

EXPLORING EFL STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF VOCABULARY LEARNING THROUGH SUBTITLES

THESIS

Submitted by:

PUTRI RAISAH

NIM. 210203096

Student of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*

Department of English Language Education



**FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY**

BANDA ACEH

2026M / 1448 H

THESIS

Submitted to *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan
Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-
Raniry Banda Aceh* in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
The Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

by:

PUTRI RAISAH

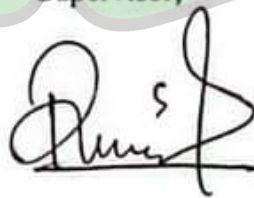
210203096

Student of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Department of English Language Education

Approved by:

A R - R A N I R Y

Supervisor,



Rahmi, M.TESOL., Ph.D,
Date :

**EXPLORING EFL STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF VOCABULARY
LEARNING THROUGH SUBTITLES**

THESIS

It has been defended in *Sidang Munaqasyah* in front of the board of the Examination for the working paper and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

On:

Monday,

February 02th 2026 M

Sya'ban 14th 1447 H

Board of Examiners,

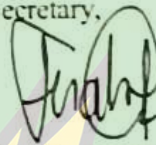
Chairperson,



Rahmi, S.Pd.L., M. TESOL., Ph.D

NIP 198402052006042002

Secretary,



Fera Busfina Zalha, MA

NIP 198902272018012001

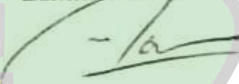
Examiner I,



Dr. Muhammad Nasir, M. Hum

NIP 196601131994021002

Examiner II



Dr. Maskur, MA

NIP 197602022005011002

Certified by:

The Dean of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh




Prof. Safar Malik, S.Ag., M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D

NIP 197307021997031003

SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN
(Declaration of Originality)

Saya yang bertandatangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Putri Raisah
NIM : 210203096
Tempat/tanggal lahir : Mee Peuduek, 17 Oktober 2003
Alamat : Gampong Mee Peuduek, kec.
Trienggadeng, Kab. Pidie Jaya

Menyatakan dengan sesungguhnya bahwa skripsi yang berjudul:

**Exploring EFL Student's Perceptions of Vocabulary Learning
Through Subtitles**

adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggungjawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

Banda Aceh, 26 January 2026

Saya yang membuat surat pernyataan,



Putri Raisah

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

First and foremost, all praise and gratitude belong solely to Allah SWT, the Almighty, for His infinite mercy, blessings, and guidance that have enabled me to complete this thesis. May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who has guided us to the path of truth and enlightenment. Writing this thesis has been a long and meaningful journey filled with challenges, learning, and growth. Therefore, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have supported and contributed to the completion of this work.

My sincerest appreciation and heartfelt gratitude go to my supervisor, Rahmi, M.TESOL., Ph.D, for her invaluable guidance, patience, and encouragement throughout the process of writing this thesis. Her insightful feedback, constant support, and kind attention have inspired me to improve both academically and personally. May Allah SWT reward her with abundant health, happiness, and blessings, and may all her good deeds and dedication to her students be counted as charity.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Syarifah Dahliana, S.Ag., SE., M.Ag., M.Ed, Ph.D, Head of the English Education Department, and Azizah, S.Ag., M.Pd, Secretary of the Department, for their assistance and support throughout my academic journey. May Allah bless them with good health, happiness, and continued success. Special thanks go to the seven participants from the Department of English Education who voluntarily shared their time and experiences during the interviews. Their valuable contributions made this research possible, and I truly appreciate their cooperation and openness.

My deepest gratitude goes to my precious family, especially my beloved parents, Mulidar Ahmad and Halimah Abdullah, for their boundless love, prayers, and sacrifices. Their unwavering support and encouragement have been the foundation of my strength and perseverance. I am forever indebted to them for their unconditional love and guidance. May Allah SWT always protect them and grant them endless happiness and blessings.

In addition, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my dear friend,

Cindy Caroline Munthe, who has sincerely helped and accompanied me throughout the process of completing this thesis. Her support, motivation, and presence during the research and writing stages have been invaluable to me. My thanks also go to Nurhafifah, who has always provided encouragement and positive energy to stay strong and keep moving forward.

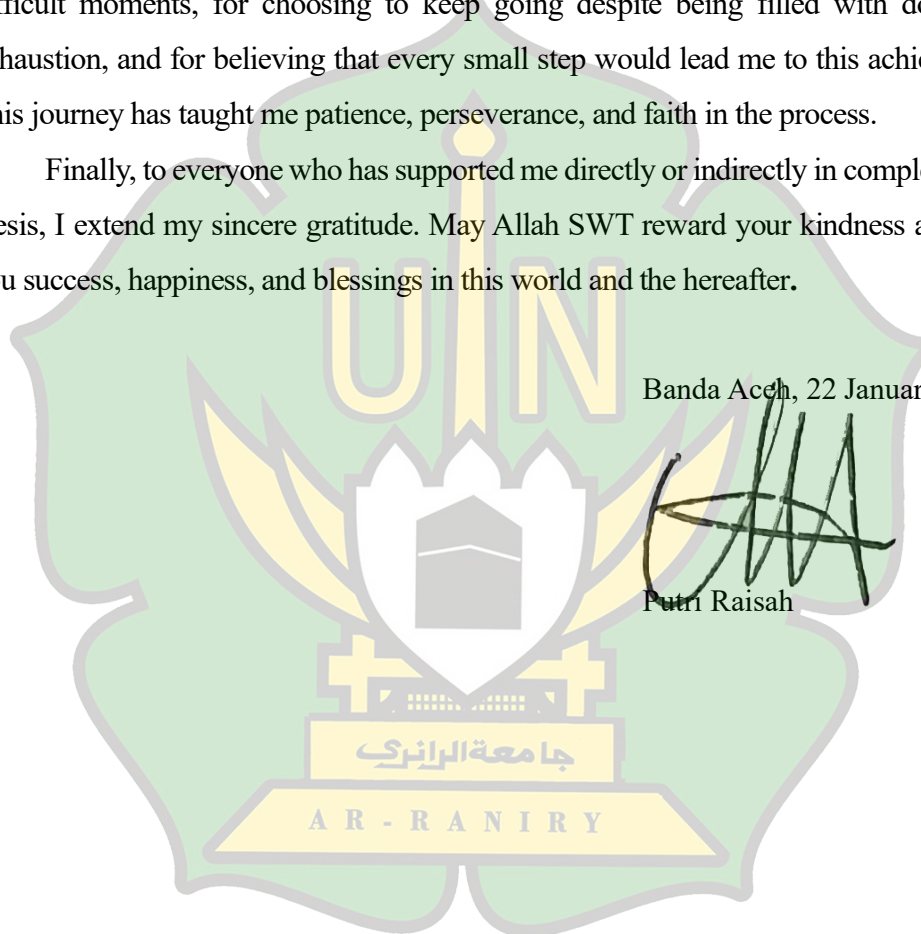
Last but not least, I would like to thank myself for not giving up even in the most difficult moments, for choosing to keep going despite being filled with doubt and exhaustion, and for believing that every small step would lead me to this achievement. This journey has taught me patience, perseverance, and faith in the process.

Finally, to everyone who has supported me directly or indirectly in completing this thesis, I extend my sincere gratitude. May Allah SWT reward your kindness and grant you success, happiness, and blessings in this world and the hereafter.

Banda Aceh, 22 January 2026



Putri Raisah



ABSTRACT

Name : Putri Raisah
Reg. No. : 210203096
Faculty : *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Major : Department of English Language Education
Thesis Working Title : Exploring EFL Student's Perceptions of Vocabulary Learning Through Subtitles
Supervisor : Rahmi, M. TESOL., Ph.D.
Keywords : EFL Student's, Vocabulary Learning, Subtitles,

This study investigates the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students toward vocabulary learning through subtitles. The research aimed to explore how students perceive the role of subtitles in facilitating vocabulary recognition, retention, and motivation, as well as to identify the challenges they experience when using subtitles as a learning aid. The study was conducted at a university in Aceh and involved seven active students from the English Education Department who met specific selection criteria. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, and the data were collected through semi structured interviews conducted in two stages to ensure data validity and depth. The findings revealed four major themes: (1) subtitles facilitate vocabulary recognition and comprehension, (2) subtitles reinforce vocabulary retention, (3) subtitles increase motivation and encourage autonomous learning, and (4) subtitles have certain limitations as a learning tool. the results showed that subtitles helped students connect pronunciation and spelling, comprehend meaning more effectively, and remember new words through repeated exposure. subtitles also reduced anxiety and created a more enjoyable learning environment, which enhanced students' motivation and encouraged independent learning outside the classroom. however, some participants reported difficulties such as overreliance on subtitles, fast moving text, and challenges in understanding idioms or cultural expressions.

A R - R A N I R Y

TABLE OF CONTENT

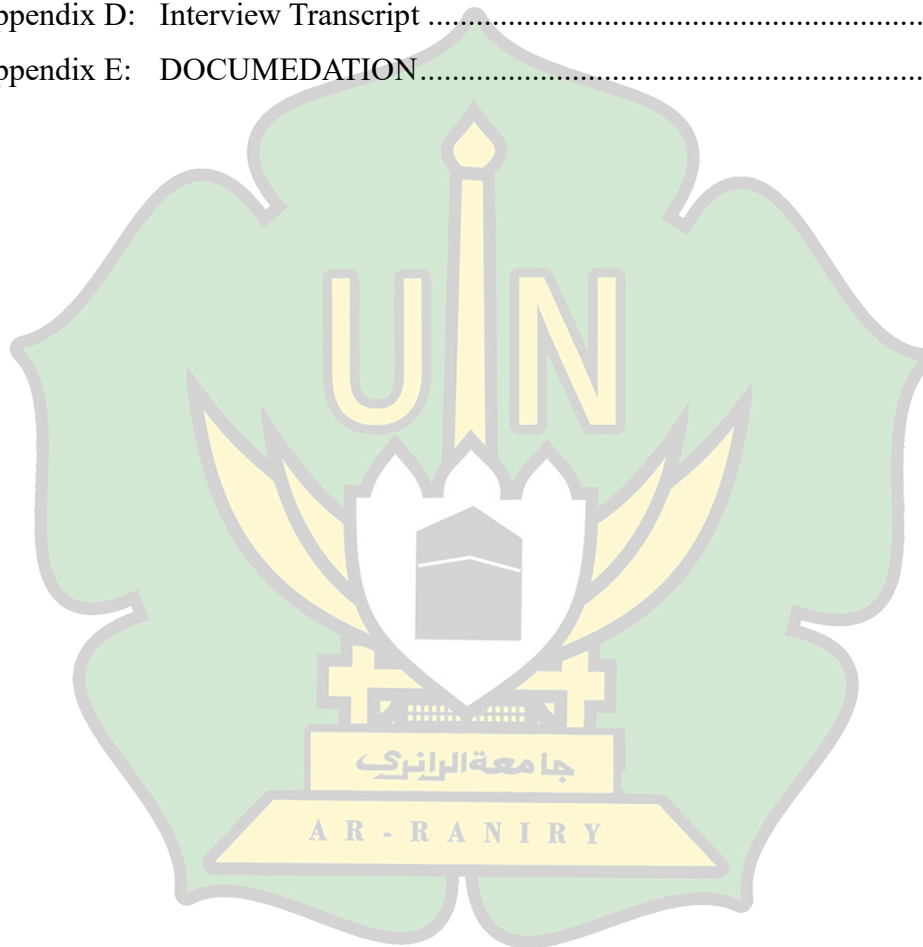
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENT	v
LIST OF APPENDICES	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of the study	1
B. Research question	2
C. Research objectives.....	2
D. Significance of the Study	2
E. Scope and Limitation of the Study	3
F. Terminologies	3
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	5
A. Vocabulary Learning in EFL Context	5
B. Subtitles in Language Learning	8
C. Student's Perceptions in Language Learning.....	13
D. Previous Studies.....	14
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	17
A. Research Design	17
B. Research Setting and Participants	17
C. Technique of data collection	18
D. Data Analysis	20
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	22
A. Findings.....	22
B. Discussion	44

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS	49
A. Conclusions.....	49
B. Suggestions	50
REFERENCES.....	52
AUTOBIOGRAPHY.....	70



LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Appointment Letter of Supervisor	57
Appendix B: Recommendation Letter from Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan to Conduct Field Research.....	58
Appendix C: Interview Protocol	59
Appendix D: Interview Transcript	61
Appendix E: DOCUMEDATION.....	69



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

In the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), vocabulary is a core component that determines the success of communication. Nation (2013) stated that vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in determining one's overall language proficiency and communicative ability, as reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills all depend heavily on vocabulary mastery. Without sufficient vocabulary, students will face difficulties in comprehending and expressing ideas effectively. Along with technological advancements, sources for vocabulary learning are no longer limited to textbooks or formal classroom instruction. Streaming platforms such as Netflix have become increasingly popular among EFL students because they provide easy access to a wide range of authentic materials. One feature that has the potential to support vocabulary learning is subtitles. In this study, the subtitles used are Indonesian subtitles, which display spoken English dialogue in Indonesian written text. According to Vanderplank (2016), subtitles allow learners to read and listen simultaneously, helping them connect the sounds they hear with the words they see. Similarly, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014) define subtitling as the process of displaying written text on the screen that represents the original dialogue, providing both visual and linguistic support for the audience. therefore, English subtitles can be considered not only as a tool for comprehension but also as an effective aid for vocabulary learning, as they help learners understand meaning while being exposed to new English words in meaningful and contextual situations.

Empirical studies support this potential. Peters and Webb (2018) found that watching English language programs with subtitles can enrich vocabulary acquisition incidentally because new words are learned in rich and meaningful contexts. Similarly, Wang (2012) states that subtitles help EFL learners reduce listening anxiety and enable them to focus more on understanding the meaning of new words. This is particularly relevant for Indonesian university students, who often experience difficulties in understanding native speakers' accents and speech

rate. However, students' perceptions of using subtitles especially Indonesian subtitles as a medium for vocabulary learning have not been extensively explored in the local context, particularly at a university in Aceh. Understanding these perceptions is important because they influence students' motivation and learning strategies. According to Robbins and Judge (2017), perception is "the process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment" (p. 166). This implies that when students perceive subtitles as an effective and enjoyable learning medium, they are more likely to use them consistently for autonomous vocabulary learning.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore in depth the perceptions of students from the English Education Department at a university in Aceh toward vocabulary learning through English subtitles. This research employs a qualitative approach, using interviews as the primary instrument to capture students' experiences, opinions, and challenges. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of vocabulary learning strategies that better align with the needs and preferences of EFL students in the digital era.

B. Research question

From the above background of study, the research questions are formulated as the following:

1. What are the perceptions of English Education Department students at a university in Aceh toward vocabulary learning through subtitles?

C. Research objectives

Based on the research question, the aims of this research are intended to:

1. To explore the perceptions of English Education Department students at a university in Aceh toward vocabulary learning through subtitles.

D. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to provide benefits for various parties, including for university teachers, and students:

1. *For Lecturers*

The findings of this study may serve as a reference for lecturers in selecting or designing effective vocabulary teaching strategies that align with students' needs and interests. The insights gained from students' perceptions can also help lecturers integrate more engaging and contextual media into their teaching practices

2. *For Students*

The results of this study can help students become more aware of effective strategies for improving their vocabulary mastery through self-directed learning. By understanding how subtitles can support vocabulary development, students may be encouraged to utilize digital or audiovisual media as supplementary learning tools beyond the classroom

3. *For future Researchers*

This study can serve as a reference and foundation for future research exploring similar topics in the area of vocabulary learning and learner perception. It may also inspire further investigations into the role of digital and authentic media in supporting English language learning among EFL students.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is limited to exploring the perceptions of English Education Department students at a university in Aceh regarding vocabulary learning through subtitles. The focus is on their experiences, views, and challenges, without quantitatively measuring vocabulary improvement

F. Terminologies

1. Perception

According to Robbins and Judge (2017), perception is the process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. In the context of education, perception influences how learners understand, evaluate, and respond to learning experiences. In this study, perception refers to the students' understanding, opinions, and attitudes toward the use of subtitles as a learning support in improving their English vocabulary. It focuses on

how students at a university in Aceh view the effectiveness of subtitles in helping them learn new words and comprehend English materials

2. Vocabulary Learning

Nation (2013) defines vocabulary learning as the process of acquiring and mastering new words in a language, including understanding their meaning, form, pronunciation, and use in context. Vocabulary is considered the foundation of language proficiency because it enables learners to communicate effectively. In this study, vocabulary learning refers to the process through which students develop their English vocabulary by watching audiovisual materials with subtitles. It involves how students recognize, remember, and use new words that they encounter through subtitled content.

3. Subtitles

Subtitles are the written form of spoken dialogue displayed on the screen to assist viewers in understanding the content. Vanderplank (2016) describes subtitles as written representations of speech that appear simultaneously with the audio, providing visual and linguistic support for comprehension. In this study, subtitles refer to English text displayed at the bottom of the screen while watching English movies, series, or videos. They are used as a learning support to help students improve their vocabulary comprehension, retention, and overall understanding of English materials.

4. EFL Students

EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), EFL students are individuals who learn English in a non-English-speaking country, where English is taught as a subject rather than used as the main language of communication. In this study, EFL students refer to learners enrolled in the English Education Department at a university in Aceh, who study English as a foreign language and use subtitles as one of their tools to support vocabulary learning.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Vocabulary Learning in EFL Context

Vocabulary is considered one of the most essential components of language competence. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners cannot effectively communicate ideas, comprehend texts, or participate in meaningful interactions. Wilkins (1972) argues that vocabulary is the most essential component of language learning, since communication cannot take place effectively without sufficient lexical knowledge. This view suggests that while grammar provides structure, vocabulary enables meaning and understanding to be conveyed. Similarly, Nation (2013) explains that vocabulary and language use are mutually reinforcing learners need vocabulary to communicate, and through communication, their vocabulary continues to develop. In line with this, Schmitt (2010) describes vocabulary learning as an ongoing process in which learners continually encounter new words and expand their understanding of familiar ones emphasizing that learners must not only memorize meanings but also understand a word's form, use, and relationships with other words. mastery of vocabulary, therefore, includes knowledge of synonyms, antonyms, collocations, word parts, and appropriate usage within context.

In the EFL context, vocabulary learning can be divided into intentional and incidental learning. Hulstijn (2001) explains that intentional learning refers to learning activities in which learners are consciously instructed to memorize new information, whereas incidental learning occurs as a by-product of other activities such as reading or listening (p. 271). Incidental learning encourages learners to “pick up” new words naturally while focusing on understanding meaning. This process allows for deeper cognitive engagement because learners infer word meaning from context, which supports long term retention (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 14).

On the other hand, intentional learning involves deliberate memorization and focused instruction, such as learning word lists or using flashcards. Although this

approach may result in faster short term gains, it is often less effective for long-term retention if not supported by meaningful exposure (Schmitt, 2010, p. 12). Recent studies suggest that combining both approaches incidental and intentional leads to more effective vocabulary acquisition (Webb, 2020, p. 22). This combination allows learners to first encounter new vocabulary naturally and then reinforce it through explicit study. Furthermore, Nation (2013) proposed that a well balanced language course should incorporate four strands of learning: meaning focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development (p. 14). The meaning focused input strand involves understanding messages through reading and listening; meaning-focused output focuses on speaking and writing for communication; language-focused learning covers deliberate study of vocabulary and grammar; and fluency development aims to use known language efficiently and automatically. when these strands are balanced, learners can achieve comprehensive vocabulary growth through both exposure and practice. Richards and Schmidt (2010) define vocabulary as “a set of words that are known and used by a particular person” (p. 629). They further note that vocabulary learning is not only about knowing the meaning of a word but also its pronunciation, spelling, and usage in various contexts. Similarly, Oxford (1990) describes vocabulary learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more transferable to new situations” (p. 8).

These strategies include guessing from context, using word associations, or applying newly learned vocabulary in speaking and writing. In the context of this study, vocabulary learning through subtitles combines both intentional and incidental elements. Learners acquire new words incidentally while watching and reading subtitles, but they may also engage in intentional learning by taking notes, repeating, or translating unfamiliar vocabulary. Therefore, subtitles serve as a bridge that facilitates natural word acquisition while still allowing deliberate reinforcement of vocabulary knowledge

1. The Importance of Vocabulary Mastery

Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that vocabulary mastery is central to the development of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Students with limited

vocabulary face significant barriers in comprehension and communication. For instance, Laufer (1997) found that a threshold of around 3,000 word families is necessary for learners to read authentic texts with adequate comprehension. Thus, building vocabulary is not an optional supplement but a central part of EFL learning

2. Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990) classifies language learning strategies into six main categories: cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social strategies. She defines learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations” (p. 8). In vocabulary learning, these strategies help learners store, recall, and use words more effectively.

Cognitive strategies involve direct manipulation or transformation of the language, such as note-taking, summarizing, and using word analysis. Metacognitive strategies include planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's learning process, which help learners become more autonomous. Memory strategies (also known as mnemonic strategies) focus on linking new information with existing knowledge through association, imagery, or grouping for example, connecting a new word to a visual image or personal experience. compensation strategies are used when learners encounter gaps in knowledge, such as guessing meaning from context or using synonyms when a word is unknown. Social strategies refer to learners' efforts to interact with others to enhance vocabulary learning, for example, by asking teachers or peers for clarification (Oxford, 1990)

Building on Oxford's framework, Schmitt (1997) proposed a more specific taxonomy for vocabulary learning strategies, dividing them into two broad types: discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Discovery strategies are techniques learners use to find out the meaning of new words. According to Schmitt, these include using dictionaries, guessing from context, or asking someone for the meaning (Schmitt, 1997).

In contrast, consolidation strategies are used to remember and retain the meaning of newly learned words. These include repetition, semantic mapping, using new words in sentences, and grouping words based on meaning or form

(Schmitt, 1997, p. 205). Schmitt's taxonomy is significant because it emphasizes the dynamic process of vocabulary learning: first, discovering the meaning of unfamiliar words, and then reinforcing and consolidating that knowledge through repeated exposure and active use. This two-phase model reflects how vocabulary acquisition occurs naturally in both formal and informal contexts. In the context of learning through subtitles, for instance, EFL learners may use discovery strategies when inferring the meaning of a new word from context, and consolidation strategies when they later review, note, or reuse the word in other activities

B. Subtitles in Language Learning

Subtitles refer to the textual representation of spoken dialogue that appears on the screen simultaneously with audiovisual input. According to Vanderplank (2016), "subtitles and captions provide access to both the spoken and written forms of language, offering learners a dual mode of input that enhances comprehension and language acquisition" (p. 9). Subtitles can be categorized into two main types: intralingual subtitles, which are in the same language as the audio, and interlingual subtitles, which provide translation into another language (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2014, p. 14). Both types are widely used in foreign language learning contexts, depending on learners' proficiency levels and goals.

Research has shown that subtitles assist learners in several ways. They support listening comprehension, increase attention to word forms, and reinforce vocabulary learning through repeated exposure to both auditory and visual input (Montero Perez, Peters, & Desmet, 2013, p. 122). The effectiveness of subtitles is often explained through Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, which proposes that learning is enhanced when information is presented simultaneously in both verbal (audio) and visual (text) forms. According to Paivio (1991), "when verbal and nonverbal systems are activated together, they create two distinct memory traces that strengthen recall and comprehension" (p. 257). Thus, subtitles can facilitate deeper processing and improve memory retention by engaging both the auditory and visual channels of learning.

However, the effectiveness of subtitles depends largely on learners' proficiency levels. For low proficiency learners, subtitles in their first language (L1) or bilingual subtitles (L1 and L2 together) can help reduce cognitive load and enhance comprehension. Studies by Peters, Heynen, and Puimege (2016) found that "learners with lower proficiency benefited more from L1 and dual subtitles because they provided immediate access to meaning and supported incidental vocabulary acquisition" (p. 17). Similarly, Lwo and Lin (2012) observed that beginners who watched videos with L1 subtitles retained more target vocabulary than those using L2 subtitles alone (p. 136).

On the other hand, high proficiency learners tend to benefit more from L2 subtitles, as they can simultaneously process auditory and textual input in the same language. this promotes noticing of new vocabulary and improves word form recognition. Winke, Gass, and Sydorenko (2010) argue that "L2 subtitles encourage learners to make form-meaning connections and enhance listening comprehension while fostering vocabulary growth" (p. 71). Therefore, the effective use of subtitles is not uniform; rather, it depends on each learner's linguistic background and proficiency level. In EFL contexts, subtitles function not only as comprehension aids but also as tools for vocabulary enhancement and language awareness.

1. Benefits of Subtitles

The use of subtitles has been widely recognized as beneficial in supporting vocabulary learning among EFL learners. First, subtitles enhance vocabulary acquisition by providing dual input through both spoken and written forms, which enables learners to recognize and retain new words more effectively (Peters & Webb, 2018). Subtitles also serve as a valuable aid to comprehension, particularly when learners encounter difficulties related to speech rate, pronunciation, or unfamiliar vocabulary (Vanderplank, 2016).

In addition, subtitles encourage incidental vocabulary learning. Learners who watch audiovisual content primarily for entertainment often acquire new words unintentionally through repeated exposure to subtitles (Montero Perez et al., 2013). Such repeated encounters also contribute to better long term retention of vocabulary items, as they strengthen memory associations (Wang, 2012). beyond linguistic

benefits, subtitles play a role in enhancing learners' motivation and engagement. Since platforms such as Netflix are perceived as both entertaining and educational, learners are more motivated to interact with the content, which in turn fosters sustained vocabulary learning (Lailiyah & Setiyaningsih, 2020). Furthermore, subtitles facilitate learner autonomy, as features like pause, replay, and adjustable settings allow students to control their learning pace and strategies (Ghorbani & Ebadi, 2020).

Finally, subtitles act as a bridge between listening and reading skills by presenting multimodal input. This simultaneous engagement with spoken and written language supports not only vocabulary learning but also listening comprehension, thereby contributing to overall language development (Alsubaie, 2021). Taken together, these benefits demonstrate that subtitles are not merely an accessory to audiovisual media but a powerful pedagogical tool that can effectively enhance vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts.

2. Limitations of subtitles in vocabulary learning

Despite the numerous benefits, the use of subtitles in EFL vocabulary learning also presents certain limitations. One common challenge is that subtitles may distract learners' attention from listening to the spoken language. Instead of focusing on the auditory input, some students tend to rely too heavily on reading the subtitles, which can reduce the effectiveness of listening practice (Karakas & Saricoban, 2012). Another limitation is related to the speed of subtitles. For learners with lower proficiency levels, subtitles may move too quickly on the screen, making it difficult for them to read and process the information while simultaneously following the audio (Putri, 2019). This can lead to frustration and may discourage learners from fully engaging with the material. Moreover, subtitles may not always provide a perfect representation of spoken language. In some cases, subtitles are shortened, paraphrased, or simplified to fit the screen, which may limit learners' exposure to authentic expressions and natural speech patterns (Vanderplank, 2016). This discrepancy between spoken and written input can create confusion or reduce the authenticity of the learning experience.

Finally, learner dependence on subtitles can become an issue. When learners consistently rely on subtitles, they may develop less confidence in understanding spoken English without textual support. This overreliance could hinder the development of listening fluency and limit learners' ability to function effectively in real-life communication where subtitles are not available (Sutarsyah, 2017). In short, while subtitles offer valuable opportunities for vocabulary learning, these limitations highlight the need for careful and strategic use. Teachers and learners should be aware of such challenges and consider combining subtitles with other pedagogical strategies to maximize their effectiveness.

3. Subtitles as a Learning Support

Subtitles have been widely acknowledged as one of the most effective learning supports in multimedia language learning. By displaying written text alongside spoken dialogue, subtitles create a dual channel of input that reinforces both comprehension and vocabulary retention. This process can be explained through Dual Coding Theory, which argues that verbal and visual information processed together lead to deeper encoding and stronger recall (Paivio, 1991). Similarly, Krashen's Input Hypothesis highlights that subtitles make input more comprehensible, thereby facilitating language acquisition (Krashen, 1985).

One major contribution of subtitles is to vocabulary acquisition. Subtitles allow learners to immediately link spoken forms with written forms, improving recognition, spelling, and semantic understanding. Empirical evidence supports this claim: learners who watched captioned videos recalled significantly more vocabulary than those who watched without captions (Winke, Gass, & Sydorenko, 2010). Earlier studies also found that English subtitles facilitated higher vocabulary gains compared to viewing without support (Markham, 1999). Subtitles further enhance listening comprehension by supporting learners in dealing with rapid speech, idiomatic usage, or accented pronunciation. By reading and listening simultaneously, students can confirm what they hear and reduce the cognitive load of processing challenging spoken input. Vanderplank emphasizes that subtitles serve as a valuable scaffold, especially for intermediate learners, helping them to follow dialogue more easily and remain engaged (Vanderplank, 2016).

In addition, subtitles promote learner autonomy and strategy use. Students can select interlingual, intralingual, or bimodal subtitle modes depending on their proficiency and learning goals. Switching gradually from L1 to L2 subtitles allows them to adjust their strategies, supporting both cognitive and metacognitive approaches as outlined in Oxford's (1990) and Schmitt's (1997) taxonomies of learning strategies.

Subtitles also facilitate incidental vocabulary learning, where learners acquire new words while focusing on meaning rather than form. Peters, Heynen, and Puimège (2016) demonstrated that repeated exposure to vocabulary in subtitled videos leads to durable retention, especially when learners watch multiple episodes within the same genre (narrow viewing). Netflix's pause and replay functions strengthen this process by allowing repeated review and consolidation. Subtitles contribute to cultural literacy as they expose learners to pragmatic norms, idiomatic humor, and cultural references embedded in dialogue. By simultaneously reading and listening, students not only expand their vocabulary but also understand how language reflects culture, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real life communication (Kramsch, 1993).

4. Motivation and Engagement in Vocabulary Learning through Subtitles

Motivation and engagement play crucial roles in language learning success, as they determine how persistently and effectively students interact with learning materials. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation is the driving force that initiates, directs, and sustains learning behavior. When students feel motivated, they are more likely to expose themselves to English input voluntarily, which increases opportunities for vocabulary acquisition. Subtitles can serve as motivational tools by making English input more comprehensible and enjoyable, especially when learners are watching content that interests them. Ryan and Deci (2000) in their Self-Determination Theory explain that intrinsic motivation learning for personal enjoyment or satisfaction leads to deeper engagement and long-term learning retention.

Engagement, meanwhile, refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, and interest that learners demonstrate during the learning process. Fredricks,

Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) describe engagement as a multidimensional construct that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement. Subtitles can enhance engagement by providing immediate feedback and support, reducing anxiety, and helping learners follow content more confidently. This increased engagement encourages learners to interact more frequently with authentic English input outside the classroom, strengthening their vocabulary and comprehension skills. As highlighted by Vandergrift and Goh (2012), affective factors such as motivation and engagement are key components that support successful listening and vocabulary learning. Therefore, subtitles not only facilitate understanding but also create a more enjoyable and emotionally supportive environment for vocabulary development.

C. Student's Perceptions in Language Learning

Students' perceptions play a crucial role in shaping how they approach language learning, influencing their motivation, strategy use, and overall achievement. In general, perception refers to how individuals interpret and give meaning to their experiences and surroundings. Robbins and Judge (2017) define perception as "the process by which individuals organize and interpret sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment" (p. 153). In the context of education, learners' perceptions represent their personal interpretations of classroom activities, learning tools, and instructional methods. These perceptions are shaped not only by cognitive factors such as prior knowledge and self-efficacy but also by affective and social factors like confidence, attitude, and peer interaction.

According to Wenden (1999), "learners' beliefs and perceptions about language learning determine their choice of learning strategies and their degree of persistence in language study" (p. 436). When students perceive a certain learning method as effective or enjoyable, they are more likely to engage deeply with it and maintain long-term effort. Conversely, negative perceptions such as seeing a task as difficult or irrelevant can reduce motivation and hinder learning outcomes. Williams and Burden (1997) further emphasize that "students' interpretations of

classroom experiences influence not only what they learn but also how they learn” (p. 98). Thus, perception acts as a filter that affects how learners respond to input, feedback, and instructional methods. In the field of language learning, perceptions are also connected to learners’ self-efficacy their belief in their ability to succeed in specific tasks. Bandura (1986) explains that “self-efficacy beliefs influence the amount of effort people expend and how long they persist in the face of obstacles” (p. 394). Learners with positive perceptions of their capabilities tend to engage more actively and view challenges as opportunities rather than threats. In the same line, Gardner (1985) highlights that attitudes and motivation are integral to successful language acquisition, as they shape learners’ perceptions of both the language and the learning process (p. 12).

In an EFL context, where exposure to the target language is limited, learners’ perceptions become even more influential. Their views about what constitutes effective learning such as using subtitles, engaging with media, or practicing with peers directly impact their learning behaviors. Horwitz (1988) found that “students’ beliefs about language learning often determine the strategies they use, sometimes even more strongly than teacher instruction does” (p. 284). For instance, learners who perceive vocabulary learning through subtitles as enjoyable and useful are more likely to integrate it into their daily routines, while those who view it as distracting may avoid it.

Therefore, students’ perceptions in language learning are not static; they are dynamic constructs that evolve through experience, reflection, and feedback. These perceptions influence how learners engage with new tools, such as subtitles, and how they interpret their learning success. Understanding these perceptions allows educators to design learning experiences that are more responsive to learners’ needs, fostering both motivation and autonomy in the EFL

D. Previous Studies

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the role of subtitles in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and language comprehension among EFL learners. Most of these studies have confirmed that the use of subtitles, particularly

English subtitles, can significantly improve learners' understanding, retention, and motivation in learning English vocabulary. However, despite the growing number of studies on this topic, few have explored students' perceptions toward using subtitles as a learning tool, especially within the Acehnese EFL context.

Harji, Woods, and Alavi (2010) conducted a study on the effect of viewing subtitled videos on vocabulary learning among intermediate EFL students. The results showed that students who watched English-subtitled videos scored significantly higher in vocabulary post-tests compared to those who watched without subtitles. This finding suggests that subtitles facilitate the connection between auditory and visual input, leading to better vocabulary retention.

Similarly, Fage (2017) examined the effectiveness of English movie subtitles in vocabulary learning and concluded that subtitles help learners acquire idiomatic expressions, phrases, and new vocabulary more efficiently. The study also found that students reported higher motivation and satisfaction when using subtitles during language learning activities. This indicates that subtitles contribute not only to linguistic improvement but also to affective aspects of learning such as motivation and engagement. Lestari and Yosintha (2022) investigated the effects of watching English-subtitled videos on EFL students' vocabulary development in Indonesia. The results revealed a significant positive impact of subtitles on vocabulary acquisition, with learners expressing that subtitles made it easier for them to understand meaning and context. This study highlighted that subtitles can serve as an effective multimedia learning aid in Indonesian classrooms.

Several studies have discussed the use of videos and other audiovisual materials in English learning, especially for improving vocabulary. For instance, Mulyani and Yusuf (2022) in their study "Watch and Learn: EFL Students' Perceptions of Video Clip Usage in Vocabulary Learning" found that using video clips could help students enrich their vocabulary and make learning more enjoyable. However, their research mainly focused on the use of video clips in general, without specifically examining the role of subtitles as a learning support tool.

The study emphasized that subtitles support autonomous learning and promote engagement with authentic English materials. Moreover, Jaber and Dollar

(2019) conducted a meta analysis of research on the effect of bimodal subtitling (English audio with English subtitles) on language learning. The results across multiple studies showed that bimodal subtitling significantly enhances vocabulary learning, listening comprehension, and pronunciation accuracy among adult EFL learners. however, Xu, Jordan, and Li (2022) explored teachers' perceptions of subtitles in the Chinese EFL context and found mixed opinions. While teachers recognized that subtitles improve comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, they also cautioned against potential overdependence, especially for low proficiency students. This highlights the need for further.

Despite the benefits of subtitles, there are still few studies that focus specifically on how students perceive subtitles in learning vocabulary, especially in the Indonesian EFL setting. So far, there has not been any study conducted at University in Aceh that explores this topic in depth. Considering that English Education students in this department often watch English movies or series in their free time, it becomes important to understand how they see the role of subtitles in their vocabulary learning process.

Therefore, this research aims to fill that gap by exploring students' perceptions of using subtitles as a learning support in vocabulary learning. The study hopes to show that subtitles are not just a tool for understanding spoken English, but also a helpful medium for improving motivation, independence, and incidental vocabulary learning. In this way, the study continues and extends the findings of Mulyani and Yusuf (2022), but in a more specific and localized context.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in this study, including the research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. The methodology is designed to systematically explore the perceptions of English Education Department students at a University in Aceh regarding vocabulary learning through subtitles.

A. Research Design

This research was conducted using a qualitative research approach with a descriptive qualitative design. a qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to gain an in depth understanding of the experiences, opinions, and perceptions of the participants, rather than measuring numerical data or testing hypotheses. This approach allowed the researcher to capture the subjective viewpoints and lived experiences of the students in their natural context (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The descriptive qualitative design was particularly suitable for this research as it focused on providing a detailed description of the phenomenon being studied in this case, the perceptions and challenges faced by students (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Previous studies in English language education also employed descriptive qualitative designs to explore students' vocabulary learning challenges and strategies (Hidayati & Putri, 2024; Hulu, 2023), as well as teachers' instructional approaches (Sari & Yusuf, 2024; Lestari & Mahendra, 2024). These studies demonstrated that descriptive qualitative research was widely recognized as a valid and appropriate design in the field of English education.

B. Research Setting and Participants

The study is conducted at the English Education Department of a university in Aceh. this setting is selected because the students in this program are English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who are required to develop adequate

vocabulary skills to support their academic performance. Moreover, many of the students are familiar with using digital platforms such as Netflix both for entertainment and language learning purposes, which makes them suitable participants for this research.

The participants of this study are active students of the English Education Department at a university in Aceh. the participants are selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which the researcher intentionally chooses individuals who meet specific criteria relevant to the research questions. the number of participants in this study was seven students, which was considered appropriate for qualitative research as it allowed for the collection of rich and detailed data (Creswell, 2018; Morse, 2000).

The participants in this study were selected based on specific criteria to ensure that they were relevant to the research focus. All participants were active students of the English Education Department at a university in Aceh, they had prior experience using Indonesian subtitles while engaging with various English audiovisual materials, such as movies, series, or online videos. In addition, they utilized subtitles as a medium to support their vocabulary learning, either intentionally as part of their learning strategies or incidentally through their daily viewing habits. these criteria ensured that the participants were familiar with the use of subtitles and could provide meaningful insights regarding their perceptions and experiences in learning English vocabulary through subtitled content

C. Technique of data collection

The primary method of data collection in this study was the interview. The interview was chosen because it is widely recognized as an effective instrument in qualitative research, allowing the researcher to obtain rich and detailed information directly from participants' experiences and perspectives. Creswell (2018) emphasized that interviews provide access to participants' voices in depth, while Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) explained that interviews enable the exploration of subjective meanings. Similarly, Adams (2015) stated that semi structured

interviews are particularly useful for capturing participants' motivations, attitudes, and personal experiences that may not emerge through other methods.

This study employed a semi-structured interview, which combined a predetermined set of guiding questions with the flexibility to probe deeper into participants' responses when necessary. This format ensured that all participants were asked consistent core questions while still allowing the researcher to explore new or unexpected issues as they arose (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Wilson, 2014). According to Longhurst (2009), such interviews create a natural conversational flow, giving participants space to elaborate on topics they consider important.

In relation to the focus of this study, the vocabulary explored during the interviews was general and high-frequency vocabulary commonly encountered by students while watching English movies and series using Indonesian subtitles. The interview questions were designed to explore students' experiences in recognizing, understanding, and remembering everyday vocabulary used in daily conversations, rather than technical or academic vocabulary. This focus aligns with the aim of the study, which is to examine students' perceptions of vocabulary learning that occurs naturally through exposure to audiovisual media.

The data collection was conducted in two stages. The first stage consisted of face to face interviews with seven participants from the English Education Department at a university in Aceh. The interviews took place at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training in a quiet and comfortable setting to support open communication. Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes per participant. The researcher personally conducted all interviews, beginning with general questions to build rapport before moving to more specific questions about vocabulary learning through English movies and series using English subtitles.

The second stage of interviews was conducted via phone due to practical constraints, as several participants had returned to their hometowns following severe flooding in their areas and were unavailable for face to face meetings. Conducting follow up interviews by phone allowed the researcher to clarify and strengthen the initial data without disrupting the research timeline. Despite the

different medium, the same interview protocol and ethical considerations were maintained to ensure data consistency and reliability (Opdenakker, 2006).

The interview guide was developed based on the research questions to explore students' perceptions of vocabulary learning through English subtitles and the challenges they experienced in using subtitles as a support for vocabulary learning. Although the same core questions were asked to each participant, the researcher adapted the sequence and wording of questions when necessary to follow the natural flow of the conversation. This flexibility allowed the participants to express their opinions more freely and provide deeper insights into their personal experiences.

All interviews were audio recorded with participants' consent to ensure accuracy and to facilitate transcription and analysis. After each session, the researcher also made brief field notes to record non-verbal expressions, tone, and contextual details that could assist in interpreting the data.

D. Data Analysis

The data in this study are analyzed using the qualitative interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of five systematic steps:

1. Transcription

All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, meaning that every word, pause, and expression was written down exactly as spoken. This step converted spoken data into a written format, making it easier to review and analyze systematically. Transcription also ensured that no important detail from the participants' responses was lost.

2. Coding and Categorization

The transcribed data were carefully read and re-read to identify significant words, phrases, or sentences that reflected the participants' experiences. These segments were assigned codes (short labels) that represented the meaning of the data. Codes with similar meanings were then grouped into categories. For instance, a student statement such as "I learned new words by turning on Indonesian

subtitles” was coded as “vocabulary support,” while a comment such as “Sometimes the characters spoke too fast” was coded as “listening challenge.”

3. *Data Reduction*

At this stage, the large amount of raw data was filtered and condensed. Irrelevant information was removed, while the most significant, frequent, and meaningful codes and categories were retained. The goal was not to lose information but to focus on the data that directly answered the research questions.

4. *Data Display*

The reduced data were then organized and presented in a structured way, such as in tables, charts, or descriptive summaries. Data display helped the researcher see connections and relationships more clearly. For example, students’ positive and negative perceptions of subtitles were presented in a comparative form to identify recurring themes.

5. *Conclusion Drawing and Verification*

In this final step, the researcher interpreted the data to identify patterns, relationships, and themes that answered the research questions. Initial conclusions were drawn and then verified by cross checking with the data, comparing across participants, and ensuring consistency. This process helped ensure that the findings were trustworthy and not influenced by personal bias.

Therefore, by following the framework of Miles and Huberman (1994), the data analysis remains systematic, rigorous, and aligned with the objectives of qualitative research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study. The data were collected through semi structured interviews with seven students from the English Education Department at a university in Aceh. All participants had prior experience watching English language videos using subtitles and were selected based on purposive sampling criteria.

A. Findings

In this section, the researcher presents the data collected to answer the research questions: What are the students' perceptions of vocabulary learning through subtitles and the data for this study were obtained through semi structured interviews conducted with seven active students from the English Education Department at a university in Aceh. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria relevant to the study, such as having experience using Indonesian subtitles while learning English vocabulary through audio visual materials. To protect the participants' confidentiality, each respondent was represented using initials: ZF, SA, CS, RL, AM, RA, and AR. Each interview lasted approximately thirty minutes and was conducted face to face at the Faculty of Education building.

The researcher played an active role as the interviewer, guiding the discussion using open ended questions and follow up probes to explore the participants' experiences and perceptions in depth. After transcribing and analyzing the interview data using Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, the researcher identified several emerging themes that reflected the students' perspectives on vocabulary learning through subtitles. The findings are presented thematically in the following sections, supported by direct quotations from the participants to illustrate their experiences and opinions. From the coding process, four main themes and several sub-themes were identified, reflecting how students perceived the role of subtitles in their vocabulary learning experiences.

1. *Subtitles Facilitate Vocabulary Recognition and Comprehension*

The first major theme identified from the interviews reveals that subtitles play a significant role in helping students recognize and comprehend vocabulary while watching English language content. All seven participants agreed that subtitles make understanding English easier, especially when the speakers talk fast or use unfamiliar accents. Through subtitles, students were able to connect spoken sounds with written words, which made it easier for them to recognize, understand, and remember new vocabulary. Several participants mentioned that subtitles allowed them to learn the spelling of words they had previously only heard, while others emphasized that subtitles helped them follow the storyline without getting lost. This finding aligns with Vanderplank's (2016) view that subtitles act as a linguistic support system that facilitates vocabulary learning by linking visual and auditory input. Moreover, the data indicate that subtitles reduce the cognitive burden often experienced by EFL learners when processing new information, making learning more efficient and less stressful.

a. *Helping Students Recognize Word Forms and Pronunciation*

One of the most consistent findings from the participants was that subtitles helped them connect pronunciation and spelling simultaneously. Most students stated that reading and listening at the same time made it easier for them to recognize how words were written and pronounced correctly. This process allowed them to identify pronunciation patterns and sound-spelling relationships that are often confusing for EFL learners.

“When I watch English movies with subtitles, I can see how the word looks and how it sounds at the same time. For example, before I used to pronounce comfortable as ‘com-for-ta-ble,’ like in Indonesian, but after seeing it many times in subtitles and hearing how the actors say it, I realized it’s pronounced more like ‘comf-tuh-bul.’ That really helped me fix my pronunciation and now I feel more confident saying it,” (P1).

This shows that subtitles act as a visual reference for learners to confirm auditory input, helping them connect the written and spoken forms of words. Vanderplank (2016) supports this by explaining that subtitles serve as a “linguistic

bridge” between speech and text, enhancing learners’ awareness of pronunciation and word form recognition. Another participant shared that subtitles helped her identify long-standing pronunciation errors, particularly for words that are irregularly spelled. She reflected that seeing and hearing the same word repeatedly helped her realize where her pronunciation had been incorrect.

“Sometimes I realize that I’ve been saying a word wrong for years. For example, I always pronounced enough with the ‘gh’ sound, but when I saw the subtitles while hearing it in a movie, I understood that the ‘gh’ is silent. I kept hearing it and reading it again in other movies, and now it just stays in my memory,” (P6).

This comment illustrates the self-corrective role of subtitles, allowing learners to notice and adjust their pronunciation errors through repeated exposure. As Vanderplank (2010) explains, subtitles enable learners to “cross-check” what they hear and see, making pronunciation learning more autonomous and natural. In addition, participants noticed how subtitles helped them understand connected speech how words change when spoken quickly by native speakers. They explained that without subtitles, they often could not distinguish words when they were reduced or linked together. However, by reading along, they began recognizing those patterns and could follow speech more easily.

“Sometimes when people talk fast, I don’t catch every word. But when I see the subtitles, I notice that they say things differently, like want to becomes wanna or going to becomes gonna. Before, I didn’t understand that, but now I start to recognize it when I hear people speak,” (P3).

This aligns with Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which argues that conscious awareness of language features is necessary for acquisition. Through subtitles, learners are exposed to authentic spoken forms and have visual cues that help them notice pronunciation changes that would otherwise go unnoticed.

b. *Supporting Comprehension Through Visual Text*

Another strong pattern that emerged from the data was how subtitles supported students’ comprehension of English dialogue, especially when speakers talked quickly, used unfamiliar accents, or included unknown vocabulary. the

participants repeatedly expressed that subtitles helped them follow the storyline and grasp meaning without constantly pausing or feeling lost. Subtitles acted as a visual scaffold that complemented listening, allowing them to understand the message as a whole even when specific words were unclear.

“When I watch without subtitles, I often get lost, especially when the characters speak fast or use slang. But when the subtitles appear, I can follow the story easily. Even if I don’t know every single word, I can still understand what they mean because I can read it while listening. It makes the movie more enjoyable and less stressful,” (P2).

This reflects Vanderplank’s (2016) statement that subtitles serve as a “supportive visual script” that helps learners process auditory input. By allowing students to see and hear language simultaneously, subtitles provide a bridge between comprehension and listening, enabling learners to grasp both surface meaning and context more effectively. Another participant described subtitles as a “guide” that keeps them engaged in the flow of the content. She explained that subtitles prevented her from feeling frustrated when she missed parts of the dialogue, allowing her to stay focused on the storyline.

“Sometimes native speakers talk so fast that I can’t catch every word. When that happens, I just look at the subtitles, and I can understand the meaning right away. It helps me to stay focused and not give up halfway. Without subtitles, I usually stop watching because I feel frustrated,” (P5).

This statement supports Paivio’s Dual Coding Theory (1986), which posits that information processed through both auditory and visual channels enhances comprehension and recall. By providing simultaneous visual input, subtitles help learners process language more deeply and reduce cognitive overload, allowing them to focus on meaning rather than just decoding sounds. Another participant emphasized how subtitles helped him understand unfamiliar accents especially British or Australian ones which he found difficult compared to American accents. Subtitles gave him confidence to continue listening rather than avoiding difficult content.

“When I watch British movies, it’s really hard for me to catch what they say because the pronunciation is different. But with subtitles, I can follow it. I start to notice the differences in accent, like how they pronounce water or better. It helps me understand and get used to different kinds of English,” (P6).

This aligns with Winke, Gass, and Sydorenko (2010), who found that subtitles improve learners’ comprehension by providing consistent textual support, especially in cases where spoken input is fast, accented, or unfamiliar. In this way, subtitles not only aid vocabulary understanding but also build listening tolerance for diverse English varieties. a fourth participant highlighted that subtitles gave her the opportunity to confirm meaning when she was unsure of what she heard. She described subtitles as a tool for verifying comprehension rather than a crutch for understanding everything.

“Sometimes I think I understand what they’re saying, but then I look at the subtitles to make sure I got it right. It helps me confirm the meaning, like when they use idioms or expressions that I’ve never heard before. For example, I once saw the phrase ‘break a leg’ and didn’t understand it until I read it and searched the meaning later. Now I remember it clearly,” (P3).

This shows that subtitles encourage active engagement with the language by prompting learners to notice, verify, and explore new expressions. It also resonates with Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which emphasizes that conscious awareness of language features facilitates acquisition. Through subtitles, learners not only understand meaning but also identify gaps in their knowledge and take steps to fill them.

c. Subtitles Reinforce Vocabulary Retention

The second theme highlights that subtitles enhance vocabulary retention by providing repeated exposure to words in context. Most participants agreed that they could remember words more easily when they appeared multiple times in a movie or series. Subtitles also encouraged learners to use personal strategies such as pausing, translating, and note-taking. These findings support Schmitt (2010) and Nation (2013), who emphasize that repeated and meaningful encounters with vocabulary lead to stronger long-term retention. Three subthemes emerged from

this theme: repetition, personal vocabulary learning strategies, and contextual learning

d. *Repetition Helps Strengthen Memory*

One of the most significant findings that emerged from the data was that repetition through subtitles played an essential role in helping students remember and retain new vocabulary. Almost all participants shared that when they repeatedly encountered the same words in movies, series, or videos, those words became easier to recognize, recall, and understand. Seeing and hearing the same vocabulary items several times made the learning process more natural and effective, even when they were not intentionally studying.

“I realized that when I hear and read the same word many times in different movies, it becomes familiar to me. For example, the word ‘actually’ appeared so often in the shows I watch that now I automatically understand and sometimes use it myself without checking the dictionary anymore. It’s like my brain remembers it naturally,” (P2).

This participant’s reflection shows that repetition allowed words to move from short-term to long-term memory through continuous exposure. The process aligns with Schmitt’s (2010) statement that vocabulary learning is an incremental process in which repeated encounters with a word help solidify its meaning and usage. Similarly, Nation (2013) argues that repetition provides the necessary reinforcement for vocabulary retention because learners gradually build stronger mental associations each time they encounter a word.

“Sometimes when I watch several episodes of a series, I notice that some expressions keep repeating, like ‘you know what I mean’ or ‘kind of.’ At first, I didn’t pay much attention, but after hearing and reading them again and again, they stuck in my head. Now I use those phrases naturally in conversation with my friends,” (P5).

This quotation illustrates that repetition not only supports word level learning but also encourages the acquisition of common phrases and collocations. This finding supports Lewis’s (1993) Lexical Approach, which highlights that repeated exposure to word combinations (lexical chunks) enhances fluency and natural use

of language. Students learned not just individual vocabulary items but also how words combine in authentic expressions, which helps them use language more accurately and idiomatically.

“When I see a word again and again in different situations, I start to understand how it’s used. For example, the word ‘though’ confused me before, but after seeing it many times in subtitles, I understood that it’s used to contrast ideas. So, repetition helps me not only remember the word but also understand its function,” (P7).

This participant’s explanation indicates that repetition helped deepen their understanding of vocabulary usage and grammatical context, not just word recognition. It reflects Webb and Nation’s (2017) idea that repeated exposure in varied contexts leads to a richer and more precise understanding of a word’s meaning, collocation, and function.

e. *Personal Vocabulary Learning Strategies*

Another important finding from the data is that students developed personal strategies while using subtitles to enhance their vocabulary learning. Although watching subtitled videos was initially an entertaining activity, many participants unconsciously began applying cognitive and metacognitive learning techniques such as pausing, rewinding, translating, and taking notes. These strategies made the process of vocabulary learning more intentional and effective, even within an informal context.

“Usually when I watch a movie and find a new word in the subtitle, I pause it right away. I check the meaning on Google or sometimes write it in my notebook with an example sentence. Later, when I hear the same word again in another movie, I remember it faster because I already learned it before,” (P3).

This statement reflects the use of cognitive strategies as described by Oxford (1990) specifically, techniques that involve direct manipulation of the learning material, such as repeating, translating, and taking notes. The participant’s habit of pausing and writing demonstrates active engagement with language input, showing that even outside the classroom, learners consciously control their vocabulary learning process.

“When I don’t understand a word, I replay the part several times until I can connect the word I hear with what I see on the subtitle. It helps me understand the pronunciation and how the word is used in the sentence. Sometimes I also write it down and make my own example so I don’t forget it,” (P6).

This response illustrates a combination of metacognitive and memory-related strategies. by replaying and reflecting on specific moments, learners monitor their comprehension and evaluate their progress behaviors consistent with Oxford’s (1990) metacognitive strategy framework, where students plan, observe, and evaluate their learning to achieve better outcomes. Additionally, connecting sound and text strengthens dual channel memory encoding as explained in Paivio’s Dual Coding Theory (1986), allowing for stronger recall and comprehension.

“I like to collect new words from the subtitles that I find interesting. I usually save them on my phone and make a list with their meanings. Sometimes, when I’m bored, I check the list again and try to use the words in sentences. I feel proud when I can remember them while talking with my friends,” (P1).

This participant’s approach shows how personal learning strategies foster motivation and self reflection. the act of storing, reviewing, and applying new words demonstrates self regulated learning, where learners set their own goals and take responsibility for maintaining progress. This behavior aligns with Zimmerman’s (2000) theory of self regulated learning, which emphasizes active monitoring, control, and reflection during the learning process.

These findings collectively indicate that subtitles not only provide linguistic input but also encourage students to engage in independent learning practices. By pausing, noting, and reviewing, learners transform passive viewing into an active vocabulary learning experience. Moreover, these strategies build learner autonomy, as students begin to rely on their own initiative rather than teacher guidance.

In line with Benson’s (2011) concept of learner autonomy, this study shows that when learners are given access to authentic language materials and supportive tools such as subtitles, they develop the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning effectively. As a result, vocabulary acquisition becomes not only more efficient but also more meaningful and personally rewarding.

f. *Learning Vocabulary Through Contextual Exposure*

Another important aspect revealed from the participants' responses was that subtitles helped them understand and remember new vocabulary because the words were learned in meaningful and contextual situations. Rather than memorizing isolated vocabulary lists, students reported that they could infer the meaning of new words directly from the dialogue, gestures, and overall storyline. This kind of learning, known as contextual learning, allowed them to grasp how words were actually used in communication rather than just knowing their dictionary meanings.

"When I see the subtitles while watching, I don't just know the meaning of a word I also understand how it is used in a real conversation. For example, when someone says 'take your time,' I can feel when it's appropriate to use it because I hear it and see it at the same time," (P3).

Another participant mentioned that subtitles helped her notice the emotions, tones, and expressions behind certain words, which made vocabulary learning feel more real and relevant.

"Sometimes the way they say a word, like when someone says 'really?' with a surprised tone, makes me understand more than just the text. The subtitles help me connect the meaning with the situation, so it's easier to remember," (P6).

These responses illustrate that subtitles provide contextual clues that enrich vocabulary understanding. Students did not learn words in isolation; instead, they learned them through meaningful interaction with audiovisual content. This supports Schmitt's (2010) argument that contextual exposure enables deeper learning because students can see how words function within grammatical and social contexts. Similarly, Nation (2013) emphasizes that contextualized vocabulary input enhances comprehension and memory by linking word knowledge with usage and meaning in authentic situations.

Another participant expressed that learning vocabulary from subtitles allowed her to imitate how native speakers use certain words naturally.

"When I watch with subtitles, I can copy how they use certain expressions like 'you gotta be kidding me' or 'that's awesome.' It's different from reading them in a book because I can hear the tone, the situation, and see their expressions," (P4).

This observation reflects Lewis's (1993) Lexical Approach, which highlights the importance of learning word combinations and chunks rather than individual words. Through subtitles, learners encounter these natural collocations and idiomatic expressions repeatedly, helping them internalize how native speakers actually use the language.

Moreover, the participants reported that subtitles made vocabulary learning more engaging because they could relate the words to the story being told. This emotional and situational connection supported stronger memory retention. As Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986) suggests, when verbal input (dialogue) is paired with visual and contextual information (subtitles and scenes), it activates both cognitive channels verbal and imagery which enhances recall and understanding.

"It's easier to remember new words when I see them used in a situation. For example, I learned the phrase 'I can't handle this' from a drama scene where someone was crying. I'll never forget that sentence because I remember the emotion and the scene," (P2).

2. Subtitles Increase Motivation and Encourage Autonomous Learning

The third theme shows that subtitles contribute to students' learning motivation and independence. Participants revealed that learning through subtitles felt enjoyable and less formal, making them more willing to watch English content regularly. Subtitles transformed learning from a classroom obligation into a personal habit.

These findings are consistent with Dörnyei's (2001) theory of motivation in language learning, which emphasizes that enjoyment and self-efficacy drive learner engagement. Subtitles allowed students to feel capable of understanding English, building a positive attitude toward continuous learning. From this theme, three subthemes were identified: enjoyable learning experience, habitual and independent learning, and growing confidence.

a. Enjoyable and Relaxed Learning Experience

One of the strongest findings of this study was that participants described learning vocabulary through subtitles as an enjoyable and stress-free experience.

Unlike classroom learning, which they often associated with pressure and assessment, watching English content with subtitles felt natural, entertaining, and motivating. Students emphasized that they learned vocabulary “without realizing it,” as part of an activity they genuinely enjoyed. This combination of enjoyment and learning created what Dörnyei (2001) called intrinsic motivation the internal drive to learn for personal satisfaction rather than external rewards.

“When I watch English movies, it doesn’t feel like I’m studying. I just enjoy the story, but at the same time I learn so many new words without feeling tired. It’s different from memorizing vocabulary in class,” (P2).

This statement reflects the essence of flow, a concept introduced by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), referring to the state of deep engagement where learners are fully absorbed in an activity. When students are in this state, learning happens naturally and efficiently. The participants’ descriptions of watching with subtitles being focused yet relaxed show how positive emotional engagement can transform entertainment into a meaningful learning experience. Another participant expressed that watching with subtitles made English learning more interesting because the content matched their personal interests. They could choose genres or topics they liked, which increased their motivation to watch regularly and exposed them to more vocabulary in context.

“Sometimes I watch romantic movies, sometimes documentaries. Because I like what I’m watching, I keep paying attention to the subtitles and new words. I think I learn better because I really enjoy it,” (P4).

This finding supports Deci and Ryan’s (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key elements of motivation. When learners feel they can make their own choices, such as selecting what to watch and when to learn, they experience greater intrinsic motivation. The participants’ statements clearly demonstrate this autonomy they took ownership of their learning process by engaging with English content that suited their preferences.

In addition, several participants mentioned that subtitles made them feel more confident and relaxed when facing English dialogue. They explained that without

subtitles, they often felt anxious about missing words or misunderstanding the story. However, with subtitles, they could follow along more easily, which reduced their stress and increased their enjoyment.

“If there are no subtitles, I feel nervous because I’m afraid I won’t understand. But with subtitles, I feel calm and confident. I can enjoy watching and still learn,” (P1).

This aligns with Krashen’s (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that emotional states like anxiety and stress can block language acquisition. Subtitles, by lowering anxiety, create a safe and supportive environment that allows learners to process new vocabulary more effectively. When students feel relaxed, their affective filter lowers, making it easier for them to absorb and retain linguistic input.

Participants also shared that subtitles transformed their perception of English learning from something formal and demanding into something enjoyable and self directed. This shift encouraged them to continue watching regularly, even outside academic requirements.

“Learning through subtitles is different it’s fun and makes me want to keep doing it. I think I learn more because I enjoy it and it’s not stressful,” (P6).

Enjoyment not only enhanced their motivation but also improved the quality of their attention. When learners are emotionally engaged, they tend to notice linguistic details more deeply. Vanderplank (2016) also pointed out that subtitles help maintain concentration by combining auditory and visual input, which keeps learners actively involved without feeling pressured.

In conclusion, the findings reveal that subtitles transform English learning into a positive emotional experience. Enjoyment, relaxation, and autonomy work together to create intrinsic motivation, which sustains students’ engagement over time. This emotional connection between pleasure and learning supports vocabulary acquisition more effectively than traditional, test-oriented methods. As Dörnyei (2005) argues, learners who are motivated by enjoyment and self-efficacy are more likely to persist, engage, and succeed in language learning

b. *Building Habitual and Independent Learning*

The findings revealed that subtitles significantly contributed to building students' learning habits and fostering independence in vocabulary development. Many participants described how what initially began as casual entertainment gradually evolved into a consistent and intentional learning practice. Watching English content with subtitles became part of their daily routine, offering ongoing exposure to new vocabulary in meaningful contexts. This process reflects a shift from teacher-dependent learning to learner driven engagement.

“At first, I only watched English movies when I was bored or wanted to relax. But after some time, I realized that I was learning a lot of new words just by watching regularly. Now, it has become my daily routine I always turn on English subtitles because it helps me understand and remember new words. It's like learning without pressure, and I enjoy it,” (P1).

This participant's statement shows how entertainment transformed into autonomous learning behavior. Subtitles made the process enjoyable and stress free, allowing students to learn vocabulary naturally without feeling forced. This finding supports Benson's (2011) concept of autonomy, where learners take control of their learning choices and develop the ability to manage their learning beyond the classroom.

“When I started watching English dramas, I didn't think of it as studying. But after watching with subtitles for several months, I realized I could understand more without even opening a dictionary. I often replay some parts when I find interesting words or phrases. It makes me feel that I can learn English on my own without waiting for lessons from class,” (P3).

This statement illustrates how subtitles foster independent learning by encouraging students to regulate their own pace and focus. Holec (1981) defines autonomy as the ability to take responsibility for one's learning choosing materials, setting goals, and evaluating progress. The participant's practice of replaying and noting phrases demonstrates an internalized learning habit supported by motivation and self-awareness.

Another participant emphasized that subtitles made learning more consistent because it merged enjoyment with educational value. The comfort of informal learning through media motivated students to engage with English content regularly, leading to increased exposure and vocabulary development.

“Even when I’m tired from campus activities, I still watch English movies at night because it feels relaxing. I don’t feel pressured like in the classroom. I just enjoy the story, but at the same time, I realize I’m improving my vocabulary. It becomes a habit now something I look forward to every day,” (P5).

This response indicates how learning through subtitles merges leisure and education, a characteristic of autonomous learning. According to Dörnyei (2001), enjoyable learning experiences stimulate intrinsic motivation, which sustains learner engagement over time. By associating English with enjoyment, students are more likely to maintain consistent exposure and self-regulated practice.

Furthermore, subtitles encouraged students to explore learning materials based on their personal preferences, giving them a sense of control and ownership over their progress. This sense of freedom nurtured motivation and made them feel more responsible for their learning journey.

“I like that I can choose what to watch. Sometimes I pick movies with accents that are harder for me to understand, and I challenge myself. I use subtitles when I need them, and sometimes I turn them off to test how much I understand. It feels like I’m managing my own learning process,” (P7).

This comment demonstrates the highest level of learner autonomy, where students are able to make deliberate decisions about how and when to use learning tools. It also reflects Little’s (1991) perspective that autonomy involves reflection and control over one’s learning behavior, enabling students to monitor their growth effectively.

c. Growing Confidence in Engaging with English

Another important finding from the data is that students developed personal strategies while using subtitles to enhance their vocabulary learning. Although watching subtitled videos was initially an entertaining activity, many participants unconsciously began applying cognitive and metacognitive learning techniques

such as pausing, rewinding, translating, and taking notes. these strategies made the process of vocabulary learning more intentional and effective, even within an informal context.

“Usually when I watch a movie and find a new word in the subtitle, I pause it right away. I check the meaning on Google or sometimes write it in my notebook with an example sentence. Later, when I hear the same word again in another movie, I remember it faster because I already learned it before,” (P3).

This statement reflects the use of cognitive strategies as described by Oxford (1990) specifically, techniques that involve direct manipulation of the learning material, such as repeating, translating, and taking notes. The participant’s habit of pausing and writing demonstrates active engagement with language input, showing that even outside the classroom, learners consciously control their vocabulary learning process.

“When I don’t understand a word, I replay the part several times until I can connect the word I hear with what I see on the subtitle. It helps me understand the pronunciation and how the word is used in the sentence. Sometimes I also write it down and make my own example so I don’t forget it,” (P6).

This response illustrates a combination of metacognitive and memory related strategies. by replaying and reflecting on specific moments, learners monitor their comprehension and evaluate their progress behaviors consistent with Oxford’s (1990) metacognitive strategy framework, where students plan, observe, and evaluate their learning to achieve better outcomes. Additionally, connecting sound and text strengthens dual channel memory encoding as explained in Paivio’s Dual Coding Theory (1986), allowing for stronger recall and comprehension.

“I like to collect new words from the subtitles that I find interesting. I usually save them on my phone and make a list with their meanings. Sometimes, when I’m bored, I check the list again and try to use the words in sentences. I feel proud when I can remember them while talking with my friends,” (P1).

This participant’s approach shows how personal learning strategies foster motivation and self reflection. the act of storing, reviewing, and applying new words demonstrates self-regulated learning, where learners set their own goals and

take responsibility for maintaining progress. This behavior aligns with Zimmerman's (2000) theory of self regulated learning, which emphasizes active monitoring, control, and reflection during the learning process.

These findings collectively indicate that subtitles not only provide linguistic input but also encourage students to engage in independent learning practices. By pausing, noting, and reviewing, learners transform passive viewing into an active vocabulary learning experience. Moreover, these strategies build learner autonomy, as students begin to rely on their own initiative rather than teacher guidance. In line with Benson's (2011) concept of learner autonomy, this study shows that when learners are given access to authentic language materials and supportive tools such as subtitles, they develop the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning effectively. As a result, vocabulary acquisition becomes not only more efficient but also more meaningful and personally rewarding.

d. *Reducing Anxiety and Increasing Willingness to Learn*

In addition to increasing motivation and promoting autonomous learning, subtitles also helped reduce students' feelings of anxiety when learning English through audiovisual materials. Several participants admitted that before using subtitles, they often felt nervous, insecure, or even frustrated when watching English content because they were afraid of missing meaning or misunderstanding the dialogue. However, subtitles provided reassurance that they could still follow the storyline, which made them feel more relaxed and motivated to continue watching and learning.

"Before, I felt nervous because the speakers talked so fast, and I couldn't catch what they were saying. I remember once I tried watching without subtitles, and after just a few minutes, I gave up because I didn't understand anything. But with subtitles, I can follow every sentence. It makes me feel calm because I know what is happening and what the characters are talking about. Even if I don't understand a word, I can still guess the meaning from the subtitle. that helps me stay focused instead of getting stressed," (P4).

"Sometimes I used to stop watching in the middle because I didn't understand the conversation, especially when the accent was too strong or the dialogue was too

fast. I felt like it was useless to continue because I couldn't get the message. But now, when I watch with subtitles, I don't give up easily. I can understand the story and even learn new words. I feel more confident and keep watching until the end, and sometimes I even replay certain scenes to make sure I understand the vocabulary or pronunciation," (P6)

These experiences demonstrate that subtitles acted as both a linguistic and emotional support system. The availability of text on screen reduced uncertainty, helping students focus on understanding rather than worrying about missing information. This emotional comfort encouraged them to engage with English input more consistently, showing that affective factors play a crucial role in sustaining attention and comprehension.

"In class, I sometimes feel shy or afraid to pronounce new words because I might be wrong. Once, I tried to speak and my friends laughed because my pronunciation was strange. That made me more anxious to try again. But when I learn through movies, I can repeat and listen many times without anyone judging me. I feel more comfortable and free to learn at my own pace. If I don't understand something, I just replay it and read the subtitle again. It's like I'm learning quietly and confidently," (P3).

This quote illustrates how subtitles can lower learners' affective filter, a concept introduced by Krashen (1985) to describe the emotional barrier that can block language acquisition. When students feel anxious or self-conscious, they are less likely to absorb input effectively. By contrast, subtitles create a safe environment that reduces fear of failure and promotes relaxed learning. When the affective filter is lowered, learners become more receptive to vocabulary input, enabling better understanding and retention.

Moreover, the feeling of comfort and success from understanding subtitled content encouraged students to continue watching English media regularly. This sense of achievement became a source of motivation in itself. As Dörnyei (2001) explains, emotional satisfaction and confidence are strong predictors of persistence in language learning. Participants who experienced comprehension success through

subtitles felt more confident and curious to explore new and more complex materials.

“I think subtitles give me courage. I used to feel scared to watch English movies because I thought they were too hard and I wouldn’t understand anything. But after using subtitles for a while, I realized I could follow the story and learn new words easily. Now, I’m brave enough to try even when the topic is difficult, because I know the subtitles will help me if I get stuck. It makes me feel that learning English is possible for me,” (P2).

This transformation from fear to confidence illustrates how emotional factors influence motivation. When learners feel capable and supported, they are more likely to engage with English materials voluntarily, which in turn increases their exposure to new vocabulary. Subtitles therefore play a dual role: they aid comprehension and simultaneously build emotional resilience in learners.

3. *Limitations of Subtitles as a Learning Tool*

While subtitles offer significant benefits for vocabulary development and comprehension, several limitations were also identified through participants’ experiences. Although most students acknowledged the usefulness of subtitles, they recognized that their excessive or improper use could hinder progress in other language skills, particularly listening. Participants also reported technical and linguistic challenges, such as fast-moving text, accent variations, and difficulties understanding idiomatic expressions.

These findings show that while subtitles serve as an effective scaffold for language learning, they must be used strategically. The limitations identified in this study can be grouped into three main subthemes: overreliance on subtitles, technical and visual difficulties, and challenges in understanding idiomatic and cultural expressions

a. *Overreliance on Subtitles*

One of the most prominent limitations revealed in this study was students’ dependency on subtitles. Many participants admitted that while subtitles initially helped them understand English dialogue, over time they became too reliant on them. This dependency created a sense of comfort that made it difficult for them to

watch English content without subtitles. The feeling of security that subtitles provided caused some learners to hesitate when they tried to watch without them, showing that subtitles could unintentionally reduce listening independence.

“Honestly, I depend too much on subtitles now. At first, I used them just to help me understand new words, but now I feel uncomfortable when I turn them off. When I try to watch without subtitles, I get anxious because I can’t catch the words clearly, especially when the actors talk fast,” (P2).

“I realize that I always focus on reading instead of listening. My eyes go directly to the text even when I try to listen. So when I turn off the subtitles, it feels like I lose half of my understanding. I know it’s not good, but it’s already become a habit,” (P4).

“Sometimes I think I’m learning, but maybe I’m just reading. When subtitles are on, I don’t pay full attention to how words sound. Without them, I get frustrated quickly and usually stop watching halfway,” (P7).

These responses clearly demonstrate how subtitles, while beneficial for comprehension, can also hinder the development of listening skills when learners rely on them excessively. the sense of dependency often arises because subtitles make comprehension easier and more immediate, giving learners instant confirmation of meaning. however, this ease can reduce the effort required to process auditory input and weaken their natural listening strategies.

This finding supports Danan’s (2004) assertion that subtitles may lead to “overreliance” when learners prioritize reading over listening comprehension. Similarly, Vanderplank (2016) observed that frequent use of subtitles can cause students to develop a passive learning pattern, where they rely on textual support instead of training their ears to decode speech independently. the students’ experiences in this study reflect these theories subtitles gave them comfort and confidence, but that comfort sometimes discouraged active engagement with listening.

Another noteworthy point is that some participants expressed awareness of their dependency and made efforts to reduce it. a few mentioned intentionally

turning subtitles off for short periods to challenge themselves, though they found it difficult to maintain focus.

“Sometimes I try to practice listening without subtitles for a few minutes, but then I start to lose track of what they’re saying. It’s hard to keep up, so I end up turning them back on,” (P6).

This shows that while learners recognize the benefits of training their listening skills, they still struggle to let go of the safety provided by subtitles. According to Vanderplank (2010), this “comfort dependency” can delay learners’ progression toward autonomous listening and natural language comprehension.

b. Technical and Visual Difficulties

In addition to dependency, participants also discussed several technical and cognitive difficulties when using subtitles for vocabulary learning. These challenges often emerged due to the speed of subtitles, the complexity of the dialogue, or the difficulty of processing two inputs audio and text simultaneously. While subtitles were intended to help comprehension, some learners admitted that they occasionally became overwhelmed when trying to read and listen at the same time.

“Sometimes the subtitles move too fast, especially when the conversation is intense. I want to read and understand every word, but before I finish reading one sentence, the next one already appears. It makes me confused because I can’t focus on both reading and listening together,” (P1).

“If the speaker talks quickly or uses complicated words, I get distracted. My brain feels tired because I have to listen, read, and understand everything at once. It’s like multitasking, and sometimes I just end up focusing on the text instead of the audio,” (P3).

“When I try to follow both the sound and the subtitles, I miss some parts. I can’t always connect what I hear with what I read because they disappear too fast. So instead of learning, I feel like I’m chasing the text,” (P5).

These accounts reveal that even though subtitles facilitate comprehension, they can also introduce cognitive overload when learners try to process multiple streams of input at once. According to Sweller’s Cognitive Load Theory (1994),

learning becomes less effective when the cognitive demand exceeds the learner's working memory capacity. In this case, students who attempt to read and listen simultaneously may experience split attention, which interferes with deep vocabulary processing.

The participants' experiences are consistent with Vanderplank's (2016) observation that subtitles are most beneficial when the reading speed and complexity of language are appropriate for the learner's proficiency level. When subtitles appear too quickly or include unfamiliar vocabulary, they can become a source of distraction rather than support. Similarly, Winke, Gass, and Sydorenko (2010) noted that excessive cognitive demand while watching subtitled videos can cause learners to rely on reading instead of developing listening comprehension.

Another issue highlighted by participants was the inconsistency of subtitles on certain streaming platforms. Some reported that translations or word choices were not accurate, which caused misunderstanding or confusion.

"Sometimes the subtitles don't really match what the actors say. The meaning feels a bit different, and it makes me doubt which one is correct. When that happens, I stop paying attention because I feel unsure which version to trust," (P7).

This issue reflects Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2014) claim that subtitles are subject to linguistic and technical limitations such as time constraints, condensation, and simplification, which can alter the message. Inaccurate or poorly synchronized subtitles may distort meaning and interfere with vocabulary learning because learners cannot rely on consistent input.

Furthermore, some participants mentioned that background noise, accent variation, or poor video quality made subtitles even more necessary. While this helped comprehension, it also increased dependence on visual aids rather than auditory comprehension.

"When the accent is too strong or the sound isn't clear, I immediately focus on reading the subtitles. I feel like my listening doesn't improve because I rely too much on reading instead of trying to understand the sound," (P4).

This demonstrates how technical and cognitive challenges can reinforce dependency patterns, where learners prioritize the easier visual channel over the

more demanding auditory one. Consequently, while subtitles offer valuable support, their effectiveness is limited when they overwhelm learners or create confusion.

c. *Challenges in Understanding Idiomatic and Cultural Expressions*

Another challenge that emerged from the data concerns the cultural and linguistic limitations of subtitles. although subtitles helped students understand vocabulary and sentence structure, many participants admitted that they still struggled with idiomatic expressions, slang, and cultural references. These types of language features often carry meanings that cannot be directly translated, even when subtitles are available. As a result, some students said they could read the words but still failed to grasp the intended message or humor.

“Sometimes I understand every single word in the subtitle, but I still don’t get what they actually mean. For example, when the character said, ‘break a leg,’ I was confused. I thought it was about hurting someone, but later I found out it means good luck. Subtitles didn’t explain that, so I had to search online to understand,” (P2).

“There are times when they use slang words or jokes that don’t make sense even though the subtitle is clear. Like, they said ‘spill the tea’ or ‘that’s lit,’ and the subtitle just translated it literally. I can read the words, but I don’t really understand the meaning or when to use them,” (P4).

“I think subtitles can’t always explain the cultural part. When I watch American or British shows, sometimes they mention things from their culture like a food, a place, or a habit and the subtitle just puts the name there. I read it, but I don’t really understand the context because it’s not something familiar to us,” (P6).

These excerpts highlight a major limitation of subtitles: while they effectively convey linguistic form, they cannot fully transmit cultural or pragmatic meaning. This finding aligns with Vanderplank (2010) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014), who argue that subtitles may fail to represent the deeper connotations or cultural nuances embedded in speech. the translation process often requires simplification due to time and space constraints, resulting in partial or even misleading interpretations.

For EFL learners, this gap poses an important challenge because understanding culture-specific language is a vital component of communicative competence. Students may acquire the literal meanings of words but still misinterpret idioms, humor, or sarcasm that depend heavily on cultural context. This supports Kramsch's (1998) idea that language and culture are inseparable; full comprehension requires not only knowing vocabulary but also understanding the social and cultural background in which it is used.

Participants also expressed that while subtitles could help them recognize unfamiliar words, they sometimes made learners over-reliant on text rather than encouraging deeper cultural exploration. Because subtitles provide quick comprehension, students might skip the effort to infer meaning or look up background references. In this sense, subtitles can create a superficial understanding of vocabulary without full contextual depth.

Despite these challenges, several students viewed this limitation positively as an opportunity to expand their cultural knowledge. Some participants said they felt curious when encountering idioms or slang, prompting them to search for meanings afterward. This suggests that subtitles can still serve as an entry point to broader language learning, sparking curiosity and self-directed exploration.

"Even if I don't understand slang or jokes right away, I get curious. Sometimes I pause the video and search the meaning. It helps me learn something new about their culture, not just the language," (P7).

This positive response aligns with Benson's (2011) view of autonomous learning, where learners take initiative to explore beyond the input provided. It also supports Hulstijn's (2001) notion of incidental learning, in which curiosity-driven engagement enhances vocabulary acquisition and intercultural awareness.

B. Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the theoretical framework and previous research presented in Chapter II. The discussion focuses on how students perceived the use of subtitles as a medium for vocabulary learning and how these perceptions align with established theories in second language

acquisition and vocabulary development. the analysis integrates several aspects that emerged from the data, including vocabulary recognition and comprehension, vocabulary retention, motivation and autonomy, incidental learning, and the challenges faced by learners.

The findings revealed that subtitles played a significant role in helping students recognize and comprehend new vocabulary more effectively. most participants stated that reading the text while listening to the dialogue helped them connect pronunciation with spelling, which made it easier to follow English speech. this perception supports Nation's (2013) claim that vocabulary development occurs through repeated and meaningful exposure in authentic contexts. when students simultaneously read and listen, they engage both visual and auditory channels, strengthening their comprehension and memory retention. this finding is also consistent with Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986), which posits that when information is presented visually and verbally, two cognitive systems are activated, leading to deeper processing and improved recall. Vanderplank (2016) further explained that subtitles serve as a linguistic bridge that allows learners to cross check what they hear with what they read, reinforcing their understanding of pronunciation, form, and meaning.

In addition to improving comprehension, subtitles were also found to reduce listening anxiety. Several participants admitted that they often felt nervous or insecure when watching English materials without subtitles, particularly when speakers talked rapidly or used unfamiliar accents. However, subtitles helped them feel calm, confident, and more focused while watching. This finding is supported by Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1985), which suggests that low anxiety levels enable learners to process linguistic input more effectively. Similarly, Wang (2012) found that subtitles lower listening anxiety by providing visible linguistic anchors that reassure learners of their understanding. In this study, subtitles not only improved comprehension but also created an emotionally supportive environment that encouraged students to keep engaging with English content.

Another key finding is that subtitles helped reinforce vocabulary retention through repeated and meaningful exposure. Many participants mentioned that they

could easily remember words that appeared multiple times across different movies or series. This observation supports Schmitt's (2010) theory that vocabulary acquisition requires multiple encounters with words in context. Nation (2013) also explained that such repetition gradually strengthens the connection between a word's form, meaning, and use, enabling long term retention. Participants demonstrated active engagement through actions such as pausing videos, taking notes, and checking word meanings. These behaviors align with Oxford's (1990) classification of learning strategies, particularly cognitive and metacognitive strategies, where learners plan, monitor, and consciously manage their learning.

Moreover, the findings indicate that many students learned vocabulary incidentally while using subtitles. They often acquired new words unintentionally while focusing on the storyline, rather than studying explicitly. This aligns with Hulstijn's (2001) theory of incidental vocabulary acquisition, which emphasizes learning that occurs through meaningful exposure. Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis also explains this process, arguing that language learning takes place when learners consciously notice linguistic features in the input. Subtitles made unfamiliar words more visible and memorable, allowing students to retain them naturally without deliberate effort.

Motivation and autonomy were also significant factors influencing students' perceptions. Many participants found learning through subtitles more enjoyable, flexible, and self-directed than formal classroom instruction. This aligns with Dörnyei's (2001) motivational theory, which highlights that positive emotional experiences enhance engagement and persistence in language learning. Subtitles gave students a sense of control and freedom they could select their preferred movies or online videos and learn at their own pace. This finding is consistent with Benson's (2011) concept of learner autonomy, where learners take responsibility for their own learning beyond the classroom. In addition, Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (2000) explains that motivation improves when learners feel autonomous, competent, and connected to what they learn. Subtitles helped students feel competent by enabling them to understand authentic English input, which increased their confidence and encouraged regular exposure to English materials.

Despite these positive perceptions, several challenges were also identified. Some participants mentioned that subtitles moved too quickly, making it difficult to read and listen simultaneously. Others admitted that they had become overly dependent on subtitles and found it uncomfortable when subtitles were turned off. This finding supports Danan's (2004) argument that excessive reliance on subtitles can hinder the development of listening skills by diverting attention from auditory input. Additionally, the effectiveness of subtitles appeared to vary depending on the learner's proficiency level. Lower level learners tended to depend heavily on subtitles for comprehension, while higher-level learners used them more strategically to verify meaning or pronunciation. Vanderplank (2010) similarly observed that the usefulness of subtitles depends on the learner's linguistic competence and processing ability. Another challenge identified was the difficulty of understanding idioms, slang, and cultural references, which are not always fully represented in subtitles. This finding is consistent with Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2014) observation that while subtitles convey linguistic meaning, they may fail to capture cultural nuances and pragmatic intent.

Overall, the findings of this study align with and extend previous research on subtitles in EFL contexts. Studies by Karakas and Saricoban (2012) and Winke et al. (2010) demonstrated that subtitles improve vocabulary recognition and attention, while Montero Perez et al. (2013) showed that both intralingual and interlingual subtitles enhance comprehension and vocabulary growth. However, this study adds new insight by focusing on students' perceptions and lived experiences rather than quantitative outcomes. It highlights the psychological and motivational aspects of learning through subtitles and contextualizes these findings within the Indonesian EFL environment, where authentic English exposure remains limited.

In summary, subtitles bridge the gap between entertainment and education, transforming passive viewing into an active learning experience. They facilitate vocabulary recognition and comprehension, reinforce retention, enhance motivation, and encourage learner autonomy. Although some challenges remain such as overreliance and limited cultural understanding, students' overall perceptions were strongly positive. Subtitles provide meaningful and repeated

exposure to authentic language, complementing formal instruction and offering an accessible, engaging medium for vocabulary development in EFL contexts.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

This chapter presents the conclusions derived from the findings and discussions in the previous chapters. The conclusions summarize how students perceived the use of subtitles as a medium for vocabulary learning and how these perceptions contributed to their language development.

Based on the results of the study, several key conclusions can be drawn. first, subtitles were perceived as a valuable tool that facilitated vocabulary recognition and comprehension. Most participants stated that reading the text while listening to dialogue helped them connect spoken and written forms of words, making it easier to understand pronunciation, spelling, and meaning simultaneously. Subtitles also helped reduce anxiety and enabled students to follow conversations more comfortably, especially when dealing with fast speech or unfamiliar accents.

Second, subtitles played an important role in reinforcing vocabulary retention. Through repeated exposure, students were able to recall new words more easily and strengthen their memory of them. Many participants employed their own strategies such as pausing videos, taking notes, and translating unfamiliar vocabulary to process and retain new words. This finding confirms that vocabulary learning through subtitles can occur both intentionally and incidentally, depending on the learner's level of engagement.

Third, subtitles increased students' motivation and fostered autonomous learning. Participants expressed that learning through subtitles was enjoyable and less formal than classroom instruction, making it feel more natural and stress free. Subtitles encouraged students to watch English content regularly outside the classroom, helping them develop independent learning habits. this sense of enjoyment and self-direction contributed positively to their long term vocabulary growth. however, the study also identified several limitations. Some students reported becoming overly dependent on subtitles and struggled to focus on listening comprehension when subtitles were removed. others mentioned that subtitles often

moved too quickly or failed to convey idiomatic and cultural meanings. these challenges suggest that while subtitles are beneficial, they should be complemented by other learning methods to maintain balanced language proficiency.

In conclusion, subtitles provided meaningful support for vocabulary learning by combining visual and auditory input in an engaging and contextualized way. when used consciously and selectively, subtitles can serve as an effective supplementary tool to improve vocabulary knowledge, listening skills, and learner motivation among EFL students.

B. Suggestions

Based on the conclusions above, several recommendations are proposed for students, lecturers, and future researchers.

1. For Students

Students are encouraged to use subtitles actively and strategically when watching English-language content. They should not only read but also listen carefully to pronunciation and observe how words are used in context. It is advisable to take notes of unfamiliar vocabulary and review it later for better retention. Students should also practice switching between English and non-subtitled viewing to strengthen both listening and vocabulary skills.

2. For Lecturers

Lecturers can incorporate subtitled videos or films into their vocabulary and listening lessons to provide authentic and engaging materials. Subtitles can be used to introduce contextual vocabulary learning, where students analyze language use in real-life conversations. However, teachers should also guide students to avoid overreliance on subtitles and gradually build their ability to comprehend without textual support.

3. For Future Researchers

This study focused on students' perceptions; therefore, future research could investigate the quantitative effects of subtitles on vocabulary growth or compare different types of subtitles (English vs. translated). Further studies could also explore how subtitles influence other aspects of language learning, such as listening

comprehension, pronunciation, or cultural understanding. Expanding the number of participants and including diverse proficiency levels may provide a broader understanding of how subtitles contribute to English learning in the EFL context.



REFERENCES

- Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In K. E. Newcomer, H. P. Hatry, & J. S. Wholey (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (pp. 492–505). Jossey-Bass.
- Alsubaie, J. (2021). The effectiveness of Netflix series with English subtitles in EFL classrooms. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(3), 1234–1248.
- Anastasia, F. (2013). *Analysis on the Indonesian subtitles of English films* (Master's thesis). Universitas Gunadarma.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Danan, M. (2004). Captioning and subtitling: Undervalued language learning strategies. *Meta: Journal des Traducteurs*, 49(1), 67–77.
- Díaz Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2014). *Audiovisual translation: Subtitling* (2th ed). Routledge.
- Dizon, G. (2021). Language learning with Netflix: Exploring the effects of dual subtitles on vocabulary learning and listening comprehension.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fievez, I., Montero Perez, M., Cornillie, F., & Desmet, P. (2021). Promoting incidental vocabulary learning through watching a French Netflix series with glossed captions. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 36(1), 26–51.
- Ghorbani, M. R., & Ebadi, S. (2020). The effect of watching subtitled movies on EFL learners' vocabulary learning. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 7(3), 110–123.
- Hartini, L. W., & Ardini, A. S. (2024). Relationship between Indonesian EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge and English competencies. *Journal of English and Education*, 10(1).

- Hidayati, N., & Putri, S. R. (2024). Strategies and challenges of English education students in vocabulary mastery. *ELTIN Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia*, 12(1), 45–56
- Hulstijn, J. H. (2001). Intentional and incidental second language vocabulary learning: A reappraisal of elaboration, rehearsal, and automaticity. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and second language instruction* (pp. 258–286). Cambridge University Press
- Hulu, M. Y. (2023). The description of students' problem in learning vocabulary through flash card at tenth grade of SMK Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 4(2), 55–62.
- Karakas, A., & Saricoban, A. (2012). The impact of watching subtitled animated cartoons on incidental vocabulary learning of ELT students. *Teaching English with Technology*, 12(4), 3–15.
- Kurniawan, B. A., & Anwar, K. (2024). The perception of student and teacher of Netflix English to English subtitle: Correlating engagement, motivation, and listening ability. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 12(3)
- Kusumaningputri, R., & Widodo, H. P. (2018). Promoting learner autonomy through schoology-mediated blended learning in an EFL classroom. *Teaching English with Technology*, 18(3), 82–96.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Lailiyah, N., & Setyaningsih, L. A. (2020). The use of English subtitles on Netflix movies to improve students' vocabulary mastery. *JELLT (Journal of English Language and Language Teaching)*, 4(2), 50–59.
- Lambert, V. A., & Lambert, C. E. (2012). Qualitative descriptive research: An acceptable design. *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 16(4), 255–256.
- Laufer, B. (1997). The lexical plight in second language reading. In J. Coady & T. Huckin (Eds.), *Second language vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 20–34). Cambridge University Press.

- Lestari, I. A., & Mahendra, D. (2024). Exploring the integration of inquiry-based learning into English instruction at the elementary school level: A qualitative descriptive study. *Journal of Research on English Teaching*, 6(1), 1–12.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Longhurst, R. (2009). In-depth, semi-structured interviews. In N. Clifford, S. French, & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Key methods in geography* (pp. 103–115). Sage.
- Maharani, R. S., & Afifi, N. (2024). Promoting self-directed learning through Netflix as a learning aid of listening and speaking: An investigation toward EFL students' voices. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 12(1).
- Markham, P. L. (1999). Captioned videotapes and second-language listening word recognition. *Foreign Language Annals*, 32(3), 321–328.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Montero Perez, M., Peters, E., Clarebout, G., & Desmet, P. (2013). Captioned video for L2 listening and vocabulary learning: A meta-analysis. *Language Learning & Technology*, 17(2), 125–142.
- Morse, J. M. (2000). Determining sample size. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(1), 3–5.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Heinle & Heinle.
- Patahuddin, P., Syawal, S., & Tahir, S. Z. B. (2017). Investigating Indonesian EFL learners' learning and acquiring English vocabulary. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 7(4), 128.
- Paivio, A. (1986). *Mental representations: A dual coding approach*. Oxford University Press
- 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.

- Putri, V. D. (2019). The use of Netflix to improve students' vocabulary mastery. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 4(2), 85–92.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rinekso, A. B., Lesagia, O., & Setiawati, D. (2021). Improving vocabulary while watching Korean dramas: A case of Indonesian EFL university students. *ELTR Journal*, 5(1).
- Ruhil, A. (2020). Students' perceptions on the use of English subtitles in improving vocabulary mastery. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 5(2), 179–192.
- Sari, D. P., & Yusuf, M. (2024). A descriptive qualitative study on teachers' strategies in teaching listening comprehension. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 9(2), 112–123.
- Sari, I. P., & Sugandi, B. (2021). The influence of watching English movies with subtitles on students' vocabulary mastery. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 4(4), 617–623.
- Schmitt, N. (1997). Vocabulary learning strategies. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 199–227). Cambridge University Press.
- Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sutarsyah, C. (2017). Vocabulary learning strategies of Indonesian EFL learners. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(3), 635–644.
- Sydorenko, T. (2010). Modality of input and vocabulary acquisition. *Language Learning & Technology*, 14(2), 50–73.
- Vanderplank, R. (2010). Déjà vu? A decade of debates around dual-coding and multimedia effects in language learning with specific reference to video. *ReCALL*, 22(2), 127–142.
- Vanderplank, R. (2016). *Captioned media in foreign language learning and teaching: Subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing as tools for language learning*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Wang, L. (2012). The effects of English caption on EFL learners' listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. *International Education Studies*, 5(6), 42–48
- Webb, S., & Nation, I. S. P. (2017). *How vocabulary is learned*. Oxford University Press.
- Wenden, A. (1991). *Learner strategies for learner autonomy*. Prentice Hall.
- Winke, P., Gass, S., & Sydorenko, T. (2010). The effects of captioning videos used for foreign language listening activities. *Language Learning & Technology*, 14(1), 65–86.



Appendix A: Appointment Letter of Supervisor



KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
NOMOR: 1481 TAHUN 2025

TENTANG:
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

- Menimbang :
- bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
 - bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
 - bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

- Mengingat :
- Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
 - Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
 - Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
 - Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
 - Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
 - Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
 - Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
 - Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
 - Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
 - Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Km.05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
 - Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

MEMUTUSKAN

- Menetapkan :
- Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa.

- KESATU :
- Menunjuk Saudara **Rahmi, M.TESOL., Ph.D** Untuk membimbing Skripsi
- Nama : **Putri Raisah**
NIM : **210203096**
Program Studi : **Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris**
Judul Skripsi : **Exploring EFL students Perceptions Of Vocabulary Learning Through Subtitles**

- KEDUA :
- Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;

- KETIGA :
- Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025;

- KEEMPAT :
- Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;

- KELIMA :
- Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh
Pada tanggal : 30 Oktober 2025
Dekan,

Saiful Muluk

Tembusan

- Sekolah Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Depdiknas Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
- Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
- Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Akuntansi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
- Yang bersangkutan;
- Arsip.



Appendix B: Recommendation Letter from Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan to Conduct Field Research



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN

Jl. Syeikh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh Telp/Fax. : 0651-752921

Nomor : B-217/Un.08/FTK.1/TL.00/1/2026

Lamp : -

Hal : **Penelitian Ilmiah Mahasiswa**

Kepada Yth,

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dengan ini menerangkan bahwa:

Nama/NIM : PUTRI RAISAH / 210203096

Semester/Jurusan : IX / Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Alamat sekarang : Peuduek baroh Lhoknga

Saudara yang tersebut namanya diatas benar mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan bermaksud melakukan penelitian ilmiah di lembaga yang Bapak/Ibu pimpin dalam rangka penulisan Skripsi dengan judul **Exploring EFL Students Perceptions of Vocabulary Learning Through Subtitles**

Banda Aceh, 14 Januari 2026

An. Dekan

Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik dan Kelembagaan



Prof. Dr.Buhori MuslimM.Ag.

NIP. 197508152001121002

Berlaku sampai : 20 Februari 2026

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project : Exploring EFL Students' Perceptions of Learning Through Subtitles

Time of interview :

Date :

Place : Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Banda Aceh

Interviewer : Putri Riasah

Interviewee :

Position of Interviewee : Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Banda Aceh

This interview aims to explore students' experiences and perceptions in learning English vocabulary through subtitles while watching English-language content. the focus is to understand how subtitles help in vocabulary learning, what strategies students use, and what challenges they encounter. the interview will be conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing for flexibility and follow-up questions based on participants' responses. each interview will last approximately 20–30 minutes and will be audio-recorded with participants' consent for data analysis purposes.

1. How long have you been accustomed to using subtitles when watching English-language content?
2. Do you think subtitles help you learn new vocabulary? How?
3. Can you share an experience where subtitles helped you understand a new word you heard for the first time?
4. Do subtitles help you recognise the spelling of a word you didn't know before?
5. Do you find it easier to remember vocabulary because you see it repeatedly in subtitles?
6. Do you feel too dependent on subtitles?
7. Do subtitles sometimes move too quickly to read?

8. Do you still have difficulty understanding slang, idioms, or cultural expressions even with subtitles?
9. What other difficulties do you experience when using subtitles?
10. Overall, how would you describe your experience of learning vocabulary using subtitles



Appendix D: Interview Transcript

Interviewer : Putri Raisah (PR)

Participant : (SA)

PR: Hi, how are you today?

SA: I'm good, thank you. A bit nervous but also excited because I like talking about movies

PR: Don't worry, it'll be fun! So, let's start simple how long have you been used to watching English movies or series with subtitles?

SA: Hmm, I think since I was in high school. At first, I used Indonesian subtitles because I couldn't catch what they were saying. But when I entered university, I switched to English subtitles. It's more challenging but it really helps me learn new words and understand pronunciation.

PR: Oh nice. By the way, where do you usually watch them?

SA: I only watch on Netflix. I don't really use other platforms like YouTube or TikTok for watching movies. I like Netflix because it's clean, no ads, and the subtitles are accurate.

PR: So, you're a Netflix subscriber?

SA: Yes, I am. I subscribe every month it's around forty-something thousand rupiah. I share the account with my friend, so it's not too expensive.

PR: That's smart! Why not use the free movie apps?

SA: Honestly, I used to, but the quality wasn't good. Sometimes the subtitles were wrong, and there were too many ads. It's distracting and not comfortable for learning. Netflix is just smoother and since I use it to improve my English, I think it's worth paying for.

PR: I see. How often do you usually watch?

SA: Almost every day, especially at night before sleeping. Sometimes during weekends I watch more maybe two or three episodes. But when I'm busy with assignments, I just watch short clips or one episode to relax.

PR: So you watch both for fun and learning?

SA: Yes, exactly. I don't really think of it as studying, but I do notice that I'm learning something every time I watch. It's like entertainment and education together.

PR: What kind of movies or series do you like?

SA: I like romance and drama series. Sometimes I watch documentaries, but mostly I choose stories that have daily conversations because it helps me learn natural English expressions. Shows like Emily in Paris or The Good Place are my favorites they use a lot of everyday vocabulary and modern slang.

PR: That's a nice choice. So, do you think subtitles help you learn new vocabulary?

SA: Definitely. When I hear a new word and see it on screen, I can understand it better. For example, when I watched Emily in Paris, I learned words like pitch, campaign, and client. They're business-related, but because I saw them used in real dialogue, I could remember them easily.

PR: So, subtitles make the connection between sound and text clearer?

SA: Yes. I can see how the word is spelled while hearing it spoken naturally. That helps a lot with pronunciation too. Before, I used to mispronounce some words, but now when I hear them in context, I realize how they're actually said.

PR: Can you remember any specific word you learned that way?

SA: Hmm, yes "schedule." I used to say it like "ske-du-le," but then I realized in American English it's "ske-jul." After hearing it repeatedly in subtitles, I finally remembered the correct pronunciation.

PR: That's a great example. So, does seeing the same words in different shows help your memory?

SA: Oh yes, totally. Repetition really helps. When I hear and see the same words in many contexts, they become part of my vocabulary naturally. For example, words like actually, literally, or honestly I didn't even try to memorize them, but they stuck in my mind because I saw them so often.

PR: Do you usually take notes or just rely on repetition?

SA: I just rely on repetition. I don't pause to write because it breaks the mood. If a word is really interesting, I'll just screenshot it. But mostly, I remember it through context and repetition.

PR: Do you feel that subtitles also make you more confident in using English?

SA: Yes, a lot. Watching English shows makes me less afraid of speaking. I often imitate the way the characters speak their pronunciation, their tone, even their expressions. It's fun! For example, I learned to pronounce comfortable correctly just by hearing it many times. Before, I used to say every syllable, but now I say it like native speakers do "comf-tur-bul."

PR: Wow, that's a clear improvement! What about accents do you find any accent hard to understand?

SA: Yes, sometimes. I find the British accent quite difficult. When I watched The Crown, I had to focus more because the accent and vocabulary were different. American accents are easier for me clearer and faster to catch.

PR: Which accent do you prefer?

SA: I like the American accent. It sounds more casual and familiar. But I also admire the British accent it sounds elegant, though harder to follow.

PR: Interesting. Are there any challenges you face while using subtitles?

SA: Sometimes, yes. When the subtitles move too fast, I can't read them properly. Or sometimes, I get too focused on reading and forget to listen. And honestly, I think I'm a bit too dependent on subtitles. When I try turning them off, I panic, haha. But I'm trying to practice without them little by little.

PR: That's good! Do subtitles help with idioms or slang too?

SA: Not always. They help me notice the expressions, but they don't explain the meaning. Like when someone said "spill the tea" or "break a leg," I had to look them up later. But at least the subtitles help me catch those phrases so I can learn them afterward.

PR: That makes sense. So overall, how would you describe your experience learning English through subtitles?

SA: Honestly, it's been really enjoyable. I learn without pressure. Subtitles help me understand and remember new words, improve my pronunciation, and

make me more confident to use English. It's not perfect sometimes I rely too much on them but it's a fun and effective way to learn.

PR: Okayy. Lastly, any advice for others who want to learn English this way?

SA: I'd say if you like watching movies, use that as your learning tool. Choose English subtitles instead of Indonesian, pay attention to new words, and try repeating them. It's okay to rely on subtitles at first, but as you improve, challenge yourself to watch without them.

PR: That's great advice, Nurul. Thank you so much for sharing your story!

SA: You're welcome! I had fun talking about it.



Interviewer : Putri Raisah (PR)

Participant : (AR)

PR: Hi ! Thanks a lot for joining this interview today. How are you feeling?

AR: Hi! I'm good and really happy to talk about this. Watching movies with subtitles is literally my favorite way to relax, so this topic is fun for me.

PR: That's great! So, since when have you been watching English movies or shows with subtitles?

AR: Oh, I think since I was a kid! I used to watch English cartoons and movies on television with my family. Back then, the subtitles were in Indonesian, and honestly, I didn't pay much attention to the English part because I didn't understand it yet (laughs). Sometimes the subtitles changed too fast, and I couldn't keep up. But over time, especially after I entered university, I started watching with English subtitles, and now it feels very natural like part of my habit.

PR: That's really nice! What platforms do you usually use to watch now?

AR: Mostly Netflix. I've been subscribed for a few years already. I pay every month well, actually I share an account with my cousin so it's cheaper (laughs). I prefer Netflix because the subtitles are accurate and match the dialogue perfectly. I don't really use free streaming apps because their subtitles are often messy or delayed. But sometimes, I also watch short videos on TikTok or YouTube just for quick entertainment.

PR: Oh, so you subscribe every month just for Netflix?

AR: Yep! For me, it's totally worth it. I think of it as an investment entertainment plus learning. I really like how Netflix provides an option to switch between Indonesian and English subtitles. Sometimes I rewatch scenes using English subs to check how the words are written.

PR: Nice! So how often do you watch movies or series?

AR: Pretty often, honestly (laughs). Almost every day. If I'm busy, I'll still watch something short like a clip or a 20-minute episode. On weekends or during holidays, I can binge-watch for hours. It depends on my mood. Sometimes

it's a way to relax after studying; other times, it's how I improve my listening and vocabulary without realizing it.

PR: Do you usually watch when you're free, like during the weekend?

AR: Yeah, mostly when I'm free especially at night before sleeping. I feel like watching movies helps me unwind. But even on weekdays, I might play something while doing chores or eating. It's kind of my comfort routine.

PR: You mentioned Netflix do you prefer watching movies or series?

AR: Hmm, that's a tough question! (laughs) I actually like both, but if I had to choose, I'd say series. Because with series, the story keeps going, and I can follow the characters for a longer time. It also helps me get used to hearing recurring phrases or accents. But when I'm short on time, I prefer movies since they finish in one go.

PR: Makes sense! So what's your favorite movie or series so far?

AR: Oh, definitely Extraction! I love action movies they're full of energy and keep me focused. I also like The Gray Man and Mission: Impossible. For series, I really enjoyed Stranger Things and Money Heist. They have interesting dialogue, and I often learn casual English expressions from those. For example, in Money Heist, I learned slang like "hang in there" and "take the shot." Seeing them in subtitles helped me understand how they're used naturally.

PR: That's so cool. So when watching, how do subtitles help you with vocabulary learning?

AR: Subtitles make it easier to connect what I hear with what I read. Like, sometimes I hear a word but don't catch it clearly, then I see it written in the subtitles and suddenly it clicks. It helps me understand how words are pronounced and spelled. For example, I used to pronounce "though" incorrectly until I kept seeing it in subtitles. It really strengthens my understanding.

Also, subtitles help me learn the meaning through context. When I see the actor's expressions, tone, and situation, I can guess the meaning without opening a dictionary.

PR: That's a really natural way of learning. Do you notice that seeing words repeatedly helps you remember them?

AR: Absolutely! Repetition helps a lot. I don't even try to memorize, but after hearing and reading the same word many times, it just sticks. Like the word "literally" I heard it so much in different movies, and now it's part of my daily vocabulary. It's like learning without studying, just enjoying the story.

PR: Good. So, do you take notes or just learn passively while watching?

AR: I don't take notes that would kill the fun (laughs). I just let myself watch naturally. If there's a word I find interesting, I might look it up after the movie. But most of the time, I remember it just from the context and repetition.

PR: Do you feel subtitles make you more confident using English?

AR: Oh, 100%! Before, I used to be shy about speaking English because I wasn't sure about pronunciation or intonation. But now, after hearing how actors say things, I feel braver. Sometimes I mimic their speech while watching. It's funny, but it actually helps. Subtitles give me that visual confirmation I can match the sound with the text, so I know I'm saying it right.

PR: That's really cool! Speaking of pronunciation, how about accents? Do you find some accents difficult to understand?

AR: Oh yes especially British accents at first! (laughs) I remember watching Sherlock and thinking, "What did he just say?" But now, I'm getting used to it. I still prefer American accents because they sound clearer to me. But honestly, I like the Australian accent too it sounds cheerful and relaxed, even though it's quite different.

PR: Do you ever face challenges while using subtitles?

AR: Sometimes, yeah. Like when people speak really fast or multiple characters talk at once I can't read that fast. The subtitles change quickly, and I have to rewind. Also, sometimes I get too dependent on subtitles. When I try watching without them, I feel lost. But lately, I've been practicing I watch the same movie twice, first with subtitles, then without. It helps me improve my listening little by little.

PR: That's a really smart way to learn. How about slang or idioms do subtitles help with those too?

AR: Kind of. Subtitles help me notice slang, but not always understand it right away. For example, when I first saw "spill the tea," I thought it was literally about tea (laughs). But after seeing it in different scenes, I figured out it means gossip or share news. So yeah, subtitles don't explain slang directly, but they help me recognize it and learn

PR: Good! So overall, how would you describe your experience learning English through subtitles?

AR: It's honestly the best way for me. I learn new vocabulary naturally, I understand pronunciation better, and I enjoy it. Subtitles make learning English feel fun instead of stressful. They make me curious to explore more words and expressions every time I watch something new.

Of course, sometimes I read too fast or get lazy to focus, but overall, it's such an effective and enjoyable way to learn.

PR: I love that! Do you have any advice for others who want to improve their English this way?

AR: Sure! My advice is: watch what you love. If you enjoy the movie or series, you'll learn faster because you're not forcing yourself. Start with English subtitles not translations and don't worry if you don't understand everything at first. Just keep watching. Over time, your brain will adjust naturally.

PR: alright, thank you so much for sharing your experience!

AR: You're welcome! This was so much fun. I could talk about movies all day (laughs).

Appendix E: DOCUMEDATION



AUTOBIOGRAPHY

1. Name : Putri Raisah
2. Place / Date of Birth : Mee Peuduek /17 Oktober 2003
3. Sex : Female
4. Religion : Islam
5. Nationality : Indonesian
6. Address : Gampong Mee Peuduek, Kec. Trienggadeng, Kab,
Pidie Jaya Aceh
7. Email : Praisah84@gmail.com
8. Occupation : Student of Department of English Language
Education, UIN Ar-Raniry
9. Parents
 - a. Father's Name : Mulidar Ahmad
 - b. Mother's Name : Halimah Abdullah
 - c. Father's Occupation : Farmer
 - d. Mother's Occupation : Housewife
10. Educational Background
 - a. Elementary School : SD Negeri 2 Trienggadeng
 - b. Junior High School : SMP Negeri 1 Trienggadeng
 - c. Senior High School : SMAS Darussa'adah Glumpang Tiga
 - d. University : Department of English Language Education,
Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, UIN Ar- Raniry

Banda Aceh, 22 January 2026


 Putri Raisah