

## Students' Perception on Learning Vocabulary through Watching Western Movies

Jihan Aulia Dwi Saputri<sup>1</sup>, Dahniar<sup>2</sup>, Nur Muthmainnah Halim<sup>3</sup>, Alfiandy Kamal<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Islam Makassar

Corresponding Author

[jihanauliadwsptri@gmail.com](mailto:jihanauliadwsptri@gmail.com)

---

**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of learning English through movies and explores the advantages of vocabulary acquisition via this medium. Utilizing qualitative methods, questionnaire responses from English Literature students from academic years 2019 to 2022 were gathered. Results reveal that students find learning English through movies to be enjoyable, effective, and engaging. They report benefits such as enhanced word spelling, contextual comprehension, and pronunciation skills. Despite encountering challenges, the use of movies as a learning tool remains effective. This research underscores the potential of incorporating movies into language learning curricula as it aligns with students' preferences and provides tangible benefits for vocabulary development

**Keywords:** EFL, film, students' perception, vocabulary, western movies

---

### INTRODUCTION

Many people argue that English is hard to learn because there are a lot of problems that make it tough to practice. These problems come from things like not feeling sure about using English, not fully understanding how the language works, and not knowing enough words. One big problem is having enough words. To really learn English well, one needs to know a lot of vocabulary since it is the foundation to learn language (Kamal, 2019). If one doesn't, it's hard to learn or use English. One of the way to solve that problem is learning vocabulary through films.

The use of film as a language learning tool has attracted increasing interest in recent years. Research has shown that films can provide learners with exposure to authentic language use, cultural contexts, and real-life scenarios, thereby improving a variety of language skills, including listening comprehension and speaking proficiency (Seferoğlu, 2008). Films offer a dynamic platform for language exposure, utilizing Western films for vocabulary acquisition presents unique challenges. Cultural and linguistic disparities between students' native languages and the languages depicted in Western films can pose significant barriers. The slang, idiomatic expressions, and regional accents common in Western films can further complicate comprehension and hinder effective vocabulary acquisition.

Numerous studies have extensively investigated diverse methodologies and strategies for acquiring vocabulary in language learning. While traditional techniques like



memorization and repetition have persisted over time, recent research underscores the significance of context and meaningful engagement in vocabulary (Yusupova, 2023). This shift in focus highlights the recognition that mere rote learning may not be as effective as embedding new words within meaningful contexts that resonate with learners' experiences and interests.

Furthermore, scholars have delved into the efficacy of multimedia sources, particularly films, in enhancing vocabulary learning (Munir, 2016). Films offer a dynamic and immersive platform that presents vocabulary in authentic contexts, allowing learners to grasp nuances in meaning and usage. Additionally, the visual and auditory stimuli provided by films can aid in reinforcing vocabulary retention by appealing to multiple sensory modalities. Films serve as an invaluable tool in enhancing vocabulary learning due to their multifaceted benefits. Firstly, films provide a dynamic and immersive platform that captivates learners' attention and engages them in the learning process (Champoux, 1999). Unlike traditional methods that may feel static or disconnected from real-life contexts, films offer rich narratives and visual depictions that bring vocabulary to life in authentic situations (Ryan & Granville, 2020). This authenticity enables learners to not only encounter new words but also observe how they are used naturally within various contexts, enhancing their understanding of nuances in meaning and usage (Macdonald et al., 2006).

Moreover, the visual and auditory stimuli inherent in films stimulate multiple sensory modalities, facilitating better retention of vocabulary (R. Mayer & Moreno, 1998). The combination of vibrant visuals, dialogue, and sound effects creates a multisensory experience that reinforces learners' memory and comprehension of new words. For visual learners, the imagery helps solidify associations between words and their meanings, while auditory learners benefit from hearing words pronounced in context. This multisensory approach accommodates diverse learning styles, making vocabulary acquisition more accessible and effective for a wider range of learners (K. M. Mayer et al., 2015). Overall, films serve as a powerful educational tool that not only enriches vocabulary learning but also fosters a deeper understanding of language through immersion in authentic and engaging content.

Another essential part as well is understanding learners' perceptions and attitudes towards language learning materials and resources that is crucial for educators to tailor teaching strategies effectively (Halim, 2021; Zahro et al., 2023). Numerous studies have delved into students' perspectives on diverse language learning methodologies, encompassing multimedia resources like films. Yet, a notable research gap exists concerning students' perceptions of vocabulary acquisition through the medium of Western

films. This void highlights the necessity of investigating learner attitudes and preferences within this specific context. By doing so, educators can discern potential obstacles and advantages associated with utilizing Western films for vocabulary learning. Such exploration is indispensable for informed decision-making in language instruction. Furthermore, delving into learners' attitudes towards this unconventional method not only unveils their preferences but also sheds light on the efficacy and feasibility of incorporating Western films into language curricula. Ultimately, this deeper understanding empowers educators to design more engaging and impactful learning experiences tailored to the preferences and needs of their students.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by investigating Indonesian students' perceptions of vocabulary learning through watching Western films. By filling this research gap, this study aims to provide insights of Indonesian students' perceptions of vocabulary learning through Western films, which fills a significant gap in the existing literature. By investigating the effectiveness of this approach in the Indonesian context, this study offers valuable insights into the applicability and challenges of using Western films as a tool for vocabulary acquisition in a culturally and linguistically diverse environment. The findings from this research will not only increase our understanding of language learning strategies, but also provide practical implications for language educators and curriculum developers in Indonesia. By identifying students' attitudes, preferences and barriers, this research aims to provide input for the design of more effective language learning materials and strategies adapted to the Indonesian context. In addition, this research contributes to the broader discourse on language learning through multimedia resources, offering a more in-depth look at the role of films in vocabulary acquisition. Overall, this research effort aims to advance our understanding of language learning practices and ultimately facilitate a more efficient and engaging language acquisition process.

## **METHOD**

The research employed qualitative methods, drawing upon the framework outlined by Percy and Kostere (2015), which emphasize exploring individuals' subjective opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and reflections on their experiences regarding external phenomena. Conducted over a one-month period in 2022, the study took place at Universitas Islam Makassar, South Sulawesi. The research participants consisted of 20 students enrolled conveniently from the English Literature program at the Faculty of Literature & Humanities, spanning academic years 2019 to 2022. Data collection relied on questionnaires. Questionnaires served as the primary instruments, ensuring robust data collection.

## RESULTS

By delving into Indonesian students' viewpoints and experiences, this research unveils crucial insights into the efficacy and obstacles associated with employing Western movies as a medium for vocabulary acquisition. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the findings elucidate intricate perspectives of the students.

### ***Students' Perception of Learning Vocabulary Through Watching Western Movies***

This study finds that students believe watching western movies can assist in developing speaking skills (90%). They also expressed that by watching western movies, students can learn to use words appropriately in various situations (70%). Furthermore, they acknowledged that through watching movies, students can gain deeper insights into foreign cultures (70%), find learning English more enjoyable (75%), and enhance their knowledge (65%). Additionally, students noted that watching western movies makes language learning more manageable (75%) and emphasized the importance of continuous vocabulary learning through this method (55%).

### ***Students' attitudes towards the limitation in developing learn vocabulary through watching movies***

Many students enjoyed watching movies with subtitles, believing that subtitles positively influenced their mastery of vocabulary. However, a minority expressed that subtitles had no effect (15%) or considered watching movies to be a waste of time (20%). Additionally, some argued that movies did not meet their needs (10%).

### **The advantages of learning vocabulary through watching English movies**

The results indicated that students could improve their pronunciation of words correctly (95%). Moreover, students showed improvement in their vocabulary (80%), automatic acquisition of slang and idioms (65%), communication skills with foreigners (60%), and spelling ability (65%).

## DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate a largely positive perception among students regarding the efficacy of learning vocabulary through watching western movies. A significant majority (90%) believe that this method aids in the development of speaking skills, suggesting that exposure to authentic language usage in context is beneficial (Astuti & Hapsari, 2019). Moreover, a substantial portion of students (70%) recognize the utility of movies in helping them use words appropriately across various situations, highlighting the contextual learning aspect inherent in movie watching.

The acknowledgment by students (70%) that watching movies provides deeper

insights into foreign cultures underscores the multifaceted benefits of this approach beyond mere language acquisition. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the role of cultural immersion in language learning processes (Brown, 2010). Additionally, the high percentage (75%) of students finding learning English more enjoyable through movie-watching reflects the potential for fostering intrinsic motivation, which is crucial for sustained language learning efforts. While the majority of students perceive watching western movies as advantageous for language learning, it is noteworthy that a considerable proportion (20%) express reservations or skepticism. Understanding the reasons behind such attitudes is crucial for designing more effective language learning strategies that cater to diverse learner preferences and needs.

The mixed attitudes towards limitations in vocabulary development through movie-watching highlight the complexity of this learning method. While many students enjoy watching movies with subtitles and perceive them as beneficial for vocabulary acquisition (Metruk, 2018), a notable minority (15%) either believe subtitles have no effect or consider movie-watching to be a waste of time. This divergence in opinions underscores the importance of considering individual learning preferences and the need for personalized approaches in language instruction (Wiśniewska & Mora, 2020). Furthermore, the concerns raised by some students regarding movies not meeting their needs (10%) suggest potential areas for improvement in the selection or delivery of movie materials. Addressing these concerns could enhance the effectiveness of using movies as a language learning tool and promote greater engagement among learners.

The findings underscore several advantages associated with learning vocabulary through watching western movies. Notably, the overwhelming majority of students (95%) report improvements in pronunciation accuracy, indicating the potential of movie-watching for honing phonetic skills and enhancing oral communication abilities. (Mu, 2018). Moreover, significant proportions of students demonstrate gains in vocabulary (80%), automatic acquisition of slang and idioms (65%), communication skills with foreigners (60%), and spelling ability (65%). These outcomes underscore the diverse linguistic benefits of movie-based vocabulary learning, ranging from lexical expansion to cultural fluency and intercultural communication competence.

Overall, the findings suggest that while watching western movies can be a valuable supplementary tool for vocabulary acquisition, individual differences in learning preferences and needs must be considered.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, the study underscored a unanimous perception among participants at the faculty of English literature: watching English movies significantly contributes to vocabulary expansion. Notably, participants highlighted the advantage of encountering unfamiliar vocabulary, which they believed was not adequately covered in classroom instruction. The use of subtitles emerged as a key strategy facilitating vocabulary acquisition, as participants reported actively engaging with subtitles to decipher new words. These insights affirm the efficacy of movie-based learning in fostering vocabulary development. Overall, the findings emphasize the valuable role of English movies as a supplementary tool for enriching vocabulary beyond traditional classroom settings, offering learners an immersive and dynamic approach to language acquisition. Further research is warranted to explore the effectiveness of specific movie genres, viewing techniques, and instructional strategies to optimize the learning outcomes associated with this approach.

## REFERENCES

- Astuti, N. T., & Hapsari, F. (2019). Efektifitas Media Film dan Strategi Pembelajaran Semantic Mapping dalam Meningkatkan Penguasaan Kosakata Bahasa Inggris. *Journal of Education and Instruction (JOEAI)*. <https://doi.org/10.31539/JOEAI.V2I1.713>
- Brown, S. (2010). Popular films in the EFL classroom: Study of methodology. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 3, 45–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SBSPRO.2010.07.011>
- Champoux, J. E. (1999). Film as a Teaching Resource. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 8, 206–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105649269982016>
- Halim, N. M. (2021). Teacher Talk: Student's Perception and Expectation. *ELT Worldwide*, 8(1), 52–59.
- Kamal, A. (2019). *Learning English Vocabulary through Instagram*. Universitas Negeri Makassar.
- Macdonald, M. N., Badger, R., & Dasli, M. (2006). Authenticity, Culture and Language Learning. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 6, 250–261. <https://doi.org/10.2167/laic252.0>
- Mayer, K. M., Yildiz, I. B., Macedonia, M., & Kriegstein, K. (2015). Visual and Motor Cortices Differentially Support the Translation of Foreign Language Words. *Current Biology*, 25, 530–535. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2014.11.068>
- Mayer, R., & Moreno, R. (1998). A Split-Attention Effect in Multimedia Learning: Evidence for Dual Processing Systems in Working Memory. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90, 312–320. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.90.2.312>
- Metruk, R. (2018). The Effects of Watching Authentic English Videos with and without Subtitles on Listening and Reading Skills of EFL Learners. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 14, 2545–2553. <https://doi.org/10.29333/EJMSTE/90088>
- Mu, H. (2018). A Study on English Acquisition from the Perspective of the Multimodal Theory. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.17507/TPLS.0806.10>
- Munir, F. (2016). The Effectiveness of Teaching Vocabulary by Using Cartoon Film toward Vocabulary Mastery

- of EFL Students. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 1(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v1i1.20>
- Percy, W., Kostere, K., & Kostere, S. (2015). Generic Qualitative Research in Psychology. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2097>
- Ryan, J., & Granville, S. (2020). The suitability of film for modelling the pragmatics of interaction: Exploring authenticity. *System*, 89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.102186>
- Seferoğlu, G. (2008). Using feature films in language classes. *Educational Studies*, 34(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690701785202>
- Wiśniewska, N., & Mora, J. C. (2020). Can Captioned Video Benefit Second Language Pronunciation? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 42, 599–624. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263120000029>
- Yusupova, S. (2023). Main Approaches and Techniques of Teaching English Vocabulary. *Академические исследования в современной науке*, 2(27), Article 27.
- Zahro, F., Wahab, A. A., & Ferdiyanto, F. (2023). Students' Perception Towards Teachers Strategies in Teaching Reading Skill. *International Journal of English Education and Linguistics (IJoEEL)*, 5(1), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.33650/ijoeel.v5i1.5782>