

## **SUBTITLE PREFERENCES IN NON-INDONESIAN MOVIES: THEIR IMPACT ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AMONG ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS**

Haninda Nourmaretha<sup>1</sup>, Dwi Ario Fajar<sup>2</sup>

English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education

[ninda9467@gmail.com](mailto:ninda9467@gmail.com)<sup>1 2</sup>

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana preferensi subtitle dalam film non-Indonesia mempengaruhi pengembangan keterampilan bahasa Inggris serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor pendukung lainnya pada mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Pekalongan. Menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan mahasiswa semester 6 untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman, motivasi, dan tantangan mereka dalam menggunakan subtitle saat menonton film asing. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa subtitle bahasa Indonesia membantu pemahaman alur cerita, subtitle bahasa Inggris mendukung pengembangan kosakata, keterampilan mendengar, dan pengucapan, sementara menonton tanpa subtitle membantu keterampilan mendengar dan membangun kepercayaan diri mahasiswa. Selain itu, faktor pendukung seperti mendengarkan lagu bahasa Inggris, membaca teks bahasa Inggris, mengikuti kelas berbahasa Inggris, dan percakapan dengan teman turut berkontribusi pada pengembangan keterampilan bahasa Inggris. Temuan ini selaras dengan teori scaffolding Vygotsky dan Hipotesis Input Krashen, menekankan peran menonton film dengan subtitle serta aktivitas pendukung lainnya dalam mendorong pembelajaran insidental dan kemandirian belajar dalam penguasaan bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Preferensi Subtitle, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Scaffolding, Pembelajaran Insidental, Multimedia.

### **ABSTRACT**

This research investigates how preferences for subtitles in non-Indonesian movies influence the improvement of English language abilities and identifies other elements that aid language acquisition among English Education students at Pekalongan University. Using a qualitative case study approach, information was gathered through semi-structured interviews with students in their sixth semester to examine their experiences, drives, and obstacles in utilizing subtitles while watching international films. The results indicate that Indonesian subtitles help with understanding the plot, English subtitles enhance vocabulary, listening, and pronunciation skills, and watching without subtitles improves listening skills and boosts learner confidence. Furthermore, factors such as listening to English music, reading English texts, engaging in classes taught in English, and having discussions with peers all play a role in developing English language skills. These findings correspond with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory and Krashen's Input Hypothesis, highlighting how subtitle-assisted movie viewing and related activities promote incidental learning and foster learner independence in acquiring the English language.

Key Words: Subtitle Preference, English Language Skills, Scaffolding, Incidental Learning, Multimedia.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization and advancements in technology have greatly changed the way English is learned, allowing students to find genuine materials outside of traditional classrooms (Benson, 2013). Among these materials, foreign films act as captivating resources, introducing learners to everyday vocabulary, accurate pronunciation, sentence constructions, and cultural details that are often missing in typical language education (Lin and Wang, 2021; Peters and Webb, 2018). For students studying English Education, interacting with native conversations in films links theoretical concepts with real-world use, thus enhancing vocabulary learning, pronunciation skills, and listening abilities (Krashen, 1985; Vandergriff, 2007).

Subtitles are vital in this process of accidental learning. Indonesian subtitles often help with understanding the plot, while English subtitles connect spoken language to written text, improving vocabulary retention, pronunciation, and listening capabilities. Watching films without subtitles prompts learners to engage with

spoken English in real-time, which builds their listening skills and promotes autonomous learning (Montero Perez et al. , 2013; Bisson et al. , 2014).

Although the advantages of learning through movies are well-known, research is scarce on how specific subtitle choices impact the development of English language skills in Indonesian contexts, alongside how supplementary activities enhance this learning (Lin and Wang, 2021). This study, based on Vygotsky's scaffolding theory (1978), which suggests that learners initially depend on external supports before becoming independent, and Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), which stresses the importance of understandable input, intends to investigate:

1. What are the subtitle choices of English Education students when viewing non-Indonesian films?
2. In what way do subtitle choices in non-Indonesian films influence the development of English language skills?
3. What other elements aid in the improvement of English language skills while watching non-Indonesian films?

By exploring these questions, this research seeks to offer understanding on how English Education students utilize the practice of watching films with subtitles as a supplementary learning resource and how it connects with other educational methods to enhance vocabulary, listening, pronunciation skills, and independence in learning.

## **METHOD**

This research implemented a qualitative case study approach to examine the influence of subtitle choices in foreign films on the improvement of English language abilities and to uncover additional supportive elements among students studying English Education. The subjects of the study were English Education students in their sixth semester at Universitas Pekalongan, purposefully chosen for their experiences with watching foreign films as part of their incidental learning methods.

**Data Collection:** Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the students, concentrating on their subtitle choices and their perceived effects on vocabulary, listening skills, pronunciation, grammar awareness, and other activities that aid English language learning, like music, reading, and conversations. With participants' permission, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

**Data Analysis:** A thematic analysis approach was utilized, organizing participant responses into categories that corresponded with the research questions, Vygotsky's scaffolding theory (the transition of learners from L1 subtitles to L2 or no subtitles), and Krashen's Input Hypothesis (the significance of comprehensible input in learning a language). This approach provided in-depth, context-aware insights while staying true to the theoretical frameworks.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Subtitle Preferences**

The results indicate that English Education students' choices for subtitles are shaped by their emotional preparedness, self-assurance, familiarity with different genres, and individual objectives. These preferences resonate with Vygotsky's Scaffolding Theory from 1978, which demonstrates how learners modulate the help they require, and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis from 1985, which suggests that emotional elements can affect students' readiness to learn a language.

### 1. Indonesian Subtitles

A number of students opt for Indonesian subtitles when viewing foreign films to ensure they fully grasp the story and dialogue. This choice often arises from fears of losing track of the plot or misinterpreting quick exchanges, particularly when encountering unfamiliar pronunciations and vocabulary. This relates to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, which proposes that anxiety may hinder students from engaging with more challenging material.

For instance, Ananda Eysa Rismandari expressed, "I continue to rely on Indonesian subtitles since I don't feel secure in my English skills." This illustrates her reliance on subtitles in her native language as a source of emotional reassurance while she gradually acclimatizes to English sounds and speech. Utilizing Indonesian subtitles aids students in maintaining interest and motivation as they passively absorb English audio input during film viewings.

In addition, Difa Amini Harliana mentioned, "When I struggle with an accent, I tend to prefer Indonesian subtitles, but for American films, I might choose English subtitles or skip them altogether." Difa's discerning choices reveal her gradual willingness to take risks, moving from L1 subtitles to L2 subtitles or no subtitles according to her assessed ability to follow the content. This aligns with Sari's (2020) findings that Indonesian students usually start with L1 subtitles before gradually shifting to L2 subtitles as their confidence and comprehension skills improve.

### 2. English Subtitles

Other learners intentionally opt for English subtitles to support vocabulary expansion, boost listening skills, and gain exposure to authentic English in context. This aligns with principles of incidental learning and promotes the use of leisure activities like watching films for language acquisition.

Rey Gemilang remarked, "Ever since high school, I have preferred English subtitles to enhance my vocabulary while enjoying action and comedy genres." His method illustrates how interest in specific genres helps alleviate emotional obstacles, transforming film watching into a pleasurable way to learn vocabulary and practice listening, aligning with the findings of Peters and Webb (2018).

In a similar vein, Shintya Puspita Haryanto shared, "I generally select Indonesian subtitles, yet I sometimes switch to English subtitles when I wish to push myself." This showcases flexible learning, where Shintya adapts her subtitle choices according to her readiness, using English subtitles to grow her vocabulary and enhance her understanding when she feels assured, paralleling Vygotsky's concept of gradually providing less support.

Employing English subtitles also enables learners to link spoken language with its written representation, aiding them in recognizing patterns in pronunciation, stress, intonation, and spelling. Students frequently

pause to jot down unfamiliar words or replay parts to better comprehend expressions, transforming their film-viewing experience from passive entertainment into an active educational endeavor while still enjoying the process.

No	Participant	Statement	Preference Pattern	Influencing Factors
1	Shintya Puspita Haryanto	"I generally opt for Indonesian subtitles, but occasionally I switch to English ones when I want to push myself."	Flexible shifting between L1 and L2	Confidence, self-directed learning
2	Rey Gemilang	"Since high school, I've favored English subtitles to boost my vocabulary while enjoying my favorite genres like action and comedy."	Consistent use of English subtitles	Genre interest, vocabulary expansion
3	Difa Amini Harliana	"If the accent is tough to understand, I stick with Indonesian subtitles, but for American films, I try English subtitles or none at all."	Selective switching based on content	Accent familiarity, listening comprehension goals
4	Ananda Eysa Rismandari	"I continue using Indonesian subtitles because I lack confidence in my English."	Consistent use of Indonesian subtitles	Anxiety, fear of misunderstanding

## B. Impact on English Language Skills Development

Subtitle utilization during film watching greatly aids in developing vocabulary, improving listening skills, enhancing pronunciation, and increasing grammar knowledge. This corresponds with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), which focuses on understandable input, and Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding (1978), indicating that subtitles offer valuable support for learners.

### 1. Vocabulary

Learners who watch films with English subtitles encounter idiomatic phrases, phrasal verbs, and conversational language in real-life situations, broadening their vocabulary beyond what is learned in textbooks.

Rey Gemilang remarked, "Using English subtitles helps me to naturally learn new words that I can apply later in discussions and writing." At the same time, Shintya Puspita Haryanto maintained a vocabulary log during her film viewings, stating, "I jot down any new words with examples so I can use them later." These methods demonstrate contextual vocabulary acquisition and practical utilization, as noted by Peters and Webb (2018).

### 2. Listening

Subtitles assist students in keeping up with fast-paced conversations, recognizing how words connect, and grasping informal contractions. Shintya mentioned, "With English subtitles, I can catch words in quick dialogues that I might otherwise overlook." Likewise, Difa described, "When the accent is challenging to

understand, I switch to Indonesian subtitles; for American films, I opt for English subtitles or none. " These approaches enable students to gradually improve their listening capabilities while addressing comprehension difficulties.

### 3. Pronunciation

Subtitles help learners match spoken language with written text, facilitating practice in pronunciation and intonation. Rey Gemilang noted, "I frequently read lines aloud while watching to enhance my pronunciation and fluency. " Meanwhile, Ananda Eysa Rismandari explained that she sometimes shifts to English subtitles to rehearse pronouncing new vocabulary, highlighting how subtitles offer examples of natural speech patterns.

### 4. Grammar

Viewing films with English subtitles allows students to observe sentence constructions, verb forms, modals, and discourse markers in authentic settings, thereby enhancing their practical understanding of grammar.

Difa shared, "I focus on the way sentences are formed in movies and try to incorporate those structures into my speaking and writing. " This finding supports Renandya and Jacobs (2018), who emphasize the advantages of real-world exposure for incidental grammar acquisition.

No	Skill Area	Participant Examples	Benefits	Outcomes
1	Vocabulary Development	Rey, Shintya	Contextual vocabulary learning	Retention and practical use
2	Listening Abilities	Shintya, Difa	Supports comprehension during fast speech	Improved listening skills
3	Pronunciation	Rey, Ananda	Pronunciation, stress, intonation practice	Fluency and accuracy improvement
4	Grammar Awareness	Difa	Natural grammar exposure	Practical grammar application

### C. Additional Contributing Factors

In addition to using subtitles, students participate in additional activities that support both casual and focused English language acquisition, aligning with Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding and Krashen's Input Hypothesis.

#### 1. Listening to English Music

Engaging with English songs helps improve pronunciation, rhythm, and common phrases in a stress-free setting, which lowers anxiety and boosts motivation. Shintya mentioned, "Listening to English music assists my pronunciation as I can hear the way people naturally speak. "

#### 2. Reading English Content

Exploring English novels and online articles introduces learners to a variety of vocabulary, grammar patterns, and writing styles, which improves understanding and awareness of grammar in context. Rey said, "I frequently read English books and articles to enhance my vocabulary and grasp grammar better."

### 3. Attending English Lectures

Being part of English lectures offers organized chances to expand academic vocabulary and sharpen listening comprehension abilities, supplementing the informal learning gained from movies and songs. Ananda highlighted, "Participating in English lectures helps boost my listening abilities, similar to watching movies."

### 4. Engaging in Conversations

Practicing English in discussions with classmates and teachers enables learners to use vocabulary and grammar in real situations, which fosters speaking fluency and self-assurance. Difa noted, "Speaking in English with friends helps me apply what I've learned."

### 5. Performing Writing Tasks

Activities such as summarizing movies or keeping vocabulary lists allow students to actively engage with new words and structures, reinforcing both their understanding and practical use of the language.

No	Activity	Participant Example	Benefits	Outcomes
1	Listening to English Music	Shintya	Pronunciation and intonation exposure	Improved speaking fluency
2	Reading English Content	Rey	Vocabulary and grammar learning in context	Vocabulary and grammar enhancement
3	Attending English Lectures	Ananda	Academic listening and vocabulary	Improved academic English skills
4	Engaging in Conversations	Difa	Real-life vocabulary and grammar use	Increased confidence in speaking
5	Performing Writing Tasks	General	Active language practice	Better writing skills and retention

## CONCLUSION

The results of this research indicate that students' preferences for subtitles significantly impact their development of English language skills at Pekalongan University. Subtitles in Indonesian aid understanding and lessen anxiety, while English subtitles improve vocabulary, listening skills, and pronunciation. Moreover, participating in activities like listening to English songs, reading texts in English, attending lectures in English, and engaging in discussions helps bolster their language acquisition. These findings emphasize that the strategic implementation of subtitles, in accordance with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory and Krashen's Input Hypothesis, effectively fosters incidental learning and encourages learner independence, assisting students in cultivating their English abilities in a practical, enjoyable, and meaningful way.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher extends gratitude to English Education students at Universitas Pekalongan for their participation, and to the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education for their support during this research.

## REFERENCES

- Benson, P. (2013). *Teaching and researching autonomy* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bisson, M.-J., Van Heuven, W. J. B., Conklin, K., & Tunney, R. J. (2014). Processing of native and foreign language subtitles in films: An eye tracking study. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 35(2), 399–418. doi:10.1017/S0142716412000434
- Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London, UK: Longman.
- Lin, H., & Wang, Y. (2021). Using movies for language learning: A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of movie-based instruction. *Language Learning & Technology*, 25(2), 67–87. Diakses dari <https://www.lltjournal.org/item/2021-02-67>
- Montero Perez, M., Peters, E., & Desmet, P. (2013). Is less more? The effect of keyword and full captioning on foreign language listening. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 27(4), 1–22. doi:10.1080/09588221.2013.770037
- Peters, E., & Webb, S. (2018). Incidental vocabulary acquisition through viewing L2 television and factors that affect learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 40(3), 551–577. doi:10.1017/S0272263117000407
- Renandya, W. A., & Jacobs, G. M. (2018). Extensive reading and listening in the L2 classroom. Dalam J. I. Lontas (Ed.), *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching* (hal. 1–7). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. doi:10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0545
- Sari, N. (2020). Subtitle preferences among Indonesian learners and their impact on language acquisition. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 123–135. doi:10.17509/ijal.v10i2.2020
- Vandergrift, L. (2007). *Listening: Theory and practice in modern foreign language competence*. Cambridge Papers in ELT Series, 1–31. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wang, Y. (2012). Using movies to promote listening comprehension in the EFL classroom. *TESOL Journal*, 3(4), 558–570. doi:10.1002/tesj.34

Webb, S., & Rodgers, M. P. H. (2009). The vocabulary demands of television programs. *Language Learning*, 59(2), 335–366. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2009.00509.x