Effects of English Film Subtitle on the Vocabulary Level of Grade-11 Students in a private school in Sipocot, Camarines Sur

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the effects of reading subtitles on the vocabulary level of Grade-11 students in a private school in Sipocot, Camarines Sur. The study employed a pre-experimental design with static group comparison and descriptive correlational methods. The data gathering tools used were a survey questionnaire and a researcher-made test. The test was used to assess the vocabulary level of the respondents. The study found that there was a significant difference in the language proficiency of respondents who read subtitles and those who did not, in terms of vocabulary, form, meaning, and use. The respondents who read subtitles demonstrated a higher level of language proficiency in vocabulary compared to those who did not read subtitles. The study also found that there was no significant relationship between the extent of reading subtitles and vocabulary level in terms of form and meaning, but there was a significant relationship in terms of use only. Based on the findings, the study concluded that reading subtitles while watching English films can expand vocabulary level for further purposes.

Keywords: English Films, Subtitles and Vocabulary level

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language learning and acquisition. It is an essential component of communication and serves as the building block for all language skills including reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Armea et al., 2022). Without a good vocabulary, it can be difficult to understand and use words appropriately during the language acts of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students cannot use the language efficiently without adequate knowledge of the word and its meaning. It was made evident in the words of Schmitt (2020) that, "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." This statement emphasizes the significance of having a good understanding and mastery of vocabulary.

In the Philippines, it has been observed that writing and public speaking are difficult for many students from elementary schools to college due to lack of the necessary productive English vocabulary knowledge. They commonly use 2,000-3,000 level of vocabulary in their speaking and writing, though many have productive vocabulary knowledge that is within the university word level, they especially are those exposed to the English language (Sasan & Rabillas, 2022).

Consequently, the Philippine government, particularly the Department of Education (DepEd), asserts that all Filipino citizens must acquire the competencies, skills, and values necessary for attaining quality education. To achieve this objective, the DepEd has integrated Vocabulary Development (VC) as a core competency within the K-12 curriculum, applicable to students from Grade 1 through Grade 12 (Department of Education, 2019). This incorporation of vocabulary development underscores its importance in education, addressing the need to equip learners with essential language skills to succeed in an increasingly globalized environment. By emphasizing vocabulary development, students can enhance their academic performance, communication abilities, and overall language proficiency, thereby facilitating their personal growth and development. (Ocampo, 2023).

One engaging medium that can aid students in vocabulary acquisition is film. Viewing movies with subtitles exposes audiences to a diverse range of vocabulary that extends beyond their typical usage. Subtitles, regardless of the language, serve as an effective resource that allows individuals to appreciate films from various cultures and countries. For language learners, subtitles can provide a valuable avenue for enhancing language comprehension. Overall, subtitles represent a beneficial tool for improving vocabulary proficiency. (Ocampo & Janaidi, 2024).

Learning English vocabulary is a major challenge faced by students in an English-language classroom (Baesa & Ocampo, 2023). Learners encounter difficulties in sharing their ideas, thoughts, and feelings without the use of an adequate word. However, studies about reading subtitles proved that subtitles could improve language learning, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension (Hestiana & Anita, 2022). In the study carried out by Andriano (2019) on the effects of using subtitles in target language vocabulary learning, it was revealed that the use of English-subtitled movies could improve students' vocabulary achievement. In particular, movies with subtitles can be a great tool in bringing students closer to language proficiency and good vocabulary skills.

Jay-jay et al. (2024) demonstrated that interlingual subtitles enhance vocabulary acquisition for both short- and long-term memory, particularly when presented to students in a structured learning environment with teacher support and guidance. This indicates that educators can effectively utilize subtitles as a resource to facilitate language learning and improve students' vocabulary skills, provided they offer appropriate instruction on their use. Therefore, this study offers evidence that, when implemented effectively in the classroom, interlingual subtitles can significantly bolster vocabulary acquisition among learners.

This research, therefore, investigated the effects of reading subtitles from watching English films on the vocabulary level of the Grade-11 students of one of the private schools in the district of Sipocot, Camarines Sur for the SY 2022-2023. This offers an Information and Communications Technology (ICT)-based subject, providing an ideal setting to explore the effects of reading subtitles on the vocabulary proficiency of Grade-11 students. This choice aligns with the research goal of understanding how technology-integrated education, such as an ICT-based strand, influenced language skills. The study compared the vocabulary proficiency of students who read subtitles versus those who did not read subtitles, considering the aspects of vocabulary form, meaning, and use.

This study was conducted to determine the effects of reading subtitles in the vocabulary level of Grade-11 students of one of the private schools in the district of Sipocot, Camarines Sur. This study attained the following: 1. Determine the extent of reading English subtitles from watching English films of the students; 2. Determine the level of language proficiency of the students who read the subtitles in terms of their vocabulary along with form, meaning, and use; 3. Determine the level of language proficiency of the students who do not read subtitles in terms of their vocabulary along with form, meaning, and use; 4. Analyze the significant difference of the level of language proficiency of the respondents between two groups in terms of their vocabulary along with form meaning and use; 5. Evaluate the significant relationship between the extent of reading subtitles and the vocabulary level of the respondents.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was quantitative in approach employing a pre-experimental design using static group comparison and descriptive correlational methods. The quantitative method was used to interpret the data from the responses of the students in the survey questionnaires. Pre-experimental design using a static group comparison method was employed to determine the respondents who read subtitles from watching English films (Karta et al., 2023). This approach facilitated the analysis of observed differences in the vocabulary level between two groups: (1) respondents who read subtitles and (2) respondents who do not read subtitles when watching foreign films.

The descriptive method was used to describe the (1) extent of reading English subtitles from watching English films of the students; (2) the level of language proficiency of the students who read subtitles in terms of their vocabulary along with form, meaning, and use and; (3) the level of language proficiency of the students who read subtitles in terms of their vocabulary along with form, meaning, and use. The correlational method was utilized to analyze the significant relationship between the extent of reading subtitles and the vocabulary level of the respondents.

The respondents of this study were the Grade-11 students of one of the private schools in the 1st district of Camarines Sur for the SY 2022-2023. This study employed a pre-experimental design using static group comparison and descriptive correlational methods. The researchers used a purposive sampling technique to gather the respondents and to group them into: (1) respondents who read subtitles from watching English films and; (2) respondents who do not read subtitles. The researchers obtained a sample size of 30 students who read subtitles while watching English films and an additional 30 respondents who did not read subtitles. This sample was drawn from the entire population of Grade-11 students at one of the private schools in the 1st district of Camarines Sur for the SY 2022-2023.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Extent of Reading English Subtitles from Watching English Films of the Student

Subtitles are printed statement or line of dialogue that appears on the screen in between the scenes of a film or that is translated at the bottom of the screen during scenes of a film (Guillot,2020). Subtitles can help improve vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and word recognition and decoding skills for the students. In line with this, studies have proved the benefits of employing captions and subtitles in films to aid learning for both native and non-native speakers (Hashim & Aziz., 2022) allowing them to clarify any unclear accents or parts of the film with low audio quality. Additionally, subtitles help learners feel at ease because they can quickly access meaning. As Reynolds et.al. (2017) states subtitles can anticipate content and it becomes more immersed in the narrative by connecting with characters who have a focusing effect. Disclosed in Table 1 was the extent of reading English subtitles from watching English films of the students.

Table 1. Extent of reading English subtitles from watching English films of the student

Indicators	Weighted Mean (WM)	Rank	Interpretation
1. I prefer watching English films with subtitles.	3.27	9	Always
2. I actively read the subtitles while watching English films.	3.93	1.5	Always
3. I read subtitles for the entire duration of the English films.	3.73	3	Always
4. I consult the dictionary or the internet for the meaning of the unfamiliar words I encounter in the subtitles.	3.40	8	Always
5. I use subtitles to understand the flow of the story of the film.	3.93	1.5	Always
6. I consider subtitled English films an interesting way to learn vocabulary.	3.53	7	Always
7. I observe how words are used in films in connection with the actions of the actor.	3.67	4.5	Always
8. I also listen to the audio or the pronunciation while reading subtitles on English films.	3.60	6	Always
9. I learn the correct pronunciation of the words when reading subtitles from watching English films.	3.67	4.5	Always
10. I learn how words are being spelled and used in a sentence from reading subtitles.	3.13	10	Often
Overall Mean (OM)	3.59	--	Always

Legend:
3. 26 – 4.00   - Always
2.51 – 3.25   - Often
1.76 – 2.50   - Sometimes
1.00 – 1.7   - Seldom

Table 1 shows the extent of reading English subtitles while watching English films, with an overall mean of 3.59 indicating always. The two top-rated indicators, with a weighted mean of 3.93, were that students actively read the subtitles and the students used subtitles to understand the flow of the story of the film. The third best indicator was the students read the subtitles for the entire duration of the English films (WM 3.73). Students who consulted the dictionary or the internet for the meaning of unfamiliar words they encountered in subtitles (WM 3.40), placed it third from the bottom of the list. The second-lowest rating (WM 3.27), went to students who preferred watching English films with subtitles. The lowest-rated indicator was that students learned how to spell and use words from reading subtitles (WM 3.13), mainly because focusing on matching spoken sounds to words can be difficult when attempting to read subtitles. Nevertheless, the majority of indicators show that students were always reading English subtitles.

These results revealed that the majority of the students have always read English subtitles when watching English films. This suggested that reading subtitles could be beneficial for students. This was consistent with the findings of Owusu (2020) who suggested that the use of audiovisual technology could enhance students' learning. Therefore, it was recommended that students continue to read subtitles while watching English films as it could potentially aid in their language acquisition.

Relatedly, students often struggle with various language issues when they start university, such as having a restricted vocabulary, reading at a slower pace, lacking comprehension, having limited conversational abilities, and struggling with grammar. However, English movies can be deemed an effective solution to these problems. Studies, as argued by Iscan (2017), have demonstrated that subtitles can significantly enhance language learning, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension. The research also highlighted that students who frequently watched English films and read subtitles became more conscious of the language and its refinement.

Level of Language Proficiency of the Students who read Subtitles in terms of their Vocabulary along with Form, Meaning, and Use

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language that must be both learned and taught. Moreover, vocabulary serves as the means through which individuals think, articulate ideas and emotions, and acquire knowledge about the world. It is often asserted that vocabulary constitutes the foundational knowledge necessary for language acquisition, enabling effective communication and interaction in everyday life (Briones et al., 2024). Disclosed in Table 2 was the level of language proficiency of the students who read subtitles in terms of their vocabulary along with form meaning and use.

Table 2. Level of language proficiency of the students who read subtitles in terms of their vocabulary

Score	Descriptive Rating	Area			Total	Rank
		Form	Meaning	Use		
16.1-20	Advanced Proficient	10(33%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	10(11%)	4
12.1-16	Proficient	15(50%)	10(33%)	5(17%)	30(33%)	2
8.1-12	Approaching Proficient	4(14%)	16(53%)	16(53%)	36(40%)	1
4.1-8	Developing Proficient	1(3%)	4(14%)	8(27%)	13(15%)	3
01-Apr	Beginning Proficient	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(3%)	1(1%)	5
Total		30	30	30		
Average		15.27	11.47	09.47	12.07	
Descriptive rating		Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Proficient	
Rank		1	2	3	---	

Based on the results of the researchers-made test, the student's performance was evaluated in three areas. In form, the students received an average descriptive rating of 15.27, indicating proficiency. In meaning, the students received an average descriptive rating of 11.47, indicating they were approaching proficiency. Similarly, in use, the students received an average descriptive rating of 9.47, indicating they were also approaching proficiency.

From these findings it was found out that the majority of students who watched English foreign movies with subtitles had a proficient vocabulary. These findings were supported by previous studies (Chen et al., 2023), which suggested that subtitles aid in phonological visualization and improve memory recall and comprehension. Other studies (Shabani & Zanussi, 2015; Sirmandi & Sardareh, 2018; Ocampo, 2021; Orejuela et al., 2022) also demonstrated that subtitles can enhance language learning, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension. Therefore, it can be inferred that using subtitles was an effective strategy for improving language proficiency.

Additionally, the participants were able to enhance their vocabulary proficiency by watching English foreign movies and reading the subtitles. It is undeniable that through this method, we can acquire unfamiliar words and learn how to use them in our daily lives. A study conducted by Hameed (2020) highlighted the importance of incidental vocabulary learning as a learner-centered approach to acquire vocabulary in authentic situations. They concluded that extensive reading has been the primary focus of incidental learning research in the past decades. However, recent studies have explored how information technology media can aid learners in acquiring vocabulary incidentally.

Level of Language of Proficiency of the Students who do not read Subtitles in terms of their Vocabulary along with Form, Meaning, and Use

The positive effects of subtitles in learning in virtual environments were quite substantial. Other studies (Kanellopoulou et al., 2019; Tseng et al., 2020; Hao et al., 2022) identified comparable evidence indicating that, for both content and language learning, narrated explanations are generally more effective than using only subtitles or a

combination of narration and subtitles. Disclosed in Table 3 is the level of language proficiency of the students who do not read subtitles in terms of their vocabulary.

Table 3. Level of language proficiency of the students who do not read subtitles in terms of their vocabulary

Score	Descriptive Rating	Area			Total	Rank
		Form	Meaning	Use		
16.1-20	Advanced Proficient	8(27%)	2(7%)	0(0%)	10(11%)	4
12.1-16	Proficient	11(37%)	3(10%)	1(3%)	15(17%)	3
8.1-12	Approaching Proficient	7(23%)	13(43%)	17(57%)	37(41%)	1
4.1-8	Developing Proficient	4(13%)	11(37%)	11(37%)	26(29%)	2
01-Apr	Beginning Proficient	0(0%)	1(3%)	1(3%)	2(3%)	5
Total		30	30	30		
Average		13.43	09.53	0,3958333	0,4597222	
Descriptive rating		Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Approaching Proficient	
Rank		1	2	3		

The table 3 presented the level of language proficiency of the students who do not read subtitles with their vocabulary along with form, meaning and use. The students earned 37 of percentage equivalent of 11 students as a highest rank who was proficient along with form in their vocabulary. Furthermore, the students earned a 45-percentage equivalent of 13 students as the highest rank that was in approaching proficient along with meaning in their vocabulary. Moreover, the students earned a 57-percentage equivalent of 17 students as the highest rank that was approaching proficient along with use in their vocabulary. Generally, the table presented that the students were proficient in the vocabulary in terms of its form having an average of 13.43%. The students were approaching proficient in the vocabulary in terms of meaning having an average score of 9.53%. Moreover, the students were approaching proficient in the vocabulary in terms of use having an average score of 8.90%.

From these findings, the data revealed that the majority of the students who do not read subtitles in terms of their vocabulary were approaching proficient in their vocabulary. These findings showed that the proficiency of the students might not be brought by watching English foreign movies with subtitles. In contrast to the extensive research on language learning, relatively few studies have explored the impact of subtitles on content learning. However, existing research has indicated that subtitles can have a beneficial effect on content acquisition in a second language. For instance, English-speaking students demonstrated significant improvement in their understanding when viewing a short educational video in Spanish, with Spanish subtitles providing benefits, but English subtitles yielding even greater advantages. (Lertola, 2019).

Difference in the Level of Language Proficiency of the Respondents between Two Groups in Terms of their Vocabulary along with Form, Meaning, and Use

Language proficiency is often measured by an individual's ability to effectively communicate using a wide range of words and phrases, reflecting their vocabulary. A strong vocabulary demonstrates a deep understanding of a language and enables individuals to express themselves clearly and precisely. It is said that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well individuals speak, listen, read, and write (Baesa-Alfelor & Ocampo, 2023). Disclosed in Table 4 was the significant difference on the level of language proficiency of the respondents between two groups in terms of their vocabulary along with form, meaning, and use.

Table 4. Difference on the level of language proficiency of the respondents between two groups in terms of their vocabulary along with form, meaning, and use

Variables	t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Form	1.970	0.054	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Meaning	2.430	0.018	Reject Ho	Significant
Use	0,6097222	0,2659722	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Overall	2.263	0.027	Reject Ho	Significant

As illustrated, the level of the language proficiency in terms of their vocabulary along with form showed that the t-value was 1.970 and a p-value of 0.054. Hence, the p-value was greater than the alpha of 0.05, the decision was to accept the null hypothesis and interpreted as not significant. This finding was similar in terms of variable "use" which t-value resulted to 0.878 and a p-value of 0.383, which was greater than the alpha of 0.05. On the other hand, the t-value for variable "meaning" resulted in 2.430 with a p-value of 0.018, which was less than the alpha of 0.05. This finding revealed that the level of language proficiency of two groups of respondents significantly varied in this area. Moreover, in terms of overall vocabulary level of the respondents, the t-value resulted in 2.263 with a p-value of 0.027, which was less than the alpha of 0.05. This data revealed that the level of language proficiency of the two groups of respondents significantly varied in terms of their vocabulary.

Furthermore, the findings of this study only implied that there was a significant difference between the two groups, emphasizing that, on the whole, the use of subtitles have a noteworthy effect on the vocabulary proficiency of the respondents. This was supported by the study of Gesa and Miralpeix (2022) which found that participants who watched videos with subtitles scored significantly higher on vocabulary tests compared to those who watched without subtitles. This supported the claim that subtitles positively impact vocabulary learning and potentially contribute to overall vocabulary competence.

Relationship between the Extent of Reading Subtitles from Watching English Films and the Vocabulary Level of the Respondents

Learning vocabulary through subtitled films is a recognized approach in foreign language education, with a substantial body of research evaluating the efficacy of subtitled videos in both classroom and home settings. Several studies have focused on the vocabulary development of students watching videos at home, revealing that those who viewed films with subtitles considerably outperformed those who watched without them. (Kossistra and Beentjes, as cited in Alisa Sadiku, 2017). Table 5 presented the relationship between the extent of reading subtitles from watching English films and the vocabulary level of the respondents.

Table 5. Relationship between the extent of reading subtitles from watching English films and the vocabulary level of the respondents.

Vocabulary Level	Extent of reading subtitles		
	r-value	*p-value*	*Intr.*
Form	-0.205	0,192361111	Not Sig.
Meaning	-0.256	0,119444444	Not Sig.
Use	-0.515**	0.004	Sig.
Overall	-0.389*	0.034	Sig.

*　Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**　Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 showed the relationship between the extent of reading subtitles from watching English films and the vocabulary level of the respondents. Data disclosed that along form and extent, the r-value resulted to -0.205 and p-value of 0.277. Hence the p-value was greater than the Alpha of 0.05, the interpretation was not significant. Also, the relationship between meaning and extent was found not significantly related constituting the p-value of -0.256 and p-value of 0.172 which was quota the Alpha of related with the r-value of -0.05. On the other hand, use and extent were found significantly related with the r-value of -0.515 and a p-value of 0.004. Moreover, the overall vocabulary level of the respondents was found significantly related to their extent of reading subtitles with an r-value of -0.389 and a p-value of 0.034.

This result gave the researchers an idea that reading subtitles from watching English films affected the vocabulary level of the respondents. This finding was also disclosed and cited in the study of Sadiku (2017); Neuman and Koskinen (1992 as cited in Mosavi, 2014) discovered that when their subjects were exposed to English videos with subtitles their vocabulary significantly improved. Furthermore, Koskinen et al. (1985 as cited in Yuksel & Tanriverdi, 2009) reported that subtitled movies do have an impact on incidental vocabulary acquisition of non-native English speakers. Yuksel and Tanriverdi (2009) also found that learners have a greater progress when exposed to subtitled movies rather than movies without subtitles. To sum up, the results from the above-mentioned studies as well as majority of recent studies have supported that reading subtitles from watching English films affected the vocabulary level of the students.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of reading English subtitles on the language proficiency of students while watching English films. The findings suggest that students who read subtitles while watching films tend to have a higher level of vocabulary and meaning, and that reading subtitles can enhance their understanding of the language. However, the study also found that the level of language proficiency in terms of vocabulary, form, and use is not significantly related to the extent of reading subtitles, except for vocabulary use.

In terms of language proficiency, the study found that students who read subtitles tend to have a more proficient level of vocabulary and meaning, whereas those who do not read subtitles have an approaching proficient level. However, the study also found that the level of language proficiency in terms of vocabulary, form, and use is not significantly different between the two groups. The study concludes that reading subtitles can contribute to students' proficiency in vocabulary and meaning, but it may not have a significant impact on their proficiency in vocabulary use.

All things considered, this study suggests that reading English subtitles while watching English films can have a positive impact on students' language proficiency, particularly in terms of vocabulary and meaning. However, the study also found that the relationship between reading subtitles and language proficiency is complex and may depend on various factors. Therefore, this study provides insights into the potential benefits and limitations of using subtitles as a language learning tool, and highlights the importance of further research in this area to better understand its effects on language acquisition.

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