

The Use of English-Subtitled Cartoon Movies in Developing Speaking Skills Among Senior High School Students at Madani Super Camp English Course

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Abstract: Speaking remains a major challenge for EFL learners because limited exposure to authentic English input affects their vocabulary mastery and pronunciation. This research aimed to investigate how the use of English-subtitled cartoon movies improves students' vocabulary and pronunciation as components of speaking skills at Madani Super Camp English Course. The study applied a two-cycle Classroom Action Research (CAR) design involving 25 male Grade XI students from Nurul Haramain Islamic Boarding School. Quantitative data were gathered through a speaking pre-test, an immediate post-test, and a delayed post-test, and an inter-rater reliability method involving the researcher and a collaborator was used to keep the scoring objective. Qualitative data were collected through observation checklists and field notes. The students' mean score rose from 42.0 in the pre-test, when no student reached the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 80, to 86.40 in the immediate post-test (Cycle 2), with an 88% passing rate. The delayed post-test showed a stable mean score of 87.00 and the same 88% passing rate. Qualitatively, the movies reduced students' hesitation, encouraged active participation, and increased their confidence. In conclusion, English-subtitled cartoon movies are effective media for developing students' speaking skills, particularly in helping them retain vocabulary and pronunciation.

Keywords: Speaking Skills, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, English-Subtitled Cartoon Movie, Classroom Action Research.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most important skills in learning English, but it remains a major challenge for many high school students. Students often experience difficulties with pronunciation, fluency, confidence, and vocabulary mastery, which hinder their ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations. Several studies highlight that students' speaking difficulties are generally caused by limited exposure to authentic English input and a lack of opportunities to practice speaking in meaningful contexts (Fauji & Zuhriyah, 2022). In many traditional classrooms, speaking activities rely heavily on memorization, repetition, and textbook conversations, which do not always provide natural linguistic models for students to imitate. As a result, students often feel anxious and unprepared when asked to speak spontaneously in English. Teachers therefore need strategies and techniques that give students more meaningful speaking practice (Harmer, 2001; Hidayati et al., 2021; Roni et al., 2022).

In recent years, the integration of multimedia particularly English movies with subtitles has gained significant attention as a potential solution to improve learners' speaking skills. Digital media such as YouTube videos and TikTok have also been used to support students' speaking development (Adawiyah & Dalimunthe, 2024; Purwanti et al., 2022). English-subtitled cartoon movies expose students to authentic pronunciation, intonation,

vocabulary use, and conversational patterns, creating a rich environment for language acquisition. Research indicates that watching English movies with subtitles can enhance students' speaking accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative competence because the combination of audio and text strengthens comprehension and language retention (Humairah, 2024; Liando et al., 2018). Subtitles also help students associate spoken and written forms of English, enabling them to grasp meaning more effectively and imitate native-like expressions in their own speech. Students' perceptions of English-subtitled movies as learning media have also been examined in the Indonesian context (Andriani & Angelina, 2020).

The effectiveness of English-subtitled movies for speaking improvement has been supported by numerous empirical studies. Stevani et al. (2021) found that subtitle-assisted animation films improved students' fluency and pronunciation significantly compared to conventional teaching methods. Similarly, Monida et al. (2024) and Wijaya and Salainti (2024) demonstrated that subtitles increased students' vocabulary mastery, which in turn contributed to better speaking performance. Rukmana (2021) also examined the effect of movie subtitles on senior high school students' vocabulary mastery. Additional findings show that repeated exposure to subtitled films helps students internalize language structures, idiomatic expressions, and natural speech patterns, making them more confident and active during speaking

activities (Rosiana & Wardhana, 2023; Nurfauziah et al., 2023; Gifari, 2023).

Moreover, several studies emphasize that English-subtitled cartoon movies not only improve linguistic competence but also enhance students' learning motivation. Mohamed et al. (2023) reported that students feel more engaged and less anxious when learning through films, as the visual and narrative elements help sustain attention and interest. Lien and Dan (2024) found that EFL students viewed English movies as a useful resource for developing their speaking skills, while Frans et al. (2025) reported a weak positive, though not statistically significant, correlation between students' habits of watching English-subtitled movies and their speaking skills. These findings suggest that movies can create a natural and enjoyable learning atmosphere, encouraging students to practice speaking more frequently and actively.

Despite the growing evidence supporting the benefits of subtitled films, most studies have been conducted in formal school settings, and only a few explore their implementation in English course environments such as Madani Super Camp. The unique learning atmosphere of this program characterized by intensive practice, immersive activities, and flexible instructional approaches may yield different results from traditional school contexts. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how English-subtitled cartoon movies function as a medium for developing speaking skills among senior high school students in a camp-based English course. This research aims to fill that gap by examining the use of English-subtitled cartoon movies in improving the speaking abilities of students attending Madani Super Camp English Course, with the expectation that the findings will contribute both theoretically and practically to multimedia-assisted language learning in non-formal educational settings.

Speaking consists of several components, namely pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension (Brown, 2004). However, this study focuses specifically on vocabulary and pronunciation as the primary indicators of speaking skills. These two components are selected because English-subtitled cartoon movies directly expose students to authentic pronunciation while simultaneously introducing new vocabulary through synchronized spoken and written language. Therefore, grammar, fluency, and comprehension are beyond the scope of this study.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. According to Sujana (2010), Classroom Action Research is a form of reflective research carried out through specific actions aimed at improving or enhancing the teaching and learning practices. Classroom Action Research is aimed at improving teaching practices and solving problems that occur during the teaching and learning process. It allows both teachers and students to reflect on what has been achieved and what needs improvement. Classroom action research is a cyclical process consisting of four steps: planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Hopkins, 2008; Sujana, 2010).

This study was conducted in two cycles and each cycle consisted of four phases, namely: 1) Planning, 2) action, 3)

observation and 4) reflection. Before the first cycle was held, the students were given a pretest to test the students' ability as an observation and pre-activity.

The participants were 25 male Grade XI students of Nurul Haramain Islamic Boarding School who joined the Madani Super Camp English Course. Quantitative data were collected through speaking tests, namely a pre-test, an immediate post-test at the end of Cycle 2, and a delayed post-test administered 10 days later. Qualitative data were collected through observation checklists and field notes completed with the help of a collaborator (Gass & Mackey, 2007).

The speaking tests assessed two components, vocabulary and pronunciation, each scored out of 5, and the results were converted into a final score out of 100. The delayed post-test was scored by the researcher and a collaborator using an inter-rater reliability procedure to keep the assessment objective. The quantitative data were analyzed by calculating the class mean score and the percentage of students who reached the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 80, while the qualitative data were analyzed descriptively (Creswell, 2012).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research was carried out to evaluate the use of English-subtitled cartoon movies in developing students' speaking skills, specifically focusing on vocabulary and pronunciation. The findings are derived from both quantitative data (speaking tests) and qualitative data (observation checklists and field notes) collected throughout the Pre-test, Cycle 1, Cycle 2, Post-test and Delayed Post-test. The activities and results of each stage are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of activities and results in each research stage

Stage	Main activities	Results
Pre-test	Speaking test before any intervention.	Mean score 42.0 (vocabulary 2.12; pronunciation 2.08); 0% reached the KKM. Students could not pronounce or explain most words and often hesitated.
Cycle 1	Students watched three short subtitled scenes (A, B, and C) from <i>Inside Out</i> , wrote down the vocabulary, and identified the target words.	Evaluated through observation and field notes. Students were enthusiastic and active, but their confidence, vocabulary, and pronunciation remained neutral because they focused on the plot.
Cycle 2 (immediate post-test)	The same clips were replayed and paused at the target words, and the dialogues were explained. Students then built and presented new sentences.	Mean score 86.40 (vocabulary 4.32; pronunciation 4.32); 88% (22 of 25 students) reached the KKM. Students spoke without hesitation and with more confidence.
Delayed post-test (10 days later)	Speaking test scored by the researcher and a collaborator (inter-rater reliability).	Mean score 87.00; 88% reached the KKM.

The research findings began with evaluating the students' baseline speaking abilities through a pre-test conducted prior to any instructional intervention. The quantitative data revealed that the students' speaking proficiency was critically low. The class mean score was only 42.0, with vocabulary and pronunciation specifically scoring 2.12 and 2.08 out of 5, respectively. Consequently, none of the 25 students (0%) achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 80, placing all 25 students in the failing category.

Beyond the numerical scores, the qualitative data obtained from the collaborator's observation checklist and field notes highlighted significant speaking difficulties. While the classroom atmosphere was calm and students paid attention to instructions, they were mostly unable to pronounce the vocabulary correctly or explain the meanings of the words. Furthermore, their confidence levels were neutral, and they frequently responded to speaking prompts with excessive hesitation.

The critically low baseline scores and observed hesitation were attributed to several underlying factors common in EFL contexts. Observations suggested that the students' prior learning relied heavily on rote memorization without authentic, native-like English audio, leading to significant phonetic confusion. Additionally, the lack of real-life context made vocabulary comprehension abstract and difficult to grasp. Psychologically, the students exhibited a high affective filter, showing visible anxiety and fear of making mistakes in front of their peers.

To address these severe speaking limitations, the researcher implemented Cycle 1 using the English-subtitled cartoon movie *Inside Out*. The selected media focused on a specific 2 to 3-minute clip where the main character, Riley, enters puberty. To make the material digestible, the clip was strategically divided into three smaller segments (Scene A, B, and C) to facilitate clearer explanations. During the action phase, students were instructed to watch the subtitled scenes, write down the vocabularies, and actively identify the target words that had appeared in the pre-test.

The implementation of Cycle 1 yielded a highly positive transformation in the classroom's learning atmosphere. The animated clip successfully sparked excitement, and the students actively participated in the learning process. When performing the speaking tasks, they demonstrated a developing ability to pronounce the vocabulary accurately and explain the meanings correctly. Moreover, the immersive nature of the cartoon movie helped the students complete the cycle without the severe hesitation seen during the pre-test.

Despite the increased enthusiasm, the observational data and reflection phase revealed a critical pedagogical issue. The students' level of confidence and their actual improvement in vocabulary mastery and pronunciation remained neutral. The field notes identified that the core issue was the students being too absorbed in trying to understand the overall plot of the cartoon movie. This divided attention distracted their focus from analyzing the specific target vocabularies and their exact pronunciation, meaning the predetermined criteria of success were not fully achieved.

Responding to the shortcomings of Cycle 1, the researcher designed a more intensive and analytical approach for Cycle 2. The revised strategy shifted from merely watching the movie to detailed analytical viewing. The researcher replayed the same clips but actively paused the video at specific scenes containing the target vocabularies to provide explicit explanations of the dialogues. To ensure deep contextual comprehension, the post-test required students to practically apply the words by constructing and confidently presenting new, original sentences.

This targeted pedagogical intervention in Cycle 2 resulted in a remarkable surge in the students' speaking performance. The quantitative data from the immediate post-test showed that the overall class mean score skyrocketed significantly to 86.40. The individual mean scores for both vocabulary and pronunciation also improved drastically, reaching 4.32 out of 5. Crucially, the data revealed that 22 out of the 25 students successfully achieved or exceeded the KKM of 80, resulting in an 88% passing rate for the class.

The quantitative success of Cycle 2 was strongly corroborated by the qualitative observations recorded during the session. The shift to pausing the cartoon movie and explicitly explaining the dialogues effectively redirected the students' focus toward the linguistic components. Because they fully comprehended the context, the students demonstrated clear improvements in both vocabulary mastery and pronunciation accuracy. During their post-test presentations, students completed the task without hesitation and responded significantly more confidently than in the previous cycle.

While the immediate post-test indicated a highly successful outcome, a delayed post-test was administered 10 days later to measure the long-term retention of the speaking skills. To ensure maximum objectivity and validity, this test utilized an Inter-Rater Reliability method involving both the researcher and an independent collaborator. The results demonstrated a highly stable and slightly improved class mean score of 87.00, maintaining the exact same 88% passing rate. This stable outcome firmly establishes that the integration of English-subtitled cartoon movies, combined with detailed dialogue breakdowns, effectively embeds targeted vocabulary and pronunciation into the students' long-term memory.

The research findings demonstrate a significant improvement in the students' speaking abilities, specifically in the components of vocabulary and pronunciation. In the pre-test, the students' mean score was a failing 42.0, with a 0% passing rate. However, after the implementation of the English-subtitled cartoon movie through two cycles, the mean score in the post-test increased drastically to 86.40, with 88% of the students passing the KKM.

This improvement aligns with the theory that English-subtitled cartoon movies create a rich environment for language acquisition by combining audio and text, which strengthens comprehension and language retention. In Cycle 1, while students began to recognize the words, they still struggled with precise pronunciation and deep meaning. The adjustments made in Cycle 2 specifically, the detailed explanation of dialogues and contextual usage proved crucial. By associating the spoken dialogues of native speakers in the movie *Inside Out* with the written text in the subtitles, the

students were able to grasp the meaning effectively and imitate native-like expressions, confirming the findings of previous studies (Humairah, 2024; Liando et al., 2018). The requirement to create new sentences in the post-test further solidified their vocabulary mastery, moving them from passive recognition to active production.

The rapid and significant increase in the students' scores from a failing mean of 42.0 in the pre-test to 86.40 in the post-test and 87.00 in the delayed post-test can be comprehensively explained through several cognitive and pedagogical mechanisms facilitated by the English-subtitled cartoon movie.

First, the media provided a "dual-channel" cognitive input. By simultaneously hearing the authentic pronunciation of native speakers (audio) and reading the exact spelling on the screen (text subtitles), the students received immediate scaffolding. This dual exposure effectively resolved the phonetic confusion they faced during the pre-test, allowing them to map sounds to letters accurately and mimic the pronunciation with high precision.

Second, the vocabulary was presented in a rich, emotional, and visual context through the Inside Out movie clips. Instead of memorizing abstract definitions from a dictionary, the students witnessed exactly how words (such as those related to puberty and emotions) were utilized in realistic, conversational dialogues. This contextualized learning made the targeted vocabulary much easier to comprehend and retain in their long-term memory.

Third, the sharp improvement in Cycle 2 was heavily driven by the researcher's pedagogical intervention. The act of pausing the video to provide explicit, detailed dialogue breakdowns bridged the gap between passive viewing and active understanding. Furthermore, requiring the students to construct and present their own original sentences during the post-test forced them to transition from merely consuming the language to actively producing it. This active production solidified their grasp of the vocabulary's context.

Finally, the animated movie fundamentally transformed the classroom atmosphere. The entertaining and relatable narrative of the film significantly lowered the students' affective filter. It reduced their speaking anxiety, shifting their focus from the fear of making grammatical errors to the enjoyment of the story. This relaxed, immersive environment encouraged them to take risks, participate actively, and speak with the newfound confidence observed during the post-test and delayed post-test.

Beyond linguistic competence, the use of the English-subtitled cartoon movie had a profound impact on the students' learning motivation and confidence. During the pre-test, students were hesitant, lacked confidence, and struggled to answer questions. However, the observations during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 revealed a transformation in the classroom dynamics.

The visual and narrative elements of the animated film captured the students' attention, making the learning atmosphere exciting and engaging. By Cycle 2, the students were noted to be highly active, participating without hesitation, and demonstrating increased confidence during the speaking practice. This supports the notion that multimedia integration, particularly movies, can reduce anxiety and create

a natural, enjoyable learning atmosphere (Mohamed et al., 2023). Furthermore, the intensive practice and immersive environment provided by Madani Super Camp English Course, combined with the entertaining yet educational nature of the film media, effectively encouraged the students to practice speaking more frequently and actively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the Classroom Action Research, it can be concluded that the use of English-subtitled cartoon movies significantly improves senior high school students' speaking skills, particularly in vocabulary and pronunciation. This improvement is quantitatively evident from the substantial increase in the students' mean scores, which surged from a critically low baseline of 42.0 in the pre-test to 86.40 in the immediate post-test. Furthermore, the delayed post-test demonstrated a highly stable mean score of 87.00 while maintaining an 88% passing rate. These statistical achievements definitively confirm that the instructional media effectively embedded the targeted speaking skills into the students' long-term memory rather than just facilitating short-term memorization.

The success of this research aligns with the theory of multimedia-assisted language learning, primarily because the English-subtitled cartoon movies provided a dual-channel cognitive input. The simultaneous exposure to authentic audio and written text successfully resolved the students' phonetic confusion and contextualized the vocabulary in real-life situations. Qualitatively, the engaging and relatable nature of the animated movie lowered the students' affective filter, effectively reducing their speaking anxiety. This immersive learning atmosphere successfully transformed the students from hesitant learners into active and confident communicators, leading to the acceptance of the action hypothesis.

Furthermore, strategic recommendations are directed toward educational institutions and future researchers. Institutions like Madani Super Camp are advised to facilitate multimedia-based language learning by providing adequate audio-visual equipment and formally incorporating film-based instructional designs to enrich their immersive English environment. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to expand upon this study by investigating other speaking components, such as grammar, fluency, and comprehension. Conducting similar research using different movie genres, extended intervention durations, or within formal school settings would provide valuable insights to further enrich the literature on multimedia-assisted language learning.

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