



Postgraduate Students' Perceptions Towards Using Subtitled Movies in Improving English Language

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ABSTRACT

Educators are always searching for interesting and innovative ways to help language learners—especially adults—to learn language effectively, as language acquisition is often challenging for them. Nowadays, one of the most effective ways to learn languages is by using movies with subtitles. This is because subtitled movies provide entertainment and contribute to many language inputs, as the combination of audiovisual elements and text in them can create an authentic learning experience. Therefore, this study explores the effect of subtitled movies on English language acquisition among postgraduate students. The research employed a qualitative method where semi-structured interviews were conducted by interviewing 12 postgraduate students from a local university in Malaysia. The findings revealed that subtitled movies are



effective in language learning, especially in improving vocabulary, understanding accent and slang, and enhancing language skills such as pronunciation, writing and reading. Hence, this study demonstrates the potential of subtitled movies as valuable learning material in language learning, suggesting their integration into the education curriculum and contributing to the growing research on the use of subtitled movies in language learning for postgraduate students. This study may also provide insightful understanding for educators and policymakers regarding creative teaching strategies in the field of language education.

Keywords: Postgraduate students, subtitled movies, language learning, second language

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the perceptions of using subtitled movies to improve English language acquisition among postgraduate students in one of the local universities in Malaysia. With the increasing globalization and the importance of English as a lingua franca, many students worldwide place a high value on learning and acquiring the English language including Malaysian students. Therefore, effective language acquisition strategies are essential and educators are always looking for interesting and effective ways to help learners learn the language. Björnsson and Andersson (2019) mention that there is an expectation that English language teaching and learning should be varied and relevant to the interests of the learners and their daily lives. Today, one of the rising ways to improve students' English language acquisition is by using subtitled movies.

Roslim et al. (2021) report that many scholars have addressed the increasing importance of using movies to enhance second language teaching and learning. This is because movies allow learners to engage, learn, acquire, experience, and improve their language skills. Additionally, movies can assist students in integrating the development of their speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills, enhancing their communicative competence (Bellalem et al., 2018). Movies enable teachers to introduce variety and reality to the classroom, and the discussions based on the movie content enable students to contribute their own experiences and background knowledge (Kusumawati, 2018). Furthermore, in this era of modern technology, almost everyone has access to watch their favorite movies unlimitedly, be it on television at home, at the cinema, on the internet, or on the phone. A film, also known as a movie or a motion picture, is a collection of still images on film that are rapidly projected onto a screen using light (Andrew et al., 2023). Besides, the definition of a movie, as stated by Hornby (2010), is a story recorded as a set of moving pictures with sound to be shown at the cinema or on television (Anggraeni et al., 2018). The authors further explain that a movie can be concluded as one of the literary forms that include story, play, history, and culture that is recorded as a video and shown on television, cinema, or other broadcast media where entertainment is the main purpose. Thus, using movies offers a unique language-learning experience by combining audiovisual elements such as pictures, videos, and sounds compared to the traditional language-learning method.

Movies with subtitles refer to those movies that have captions or subtitles in a language that is different from the one used for the original audio track. According to Hurt and Wilder (1998), the definition of subtitles is the display of translated language in a movie in the form of



titles, usually at the bottom of an image or shot on the screen (Matkivska, 2014). These subtitles serve as a written translation of the dialogue spoken and enable an accented language to become intelligible to any viewers (Kusumawati, 2018), even if they are not proficient in the language used in the movie. Therefore, it is easier for learners to learn and acquire a language when it is understood in the context of watching subtitled movies that reflect real-life situations. Movies with subtitles are proven to have a strong impact on learning a second language in general (Bellalem et al., 2018). In fact, Kusumawati (2018) states that the use of subtitled movies is more effective in enhancing overall comprehension compared to non-subtitled movies. Moreover, movies with subtitles provide learners with a visual picture of spoken language, which aids in a deeper understanding of the language and improves language acquisition.

However, several studies have also highlighted the disadvantages of using subtitled movies. To illustrate, a study by Shahril and Abdullah (2022) found that low-proficiency learners might face a problem where they cannot understand a word the first time they hear it, and they require more time to do so. This finding is aligned with the result of the study by Napikul et al. (2018), where a student did not comprehend the subtitle even by observing the gestures and body language from the movie. Nevertheless, although there are some flaws, without a doubt past research has demonstrated the benefits of using subtitled movies, where learners are more likely to learn and acquire the English language, especially for postgraduate students who want to improve their English language acquisition. Postgraduate students can benefit most from using subtitled movies as a learning material to improve English language acquisition because of their various benefits, which include vocabulary development, language skills improvement, cultural awareness, and more (Alhai, 2023; Bostanci, 2022). Movies with subtitles offer contextual learning, motivation, and self-paced learning where students can choose movies that align with their interests and language proficiency levels. Subtitled movies provide a dynamic and interesting method of learning languages that is ideally suitable to postgraduate students' advanced academic and professional needs, considering that movies arouse viewers' curiosity (Karray & Debernitz, 2017). As a result, students can become more motivated and can even overcome some of their nervousness about not knowing the language by watching movies to learn the language (Etemadi, 2012). With the presence of subtitles, it helps students understand the conversation and the story of the movie. Therefore, this study aims to explore postgraduate students' perceptions of using subtitled movies to improve English language acquisition.

Additionally, English language acquisition has been a major challenge for many students throughout the years. Not every learner is keen on the traditional language learning methods, especially for adult learners, as they can be boring and lack interesting input in a lesson. The traditional methods that emphasize memorizing and repetition do not address the learning styles and strategies of all students (Bostanci, 2022). Hence, educators should incorporate learning strategies for the learners to diversify their language learning experience. We must acknowledge that students or learners now do not tolerate writing on paper as much, making teaching or learning a language a challenging task (Anas & Zakaria, 2019). Thus, it hinders them from learning and acquiring the language to the fullest. Certainly, this has attracted much interest among researchers, and many researchers have studied studies on the topic of movies and language learning until now (Alluri, 2018; Björnsson & Andersson, 2019; Roslim et al., 2021; Uzzaman & Roy, 2019). However, the use of subtitled movies in improving English language acquisition remains an area of concern. As stated by Shahril and Abdullah (2022), this topic is



still understudied in Malaysia, especially among young adult learners, who are postgraduate students. Anas and Zakaria (2019) reported that there are hundreds of studies conducted outside of Malaysia (Ambele & Abam, 2020; Bellalem et al., 2018; Bostanci, 2022; Kusumawati, 2018; Sadiku, 2018) that explored more on the effectiveness of having subtitles in audio-visual materials, their study has determined that it is best to have this extended, including to the Malaysian context. Ünal and Ekmekçi (2022) suggested that more research should employ qualitative methods to get a deeper understanding of learners' perceptions of the use of subtitles in language learning. In addition, Yaacob et al. (2021) even suggested that an interesting research topic that can be conducted is exploring whether English or Malay subtitles are more effective as learning media. Respectively, more reliable and credible research regarding the topic of subtitles and English language learning is needed in Malaysia. Hence, two research objectives of this study are to investigate the benefits of subtitled movies as English learning materials for postgraduate students and to determine the drawbacks of using subtitled movies in improving the English language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For adult learners, SLA is a rewarding and complicated process that calls for an effective and comprehensive approach. Their cognitive abilities, prior language knowledge and language learning strategies all have a significant impact on the course of their language acquisition. To add to this, Khasinah (2014) specifies that factors like age, motivation, intelligence, attitude, aptitude, personality, and cognitive style are all contributing to the success of SLA. Understanding the complexities of SLA for adult learners is essential for educators, language programs, or institutions to create efficient and effective language learning experiences. Language learning can be more difficult after puberty because the brain cannot adapt (Richards et al., 1985). Adult learners' potential can be increased and perhaps provide them with the language learning material they need to succeed in their SLA by implementing the learning strategies in SLA such as by using subtitled movies. Therefore, by following the learning strategies in SLA, adult learners can learn and acquire their second language to the fullest extent.

Besides, learning a second language or second language acquisition opens many doors in terms of improving communication, exposure to different cultures, promoting intercultural understanding, or just adding more value to oneself. In order to acquire a second language, many strategies of SLA have been developed. Learning strategies of SLA are important to apply to language learners so they can maximize their language learning opportunities. Also, second language learners may benefit from individualized language learning strategies to address and manage their own inner states (Teng, 2023). The definition of strategies is to set goals, decide on actions to achieve those goals and mobilize resources to execute those actions. Accordingly, Rose (2015) defines language learning strategies as the actions and processes deployed by language learners to learn and use a language more effectively. In other words, language learning strategies are the actions or methods for students to take and use in their language learning. One of the effective strategies of SLA is the contextual learning strategy. Davtyan (2014) mentions that contextual learning, or CL, is a learning system that links brain activity to create a meaningful pattern. CL accomplishes this by relating the academic material to the context of real life. In terms of language learning, CL involves understanding and acquiring a language within



real-life situations and authentic contexts. CL is crucial because it aids in storing long-term memory, which will help the learners apply the language they have learned in their lives. Besides, CL enables teachers or educators to link the content that students learn academically with real-world situations that they often encounter. As a result, this will inspire language learners to use their language in real-life situations. An example of contextual learning is using movies with subtitles.

Over the years, subtitled movies have become one of the most effective ways for language learners to improve their English language acquisition, especially adult learners. As evidence, the findings of Birulés and Soto-Faraco (2016) show that there was a significant improvement in the listening scores of English adult learners after watching a TV episode in English with subtitles. Language learners are exposed to the use of natural language in various social and diverse cultural contexts when they watch movies with subtitles. Sadiku (2018) states that movies can influence the understanding of vocabulary usage in real contexts while offering authentic settings for vocabulary acquisition. This exposure provides learners with contextual cues and visual and auditory input that helps with language acquisition and comprehension.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is Moreno and Mayer's (1999) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. According to Moreno and Mayer (1999), learning is an active process of filtering, organizing, choosing, and integrating information through two distinct channels: the auditory and the visual. They indicate that people learn more from words and visuals than from words alone (Tsai & Lin, 2021). Accordingly, this means that information given in both text and visuals can lead to deeper learning compared to just the text only. Therefore, this shows that subtitled movies, an example of audio-visual channels, can provide various benefits in assisting learners in improving their language acquisition such as in listening, reading, speaking, etc. However, Moreno and Mayer (1999) add that each channel has a limited channel capacity which can also posit drawbacks of using subtitled movies in language learning. This is because when information is delivered concurrently via several channels, it overwhelms a learner's memory and impairs understanding (Hu, 2014). Hence, subtitled movies have pros and cons when it comes to using them as learning material in language learning.

There are many pros of using subtitled movies for improving language acquisition. Firstly, watching subtitled movies can enhance language skills. Movies help language learners develop their reading and listening comprehension as well as their social skills and understanding of the cultures of native speakers (Alolaywi, 2023). Language learners simultaneously improve their reading and listening skills as they read the subtitles and listen to the spoken conversation in the movies. In several eye-tracking studies by d'Ydewalle and Van de Poel (1999) and Danan (2004), readers naturally read the subtitles whenever they are in the movies (Vulchanova et al., 2015). This finding suggests that audiovisual and verbal textual information are processed in parallel. This two-way input improves language competency by enabling language comprehension for the learners. Next, the benefit of subtitled movies is vocabulary development. Movies with subtitles expose learners to a wide variety of vocabulary, including idioms, expressions, and new terminology. Sadiku (2018) explains that movies are an example of audio-visual channels, with subtitles providing learners with a lot of vocabulary that must first be noticed by the learners and then processed. Moreover, learners can improve their pronunciation and intonation through subtitled movies. This is because movies enable learners to



mimic and correct their pronunciation by listening to native speakers. “Subtitles provide just-in-time written lexical information that can help disambiguate and parse phonemic information” (Birulés & Soto-Faraco, 2016).

Although there are a lot of pros of using subtitled movies in language acquisition, there are several cons which include neglecting a certain language skill, not having access to the subtitled movies and being exposed to profanity. Essentially students may become more dependent on their reading abilities than their listening comprehension because they will be more interested in reading the subtitles than in hearing the words spoken. This will hinder the acquisition and development of listening skills. Stewart and Pertusa (2004) say that using English subtitles does not motivate learners to apply their prior listening skills; rather, it allows them to rely on reading English instead of making the additional effort necessary to follow what they hear in the target language. Not only that, if the movie is spoken in L2 but the subtitle is in the student’s first language (L1), the usage of subtitles might be irrelevant as students may stop attempting to understand spoken language and instead become reliant on the written translation, which prevents the main purpose of language acquisition: learning a new language. Consequently, the perceptions of using subtitled movies in language acquisition are varied and progressive and are influenced by individual, cultural, and educational factors. The idea that watching films with subtitles can improve language acquisition lies at the core of these views. For students, using subtitled movies as a learning medium for language acquisition or language learning has mainly been perceived positively. Many research studies have indicated that watching subtitled movies has enhanced students' language skills (Andriani & Angelina, 2020; Fomichenko, 2022; Shahril & Abdullah, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

This section will explain the elements of research methodology employed in this research. It outlines the approach and strategies to be employed, which include the research design and strategy chosen, the setting and sample, instrumentation, data collection, and the data analysis that will be used to address the research questions and achieve the research objectives.

Research Design and Participants

This research employed a qualitative method, which includes conducting semi-structured interviews to find out the students' perceptions towards using subtitled movies in English language acquisition. The participants in this study consisted of 12 postgraduate students from an English language course at a local university in Malaysia, which is Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM). The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. Rationally, English postgraduate students were chosen because it is believed they know the best way to learn the English language since they are adults themselves and have already developed critical thinking skills and personal learning strategies. Besides, due to their advanced studies, they can reflect and share their educational experiences, which makes their perspectives very useful for evaluating the effectiveness of subtitled movies in language learning. Considering the aim of this study is to identify postgraduate students’ perceptions towards using subtitled movies to improve



their English language acquisition, the participants chosen met these three criteria to be able to get the data for this research. The three criteria were:

- 1) A postgraduate student
- 2) Majoring in the English language course
- 3) Watch movies with subtitles

Instrumentation and Materials

The instrument utilized to collect the data from the respondents is an interview question with 7 open-ended questions that cannot just be answered with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The interview demands that the respondents answer in-depth and clarify their answers. The interview questions from Alolaywi (2023) and Shahril and Abdullah (2022) all developed instruments that served as the basis for the interview questions of this study. However, for this study, there were some changes made to a few questions to fit the specific context and research objectives of the study. Table 1 displays the questions adapted for the interview.

Table 1. Interview Questions

Item	Question
1.	Do you watch movies and how often do you watch them?
2.	What language(s) do you usually watch the content in?
3.	When watching English movies or any movies, do you use subtitles as well and in what language?
4.	Do you think that watching movies with subtitles is effective for language acquisition and how?
5.	Have you noticed any improvements in your language skills as a result of watching subtitled movies and in what way subtitled movies improve your language acquisition?
6.	Do you find subtitled movies to be a comfortable and supportive learning material?
7.	Overall, would you suggest other students watch movies with subtitles to improve their English language acquisition? Why?

Data Collection and Analysis

Once the participants were identified, the interviews were conducted online via the Microsoft Teams platform. The audio and the online interview with each respondent were recorded for documentation and ease of transcription. The audio of the interview was then transcribed manually with the help of Microsoft Team’s transcription and put into separate files to be uploaded to the software NVIVO. Then, the data analysis was done using thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke’s (2006) model of thematic analysis method. Their thematic analysis method is a process that consists of six steps: 1) become familiar with the data; 2) generate codes; 3) generate themes; 4) review the themes; 5) define and name the themes; and 6) locate exemplars. Therefore, once the data was collected, it was analyzed using the thematic analysis method with the help of NVIVO software. The interview transcription files were uploaded to NVIVO for coding and categorization purposes to identify and generate the themes for this research. Hence, phrases, words, and paragraphs in the transcripts pertaining to the research



objectives were coded and categorized. The analyzed data was then exported to an Excel sheet document in the form of a codebook to review the themes. After that, the data analysis was revised and compared to determine and name the precise themes that would answer the research questions of this study.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research and its results, this study adapted the interview questions from Alolaywi (2023), and Shahril and Abdullah (2022). Then, member checking is conducted. Once done with the transcription, the transcriptions of the interview were shared with the respondents for them to verify whether what they had said during the interview was accurately captured. Besides, to maintain transparency and ensure validity, a detailed audit trail is kept for all the research-related activities, such as the audio recordings, transcriptions, and coding book. Lastly, the interview questions that were used to collect the data for this study were checked by two qualified research supervisors, who are lecturers at UiTM, to validate the reliability and validity of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 12 respondents, consisting of postgraduate students, were interviewed in this research to find out their perceptions towards using subtitled movies to improve the English language. From the data analyzed using NVIVO software, two main themes were found which are; 1) the advantages and 2) the disadvantages of using subtitled movies in improving language acquisition. The themes will then be discussed in depth to answer the research question with support from past research that has been done. Figure 1 below presents the themes and subthemes of the advantages and disadvantages of using subtitled movies in language learning.

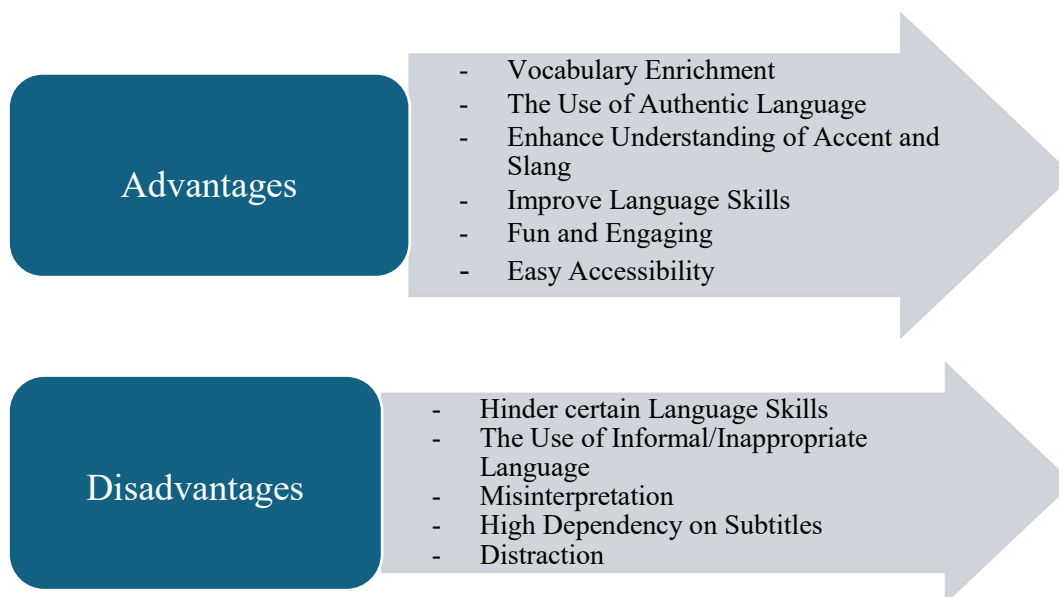


Figure 1. The Themes and Sub-themes Found in the Data Analysis



Based on Figure 1, there are several advantages and disadvantages of using subtitled movies in language learning as suggested by the participants. The sub-themes of the advantages extracted were; vocabulary enrichment, the use of authentic language, enhancing understanding of accent and slang, improving pronunciation, fun and engaging, and easy technology accessibility. As for the disadvantages, the sub-themes were; hindered language skills, the use of informal or inappropriate language, misinterpretation, being too dependent on the subtitles, and distraction.

Research Question 1: How does using subtitled movies benefit postgraduate students in improving language learning?

As it has been discussed, subtitled movies provide numerous benefits for improving language learning. The advantages of using subtitled movies in language learning found in this study are; improving vocabulary, using authentic language, using accents or slang, improving pronunciation, enhancing communication, improving language skills, being fun and engaging, and easy accessibility.

“I am able to really expand my vocabulary knowledge because I really read. So, movies and subtitles are like one of the main source of vocabulary knowledge for me.” – Participant 5

“So, you can... you can... you can watch the movie and kind of like learn the word the new words and you can also see the context at which it’s used.” – Participant 6

“and then you will learn new phrases every single time you watch a new movie.” – Participant 7

The most prominent advantage that can be noted based on the analysis of this study is the expansion of the vocabulary. Almost all participants mentioned that when watching movies with subtitles, they improve their vocabulary. This is because different types of movies use different types of words, and the repetition of words that the learners’ encounter will expand their vocabulary. Furthermore, because subtitled movies come with both audio and visual components, not only are learners able to encounter the new words, but they can also look at the context of the movies, adding to their comprehension of the words. “there will be an exposure to the natural language usage and also the cultural references. I would say that” uttered Participant 3. The use of natural or authentic language in the subtitled movies, along with the real-life context, will help learners understand how to use the words properly and apply them in their daily conversations. Accordingly, learners can enhance their communication because they get to see how people in the movies communicate.

Consequently, several participants mentioned that they are able to learn certain accents and slang through subtitled movies. This corresponds to Aksu-Ataç and Köprülü-Günay (2018) findings that students agree that watching subtitled movies teaches them the proper pronunciation of words as well as idioms, proverbs, slang terms, and accents and dialects in the target language. Although accents or slang are informal language and perhaps not good for formal language learning, Participant 5 said it is still necessary to know the language and have the knowledge. With the use of subtitles in movies, it will help learners understand the accent or slang because not all words are pronounced according to how they are spelled. Some words are



pronounced differently because of the accent and slang, so the learners will not get confused. Besides, one participant mentioned that learners can learn about idiom expressions, which aligns with the findings of Ünal and Ekmekçi (2022), who revealed that students' admit watching subtitled movies can aid in their acquisition of proverbs and idioms in the target language. The use of subtitles also assists in the comprehension of the movies and is a useful practice to get acquainted with various accents of English around the world (Sabouri et al., 2015). If the learners were to travel to English-speaking countries that use the English language with accents and slang, they surely could make use of that knowledge when speaking to native speakers.

“listening on how the words are spoken by native speakers will improve on my own pronunciations of said words” – Participant 1

“people get to really see how to pronounce the word. So I think that one is very important because when you just read the words, you don't know how to pronounce it.” – Participant 2

“the pronunciation and also intonation you you listen to the characters talking right like you know how they pronounce certain things.” – Participant 3

Next, referring to the excerpts above, as the learners are able to hear and listen to the audios of the movies, they are able to improve their pronunciation of a word. This is because the words uttered in the subtitled movies are by native speakers, so it may be the proper way to pronounce them; however, as stated previously, sometimes they may have been pronounced differently due to the accents or slang. This can be verified with the results of Ambele and Abam (2020), where it can be said that subtitled movies can aid in pronunciation effectively. They further add that subtitles provide instant feedback and positive reinforcement that helps to build confidence in the learners, which in turn makes them feel free and motivated to read and repeat the words from the subtitles of the movies they watch with the proper pronunciation and accent they have learned.

Subsequently, by watching subtitled movies, learners can improve their language skills in writing, reading, and listening. Given the unique combination of subtitled movies, Participant 1 pointed out that he improves his writing skills from watching subtitled movies because he gets to read the subtitles and is able to visualize how he can use them in a sentence. As for participant 8, she informally picked up the words that she saw in the subtitled movies, and as a result, she uses them in her writing or speaking when the situation fits. Furthermore, watching movies with subtitles also allows learners to understand the language structure, including grammar and sentence formation. A few participants mentioned that their grammar improved by watching subtitled movies. This corroborates Wahono and Qodriah's (2019) conclusion that English movie subtitles could improve the students' writing skills, as proved by the students' scores in their study.

In terms of reading skills, learners are able to read the subtitles when watching movies, which encourages reading practices and helps in reading and comprehension altogether. This can be supported by Mohamed et al. (2023), who believe that the respondents to their study believe that watching subtitled movies can drastically improve their reading comprehension because they can understand the words uttered easily by connecting them with subtitles. Moreover, three participants stated that due to the movies and subtitles running simultaneously, it makes them



learn how to read fast without missing out on the context of the movies, making learners better at reading skills and reading at a fast pace. As for listening skills, there was not much input from the participants regarding how subtitled movies assist them in listening skills, yet some of them did mention that movies improve their listening skills because they can hear clearly what the speakers are saying in the movies. Nevertheless, subtitled movies improve listening skills and this can be associated with many past studies (Birulés & Soto-Faraco, 2016; Mohamed et al., 2023; Oktapiani et al., 2024). In addition, none of the participants indicate in depth regarding the improvement in speaking skills other than that they get to improve their pronunciation and enhance their communication.

Last but not least, subtitled movies have the advantage of being fun and engaging for language learning. They provide a full and interesting storyline that increases viewer engagement and makes learners want to continue watching the subtitled movies, and as stated before, subtitled movies provide motivation for learners to learn a second language. Participant 6 also expressed that using subtitled movies as learning material creates an interesting and fun learning environment because movies are made to be attention-grabbing. Besides, these days, subtitled movies are easy to access. The learners can easily find movies with subtitles on the internet and watch them in their own comfort, depending on, for instance, what type of movies they want to watch, at what time, and with whom. This is a privilege for learners because they can watch the subtitled movies whenever and wherever they want and, at the same time, improve their English language. Lastly, based on observation of the findings, most participants mentioned that they somewhat learned about the culture of the native speakers, considering that subtitled movies provide the cultures of real-life situations.

Research Question 2: What are the drawbacks of subtitled movies as learning materials to improve the English language?

Despite having a lot of advantages, movies with subtitles also have disadvantages that are important to discuss, such as hindering certain language skills, the use of informal or inappropriate language, misinterpretation, high dependency on subtitles, and distraction.

“So, since you are listening and you are watching the movie you are listening to the audio it’s but your focus will be on the subtitles.” – Participant 4

“Yeah, about listening like that might be the disadvantage that we develop while depending on subtitles.” – Participant 8

“But if since with the presence of subtitles, I kind of like read more instead of listening more” – Participant 10

The first disadvantage of subtitled movies is that they hinder language skills, mostly listening and speaking skills, even though in the previous subtopic it was mentioned that subtitled movies improve listening skills. It is also vital to take note that half of the participants agreed that movies with subtitles hinder listening skills. This is because when they are watching subtitled movies, they are too focused on reading the subtitles instead of listening. The same goes for speaking skills, because to improve speaking skills, learners must practice speaking, and they cannot do that by just watching subtitled movies. One participant claimed that subtitled movies may limit the vocabulary of learners depending on the types of subtitled movies that they



are watching. This is rather true because, for example, if the learners are constantly watching action movies that do not involve many dialogues or language, they may gain nothing out of it.

Another disadvantage that is strongly linked to hindering language skills is that learners are too dependent on subtitles. Relying too much on subtitles may divide the learners' attention between the subtitles and the action in the movies, increasing the cognitive load and reducing comprehension (Alotaibi et al., 2023). This study is parallel to Lei's (2023) conclusion that watching subtitles is similar to reading books if too much focus is placed on the subtitles, which will impair listening comprehension. "Some people won't even bother to listen to the dialogue spoken by the characters in the movie. And I know some people who actually do that. They watch movies in mute because they only read the subtitles". Some people are so used to reading subtitles to the point that they do not even bother to listen to the audio of the subtitled movies and watch them on mute because reading subtitles is enough for them. Participant 4 stated that he will unconsciously avoid listening to the movies and focus more on subtitles if the language spoken uses accents or slang that he is not familiar with, and this prevents the improvement of listening skills.

"if the movie again is not using the proper grammar or proper sentence structure in the language, then I might start using the wrong form of the language because of how it is subtitled." – Participant 4

"there are profanities used in movies, so if they have weak general or language knowledge, then it will be a problem because they might use that without knowing that it's profanity." – Participant 5

"you are at the mercy of the movie. So, like if the movie has, you know, explicit language, then you would also be consuming that if the movie has." – Participant 6

The next disadvantage is the use of informal or inappropriate language in subtitled movies. The use of this type of language will surely misconstrue the purpose of using subtitled movies, which is to improve the English language. Learners who initially have low language proficiency might not know how to differentiate between good and bad words, and this can pose challenges to them as they are not familiar with the meaning, the context, and the usage of the words. For example, someone who grew up watching gangster movies his whole life would use gangster types of words, which are not suitable for daily conversation. Now and then, this informal or inappropriate language and subtitles in general may not be translated accurately or appropriately, which can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

In this study, the disadvantage of misinterpretation was mentioned by half of the participants. Subtitles are made by real people, and undeniably, there is a risk of mistranslation. The nuances, jokes, idioms, or references that are specific to the original context may be lost in translation due to the cultural and linguistic differences between the source and the target language. To illustrate, participant 1 said that some of the subtitles in anime movies are not accurately translated because they are translated by fans who come from various backgrounds, and sometimes the subtitles are heavily biased on certain topics, especially sensitive ones like politics or religion, according to the translator's view and belief. This is in line with Li and Liang's (2019) claim that the quality and accuracy of the subtitles depend on the translator's skills and knowledge. Therefore, language learners who love watching anime may learn the



wrong language structure in the subtitles due to the wrong translation. Likewise, it can also be concerning if the learners get brainwashed into a harmful or dangerous mentality because of the translation of the subtitles. This correlates with the study of Javandalasta et al. (2018) where mistranslations can lead to biased interpretations, strengthening damaging stereotypes and ideological differences, and influencing public opinion as the mistranslation and misinterpretation of the Copenhagen shooting report in 2015 misrepresented characters and their affiliations.

Finally, the last disadvantage is the distraction of subtitles in the movies. Several participants indicated that subtitles in movies are a distraction, as they distract the learners from hearing the words spoken and the context of the movies. One participant stated that this is because the subtitles are placed at the bottom of the movie; when it is down on the screen, viewers may not be able to resist reading the subtitles, although they do not want to read them. Hence, they cannot enjoy their movies because of the subtitles. Participants 6 and 11 brought up that a monolingual country like America has a hard time watching movies with subtitles because they are so used to just listening to the movie itself without the need to use subtitles. Consequently, they perceive subtitles as a distraction, especially when watching a movie that is not in English, because they are missing out on the movie scenes and need to focus on the subtitles to understand the context of the movie. This corresponds to Ballard (2023) that found 53% of Americans prefer not to have subtitles on while 38% prefer to have subtitles. Therefore, using subtitled movies as learning material to improve the English language may not be suitable for learners who are uncomfortable and easily distracted when having subtitles. Regardless, learners can still improve their language skills by just watching movies without subtitles.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that using subtitled movies helps improve English language learning. To conclude, the study has demonstrated that movies with subtitles can greatly improve the English language proficiency of postgraduate students. Using subtitled movies as learning material provides an engaging and interactive medium for language learning, creating a more immersive and contextual learning environment. This study has successfully answered the two research questions that were proposed in this study. Despite the disadvantages, the findings show that postgraduate students perceive subtitled movies to be effective as they provide many advantages in improving their language skills, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, reading and writing skills, and overall comprehension of the English language. Although subtitled movies can be valuable learning materials, it is important to note that they cannot replace the traditional learning method in the classroom as to become proficient in a language, learners will need to master all language skills. Therefore, merely relying on subtitled movies can hinder the improvement of some language skills, especially listening skills which are crucial components of language learning.

Moreover, the implications of this study can influence both pedagogical methods and language education policy in the future by incorporating subtitled movies in language learning. Firstly, the positive perceptions of postgraduate students about using subtitled movies to improve the English language highlight how important it is for educators to incorporate multimedia materials into their lesson plans. This not only diversifies the language learning materials but



also accommodates the varied learning styles and preferences of students. Secondly, the findings of this study could influence curriculum designers and policymakers to integrate subtitled movies as one of the activities in the language learning curriculum. This will require the development of guidelines for the effective use of movies with subtitles in language classrooms, including the selection of appropriate movies for learning, the incorporation of subtitled movies with other learning activities, and the assessment of learning inputs gained from watching the subtitled movies. Finally, this study may create opportunities for further research. The effectiveness of subtitled movies can be explored in many different settings, such as using subtitled movies for different educational levels or with different or specific genres of subtitled movies. This would contribute to a more thorough understanding of the use of subtitled movies in language learning. All in all, this study underscores the potential of subtitled movies as useful learning material in language learning and promotes wider use of them in teaching practices. Therefore, further research regarding this is necessary to fully understand and optimize the benefits of subtitled movies.

Lastly, some recommendations for future research are future research may use a different research design, especially a mixed method that includes both surveys and interviews, to obtain an in-depth comprehension of postgraduate students' perceptions of the use of subtitled movies. Besides, future research may use larger samples for this study to collect sufficient and more precise data. Next, future research may focus on students who watch the same genres of subtitled movies to get accurate results on how the use of subtitled movies helps to improve language learning. Future research may also be conducted on how subtitled movies help in learning not just in language but also in other subjects like history, culture, or science, so that subtitled movies can also be implemented in other fields of education. Additionally, another recommendation is to use different contexts and settings for this study to add more findings and results as references. This could include studies focusing on different age groups, proficiency levels, and languages. Last but not least, future research could also investigate the impact of different genres of subtitled movies on language learning. This research would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of subtitled movies in language areas.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Authors' Contributions

The authors confirm their contribution to the paper as follows: study conception and design: Kamaruddin. Author, Azizul. Author, and Roslim. Author; introduction: Roslim. Author; literature review: Azizul. Author; data collection: Kamaruddin. Author; findings: Kamaruddin. Author; analysis and interpretation of results: Kamaruddin. Author, Azizul. Author. Roslim. Author; conclusion and recommendation: Kamaruddin. Author. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.