific experiences enhancing vocabulary comprehension

The fourth findings related to specific experiences enhancing vocabulary comprehension, several respondents recounted specific moments during movie-watching experiences that significantly improved their vocabulary comprehension. These moments ranged from understanding slang and informal language to realizing improved comprehension even without subtitles, highlighting the effectiveness of immersion in language-rich contexts.

Enjoying the experience of hearing slang or informal words in certain situations while watching a movie is a moment to savor. With it believes that it not only enriches the understanding of informal English but also provides insight into the use of language in everyday contexts. (Participant R4)

Moments where they recognized previously learned vocabulary while watching movies when encountering new vocabulary, it tends to be easier to understand it because of the foundation that has been built previously. (Participant R5)

Feel more confident in communicating in English after watching the movie frequently. and can answer questions about synonyms of English words, and also when face-to-face with native speakers, can communicate well. (Participant R1)

The findings gathered from the interviews shed light on the specific experiences that contribute to enhancing vocabulary comprehension, particularly through movie-watching experiences. Respondents recounted moments where they observed a significant improvement in their understanding of vocabulary, ranging from grasping slang and informal language to achieving better comprehension even without subtitles. These experiences underscore the effectiveness of immersion in language-rich contexts. Participant R4 highlighted the enjoyment derived from encountering slang or informal words while watching movies. This enjoyment was not merely superficial but was coupled with a deeper appreciation for the enrichment of understanding informal English and gaining insights into

everyday language usage. This finding aligns with research suggesting that exposure to authentic language use, such as slang and informal speech, facilitates language learning and comprehension (Tong et al., 2022). Moreover, Participant R5 noted moments of recognition of previously learned vocabulary while watching movies. The observed improvement in vocabulary underlines the efficacy of movies as a valuable tool for English language learners, especially in the area of basic vocabulary acquisition (Vachanaratna & Suriyatham, 2022). This observation emphasizes the importance of building a strong vocabulary foundation, which serves as a scaffold for acquiring new words. Participant R1 demonstrated heightened English communication confidence after frequent movie-watching, evident in proficiently answering questions on English synonyms and effective interaction with native speakers. This emphasizes the impact of movies on language proficiency and confidence (Asim et al., 2021).

3.5. Strategies for maximizing vocabulary learning

The next findings are about strategies for maximizing vocabulary learning. Several respondents attributed this to the immersive experience, iconic scenes, consistent exposure, and the presence of subtitles. In line with that learning vocabulary while watching films is a popular and effective strategy among participants, with two primary subcategories emerging: the use of subtitles and note-taking.

3.5.1. Use of subtitles

Use of subtitles in the realm of language acquisition, subtitles emerge as a powerful tool for expanding vocabulary. R1, R3, and R5 provide visual and auditory cues, and subtitles enhance comprehension and retention.

During movie-watching sessions, the typical practice involves utilizing English subtitles. In cases where subtitles are unavailable, following the film through audio proves feasible. (Participant R1)

The initial strategy involved Indonesian subtitles, gradually transitioning to English subtitles, and ultimately attempting to watch without any subtitles. (Participant R3)

One method for vocabulary acquisition involves watching English-subtitled films. Apart from aiding in comprehension, this approach also enhances pronunciation skills and facilitates understanding word meanings and definitions. (Participant R5)

3.5.2. Note-Taking

Effective vocabulary learning requires more than just memorizing new words. R2 and R7 used proven effective strategies, including using notes to record new words encountered in context.

My strategies include noting down unfamiliar words, especially those with unclear spellings. my focus is to note down the audible parts, especially for difficult words. (Participant R2)

My strategy is to focus on the subtitles. Sometimes, when encountering unfamiliar words, I note them down or write them in notes for better translation later on. (Participant R7)

The findings underscore the effectiveness of utilizing films as a means to maximize vocabulary learning in language acquisition, focusing on the use of subtitles and note-taking as primary strategies. Participants emphasized the significance of subtitles in their vocabulary-learning journey while watching films. Subtitles not only provide visual and auditory cues but also enhance comprehension and retention of vocabulary. According to Lei (2023), This aligns with previous research suggesting that subtitles can help significantly in the second language development process. Moreover, the transition from native language subtitles to English subtitles, starting with familiar subtitles and gradually moving towards English subtitles allows learners to challenge themselves incrementally, ultimately leading to improved language skills. As stated by Sadiku (2017) Besides helping to learn the mother tongue, the use of subtitles can promote better vocabulary acquisition, both for short and long-term recall. Regarding the importance of note-taking as a supplementary strategy for vocabulary acquisition, Barcroft (2015) emphasizes that recording vocabulary and the context in which it occurs can help learners remember the meaning of words better.

3.6. Influence of personal preferences

The last findings related to the influence of personal preferences on motivation to continue watching English language movies for learning. Personal preferences regarding movie genres play an important role in motivating respondents to continue watching English-language movies for learning. The alignment of movie preferences with individual interests increased the enjoyment of the learning process, thus increasing the motivation to engage with English media regularly. Furthermore, the participants acknowledged the connection between their learning goals and the content they consumed, recognizing the importance of aligning their interests with their language learning objectives.

The importance of enjoying what you are watching to understand and focus when learning vocabulary. (Participant R2)

Motivation to master English not only for college admission, but also to prepare for future opportunities, such as scholarships, and to actively improve English skills by watching movies in the language during school. (Participant R4)

The findings suggest that personal preferences in terms of movie genres play an important role in motivating students to continue watching English-language movies with learning objectives. When the film matches individual interests and preferences, it can increase

enjoyment in the learning process, which in turn increases motivation to engage regularly with English media. These results are in line with previous research that emphasizes the importance of selecting learning materials that are interesting and relevant to student's interests to increase motivation and engagement in the learning process. As stated (Samad & Arifin, 2024) the importance of developing interesting learning materials in the integration of technology in education, suggests that incorporating engaging and relevant materials can enhance student motivation and engagement. When students enjoy the content they learn, they tend to be more engaged, focused, and motivated to continue learning. In addition, the findings also revealed that participants recognized the connection between their learning goals and the content they consume. students recognized the importance of aligning their interests with their language learning goals. This is in line with pedagogical principles that emphasize relevance and contextualization in the learning process. Therefore, (Gómez, 2016) agree that interest and language level can significantly affect motivation, engagement, and contextualization/interpretation.

4. Conclusion

This study was to investigate students' perceptions toward the impact of English movies on their vocabulary knowledge. Specifically, this research shows that watching English movies provides significant benefits for language improvement, particularly in terms of vocabulary enrichment, contextual learning, and improved pronunciation and accent. The selection of movie genres that match individual preferences and interests is crucial in motivating students to continue watching English-language movies for learning purposes, with comedy, romance, and science fiction genres considered to be popular and effective choices. Despite comprehensive challenges such as understanding specific dialog, discovering new vocabulary, and struggling with accents and dialog speed, diverse exposure to different language contexts can enrich linguistic understanding and competence. Specific experiences such as understanding slang, informality, and increased comprehension without subtitles demonstrate the effectiveness of immersion in language-rich contexts in improving vocabulary comprehension. A key strategy to maximize vocabulary learning is the use of subtitles and recording new vocabulary in context, with the transition from mother tongue subtitles to target language subtitles gradually facilitating the learning process effectively. Personal preferences in terms of movie genres also play an important role in motivating students with alignment between movie preferences and individual interests increasing enjoyment in the learning process as well as motivation to engage regularly with English-language media.

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