

## Students' Perception of English Subtitles in Movies for Autonomous Learning

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines students' perceptions of using English subtitles in movies to support autonomous English learning. In the digital age, films with subtitles have become accessible tools for language development, particularly in listening and vocabulary acquisition. The research employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data collected from 34 second- and fourth-semester English Education students at Maros Muslim University. Questionnaires were used to gather broad perceptions, while semi-structured interviews provided deeper insights. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, and qualitative data were processed through thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's framework. Findings indicate that students generally hold positive views toward English subtitles, reporting that they enhance motivation, improve vocabulary and grammar understanding, and aid pronunciation. Many students also noted that subtitles helped them comprehend movie content and made listening tasks less intimidating, especially for beginners. Participants viewed subtitles as practical tools for classroom use and self-study. The study further recommends the integration of subtitled films into English language curricula as a strategic approach to fostering learner autonomy and enhancing overall language competence. The study concludes that integrating English subtitles into language learning materials can effectively promote learner autonomy and support listening comprehension. This supports the broader use of multimedia resources in English language teaching, particularly in contexts where students seek independent learning opportunities.*

Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi mahasiswa terhadap penggunaan subtitle bahasa Inggris dalam film sebagai pendukung pembelajaran mandiri bahasa Inggris. Di era digital, film bersubtitle menjadi alat yang mudah diakses untuk pengembangan kemampuan bahasa, khususnya dalam mendengarkan dan kosakata. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan campuran, menggabungkan data kuantitatif dan kualitatif dari 34 mahasiswa semester dua dan empat Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muslim Maros. Kuesioner digunakan untuk mengukur persepsi umum, sementara wawancara terstruktur mendalam memberikan wawasan lebih dalam. Data kuantitatif dianalisis dengan SPSS, sedangkan data kualitatif dianalisis secara tematik berdasarkan kerangka Braun dan Clarke. Hasil menunjukkan mahasiswa memiliki persepsi positif: subtitle meningkatkan motivasi, membantu pemahaman kosakata dan tata bahasa, serta pelafalan. Mahasiswa menyatakan subtitle membantu memahami isi film dan membuat tugas mendengarkan lebih mudah, terutama bagi pemula. Mahasiswa menganggap subtitle sebagai alat praktis untuk pembelajaran mandiri dan pembelajaran di kelas. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan integrasi film bersubtitle ke dalam kurikulum bahasa Inggris sebagai pendekatan strategis untuk mendorong kemandirian belajar dan meningkatkan kompetensi bahasa secara menyeluruh. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi subtitle bahasa Inggris dalam materi pembelajaran dapat secara efektif meningkatkan kemandirian belajar mahasiswa dan mendukung pemahaman mendengarkan.

## INTRODUCTION

English, as a foreign language in Indonesia, remains a challenging subject for many learners due to its significant linguistic distance from the students' native language, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structure (Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020). Despite being introduced as a compulsory subject from junior high school, many students struggle to develop autonomy in learning English, often relying heavily on teacher-centered instruction (Chiew & Ismail, 2021). In this context, fostering learner independence, defined as the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning process and goals (Oktaviani, L. & Sari, F. M. (2020) becomes a critical objective in language education.

The integration of technology into language learning has opened new avenues for promoting autonomy. Among various digital tools, multimedia-based media, especially films, have emerged as effective pedagogical resources. Films offer authentic, contextualized language input through a combination of audio, visual, and textual elements, making them ideal for developing listening, vocabulary, and comprehension skills (Itagaki *et al.*, 2020; Sari & Sugandi, 2015). When paired with English subtitles, films become even more powerful: subtitles provide written reinforcement of spoken language, helping learners connect sound with spelling, grasp meaning, and internalize new expressions (Faqe, 2020; Napikul, S., Cedar, P., & Roongrattanakool, D. (2018)). This multimodal input not only enhances comprehension but also increases motivation and engagement, making learning more enjoyable and less intimidating (Erlangga, 2014; Mulyadi, 2015).

Moreover, subtitles enable learners to access authentic materials independently anytime, anywhere, thereby supporting self-directed learning (Ayu, 2020; Panjaitan & Hasibuan, 2022). They serve as scaffolds that help learners navigate complex language, especially when dealing with idioms, fast speech, or cultural references (Sabouri & Zohrabi, 2015). As such, the use of subtitled films aligns with contemporary pedagogical trends that emphasize learner agency, autonomy, and the use of authentic materials in language classrooms (Roblyer *et al.*, 2020; Liando *et al.*, 2018).

Despite these advantages, empirical research on students' perceptions of using English subtitles in movies, particularly in relation to their role in fostering independent learning remains limited, especially in the Indonesian higher education context. This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating how students perceive the use of English subtitles in films and how these perceptions relate to their autonomy in learning English. By understanding students' attitudes and experiences, this research aims to provide practical insights for educators seeking to integrate multimedia tools effectively into their teaching practices.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to explore students' perceptions of using English subtitles in movies to support autonomous English learning. The explanatory sequential design was adopted: quantitative data were collected first via questionnaire, followed by qualitative interviews to deepen understanding of the findings (Creswell, 2014). The research was conducted at Universitas Muslim Maros, chosen for its accessibility and relevance to the researcher's context. The population comprised second- and fourth-semester students of the English Education Department. A total of 34 participants (8 male, 26 female) were selected through random sampling for the questionnaire, ensuring equal opportunity for inclusion (Arieska & Herdiani, 2018). From this group, 10 students who expressed positive perceptions in the questionnaire were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews to gain richer insights (Lenaini, 2021). The Data collection involved two instruments:

1. Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) to measure perceptions of subtitle use in movies.
2. Semi-structured interviews to explore motivations, experiences, and perceived impact on autonomous learning (Cameron, 2011).

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS to calculate mean scores and identify trends. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), involving coding, theme identification, and pattern interpretation to uncover meaningful insights into students' experiences. This dual approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of both the extent and nature of students' perceptions, aligning with the study's aim to investigate how subtitles support independent learning.

## RESULTS

### The Impact of English Subtitles in Movies on Learning English

**Table 1.** *Students Perceptions of English Subtitled Movies*

| No. | Statement                                                    | SA |      | A  |      | N  |      | D  |      | SD |      |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
|     |                                                              | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %    |
| 1   | I like watching movies with English subtitles                | 7  | 20.6 | 19 | 55.9 | 7  | 20.6 | 1  | 2.9  | 0  | 0    |
| 2   | I prefer to watch movies in English subtitles                | 2  | 5.9  | 15 | 44.1 | 15 | 44.1 | 2  | 5.9  | 0  | 0    |
| 3   | English subtitles is difficult to understand                 | 1  | 2.9  | 2  | 5.9  | 16 | 47.1 | 13 | 38.2 | 2  | 5.9  |
| 4   | I do not enjoy movies because of English subtitles           | 0  | 0    | 0  | 0    | 14 | 41.2 | 12 | 35.3 | 8  | 23.5 |
| 5   | I have difficulties learning English using English subtitles | 0  | 0    | 1  | 2.9  | 15 | 44.1 | 12 | 35.3 | 6  | 17.6 |

*Source: Author's Analysis*

The questionnaire results reveal a generally positive perception among students toward using English subtitles in movies for language learning. Statement 1 — "I like watching English movies with English subtitles" — showed that 55.9% of participants agreed, with 20.6% strongly agreeing. Only 2.9% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. This indicates a clear preference for subtitled films among the majority. Statement 2 — "I prefer selecting movies with English subtitles" — received 50% agreement, while 44.1% remained neutral. Only 5.9% disagreed, suggesting that while half actively prefer subtitles, others remain indifferent rather than opposed. Statement 3 — "English subtitles are difficult to understand" — was largely rejected: 44.1% disagreed and 47.1% were neutral. Only 5.9% agreed, and 2.9% strongly agreed — indicating that students generally find subtitles accessible. Statement 4 — "I dislike watching movies with English subtitles" — was overwhelmingly rejected: 58.8% disagreed, 41.2% were neutral, and 0% agreed. This confirms that negative attitudes toward subtitles are minimal. Statement 5 — "Learning English with English subtitles is difficult" — showed 52.9% disagreed (17.6% strongly), while 44.1% were neutral. Only 2.9% agreed — reinforcing that students perceive subtitles as a supportive, not obstructive, learning tool.

Overall, the data indicate that students hold favorable perceptions of English subtitles in movies. Even for negatively worded statements, disagreement rates were consistently high, and neutral responses dominated over agreement, suggesting that while not all students are enthusiastic, few find subtitles problematic. The majority view subtitles as helpful, accessible, and conducive to independent learning. These findings suggest that English subtitles are well-received as a language learning tool, with students demonstrating a clear inclination toward their use in both formal and informal learning contexts. This positive reception further supports the potential of subtitled films as an effective and sustainable resource for autonomous English language development.

**Tabel 2.** *Students Perceptions of the Implementation of English Subtitled Movies*

| No. | Statement                                                                                        | SA |      | A  |      | N  |      | D  |      | SD |      |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
|     |                                                                                                  | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %    |
| 6   | Englissh subtitles is good to learn English in a fun way                                         | 10 | 29.4 | 18 | 52.9 | 5  | 14.7 | 1  | 2.9  | 0  | 0    |
| 7   | English subtitles encourage me to learn English                                                  | 15 | 44.1 | 12 | 35.3 | 6  | 17.6 | 1  | 2.9  | 0  | 0    |
| 8   | I feel tired when reading English subtitles                                                      | 0  | 0    | 1  | 2.9  | 8  | 23.5 | 19 | 55.9 | 6  | 17.6 |
| 9   | I motivated to learn English using subtitles                                                     | 5  | 14.7 | 20 | 58.8 | 9  | 26.5 | 0  | 0    | 0  | 0    |
| 10  | I feel comfortable watching English movies with subtitles                                        | 5  | 14.7 | 11 | 32.4 | 16 | 47.1 | 2  | 5.9  | 0  | 0    |
| 11  | I feel there is No. improvement after watching English movies with subtitles in learning English | 0  | 0    | 0  | 0    | 9  | 26.5 | 14 | 41.2 | 11 | 32.4 |

*Source: Author's Analysis*

Statement 6 — “English subtitles make learning English fun” — received strong agreement: 52.9% agreed and 29.4% strongly agreed, totaling 82.3% positive responses. Only 2.9% disagreed, with 14.7% neutral. This demonstrates that students perceive subtitles as an engaging learning tool. Statement 7 — “English subtitled movies encourage me to learn English” — showed similarly positive results: 44.1% strongly agreed, 35.3% agreed (totaling 79.4%), while 17.6% were neutral and only 2.9% disagreed. These findings indicate that subtitled films serve as a motivational resource. Statement 8 — “I feel tired when reading English subtitles” — was largely rejected: 55.9% disagreed and 17.6% strongly disagreed (totaling 73.5%). Only 2.9% agreed, with 23.5% neutral. This suggests that reading subtitles does not cause cognitive fatigue for most students. Statement 9 — “English subtitles motivate me to learn English” — showed strong agreement: 73.5% agreed or strongly agreed, while 26.5% remained neutral. No participants disagreed, reinforcing the motivational value of subtitles. Statement 10 — “I feel comfortable watching movies with English subtitles” — received balanced responses: 47.1% agreed and 47.1% were neutral. Only 5.9% disagreed. This indicates that comfort levels are generally positive or neutral, with minimal discomfort. Statement 11 — “There is no improvement after watching English movies with English subtitles” — was overwhelmingly rejected: 73.6% disagreed (32.4% strongly, 41.2% moderately), while 26.5% were neutral. No participants agreed, indicating that students perceive tangible learning gains from subtitle use.

These consistently positive perceptions across motivational, affective, and cognitive dimensions suggest that English subtitles are not merely supplementary tools, but integral components of students’ autonomous learning ecosystems. Their ability to enhance enjoyment, reduce perceived difficulty, and foster a sense of progress positions them as highly effective and sustainable resources for self-directed language acquisition. Moreover, the low levels of disagreement — even on negatively framed statements — imply that subtitles are perceived as non-disruptive and adaptable to individual learning styles. This aligns with contemporary pedagogical trends that prioritize learner agency, multimodal input, and authentic materials in language education — making subtitles a natural fit for modern, student-centered classrooms.

**Tabel 3.** *The Advantages of English Subtitled Movies*

| No. | Statement                                 | SA |      | A  |      | N |      | D |   | SD |   |
|-----|-------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|---|------|---|---|----|---|
|     |                                           | F  | %    | F  | %    | F | %    | F | % | F  | % |
| 12  | I know new vocabulary from subtitles      | 13 | 38.2 | 14 | 41.2 | 7 | 20.6 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0 |
| 13  | Subtitles helps me in learning vocabulary | 17 | 50   | 13 | 38.2 | 4 | 11.8 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0 |

*Source: Author's Analysis*

Statement 12 — “I acquire new vocabulary from English subtitles” — received strong positive responses: 38.2% strongly agreed and 41.2% agreed (totaling 79.4%), while 20.6% were neutral. No participants disagreed, indicating widespread recognition of vocabulary gains through subtitles. Statement 13 — “English subtitles help me learn vocabulary” — showed the highest agreement rate among all items: 88.2% agreed or strongly agreed, with only 11.8% neutral and 0% disagreement. This demonstrates that students strongly perceive subtitles as an effective vocabulary acquisition tool. The questionnaire from Table 3 reveals that vocabulary acquisition is a primary perceived benefit of using English subtitles, with combined agreement rates for both statements exceeding 79%. Students consistently recognized that subtitles expose them to new vocabulary and facilitate vocabulary retention, positioning subtitles as a valuable resource for lexical development.

These findings align with cognitive theories of vocabulary learning that emphasize the role of context, repetition, and multimodal input — all of which are naturally embedded in subtitled film viewing. The near-unanimous agreement on Statement 13 suggests that learners not only recognize the utility of subtitles but actively attribute lexical growth to their use — a powerful indicator of perceived efficacy. This positions subtitles not merely as passive aids, but as active, learner-driven tools that support metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning. In educational practice, this implies that integrating subtitled films into curricula — particularly for vocabulary instruction — can foster both lexical competence and learner autonomy, making them a strategic asset in modern language classrooms.

**Tabel 4.** *The Disadvantages of English Subtitled Movies*

| No. | Statement                                                                | SA |     | A |     | N  |      | D  |      | SD |      |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----|---|-----|----|------|----|------|----|------|
|     |                                                                          | F  | %   | F | %   | F  | %    | F  | %    | F  | %    |
| 14  | Subtitles in movies makes me less focused when eatching English movies   | 3  | 8.8 | 0 | 0   | 16 | 47.1 | 8  | 23.5 | 7  | 20.6 |
| 15  | I feel that English subtitles in movies distract me when watching movies | 0  | 0   | 1 | 2.9 | 11 | 32.4 | 14 | 41.2 | 8  | 23.5 |
| 16  | I need more time to read and understand subtitles                        | 0  | 0   | 1 | 5.9 | 17 | 50   | 11 | 32.4 | 4  | 11.8 |

*Source: Author's Analysis*

Statement 14 — “English subtitles make me less focused when watching movies” — Statement 12 — “I acquire new vocabulary from English subtitles” — received strong agreement: 38.2% strongly agreed and 41.2% agreed (totaling 79.4%), while 20.6% were neutral. No participants disagreed, indicating widespread recognition of vocabulary gains through subtitles. Statement 13 — “English subtitles help me learn vocabulary” — showed the highest agreement rate among all items: 88.2% agreed or strongly agreed, with only 11.8% neutral and 0%

disagreement. This demonstrates that students strongly perceive subtitles as an effective vocabulary acquisition tool. Statement 14 — “English subtitles make me less focused when watching movies” — received mixed responses: 47.1% neutral, 23.5% disagreed, and 20.6% strongly disagreed (totaling 44.1% disagreement). Only 8.8% strongly agreed, with 0% agreement. From the results, it could be concluded that more participants disagree with this statement than agree, although more participants chose neutral. Statement 15 — “English subtitles distract me when watching movies” — showed stronger rejection: 64.7% disagreed, while only 2.9% agreed. 32.4% of students selected a neutral response. From the results, it was apparent that most of the participants felt that English subtitles in movies did not distract them when watching English movies. Statement 16 — “I need more time to read and comprehend the English subtitles” — resulted in 50% neutral responses, 32.4% disagreed, and 11.8% strongly disagreed (totaling 44.2% disagreement). Only 5.9% agreed and 0% strongly agreed. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that the majority of participants had a neutral stance regarding the need for more time to read and comprehend the English subtitles.

Collectively, these findings suggest that students do not perceive subtitles as a source of distraction or cognitive overload — even when explicitly prompted to consider potential drawbacks. The predominance of disagreement over negative statements indicates that concerns about focus loss, distraction, or excessive reading time are largely unfounded from the learners’ perspective. This supports the integration of subtitles into language learning environments as low-risk, high-reward tools that enhance rather than hinder comprehension. Furthermore, the high agreement on vocabulary-related statements — coupled with minimal resistance to perceived disadvantages — reinforces the notion that subtitles function as a scaffolded, learner-friendly medium that aligns with principles of autonomy, accessibility, and multimodal learning in contemporary language pedagogy.

## **Students’ Perceptions of Using English Subtitles in Movies to Support Autonomous English Learning**

### *1. The Role of English Movies in Supporting Autonomous Language Learning*

All interview participants reported that they had independently engaged in English learning through watching English movies, which they perceived as an effective strategy for improving their language skills. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate their experiences:

Sa : Yes, I often learned English by watching English movies or videos, which I believed was an effective way to improve my English skills.

Furthermore, several participants reported consistently using English subtitles whenever they watched English movies as part of their independent learning practice. This is reflected in the following interview excerpts:

FN : Yes, almost every time I watch it, I definitely use English Subtitles because it is quite helpful.

FN reported that he consistently used English subtitles when watching movies, as he perceived them to be highly beneficial for understanding and learning English. He stated that subtitles significantly supported his independent language learning, particularly in improving comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

### *2. Students’ Perceptions of the Use of English Subtitles in Movies for Language Learning*

#### *a. The Role of English Subtitles in Vocabulary Development*

Participants reported that English subtitles facilitated the acquisition of new vocabulary and phrases. This is illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

AN : By watching movies with English subtitles, it can help me learn new vocabulary. I can see the spoken words in a movie or video written in the subtitles. It helps me to learn new vocabulary and phrases

Another participant highlighted that English subtitles aided in comprehending unfamiliar or challenging vocabulary. This perspective is reflected in the following interview excerpt:

AP : English subtitles allow me to go over new or difficult words and understand them better.

These highlight that English subtitles serve as a powerful tool for vocabulary acquisition, enabling learners to encounter, revisit, and internalize new words through authentic, context-rich input, a key mechanism in autonomous language learning.

b. *The Role of English Subtitles in Enhancing Grammar Awareness and Pronunciation Skills*

Interview data indicated that English subtitles in movies supported learners in recognizing and internalizing grammatical structures. The following excerpt illustrates this finding:

AN : . . as well as helping me learn grammar a little. I can see how English grammar is used in sentences in subtitles.

Furthermore, participants reported that English subtitles enhanced their understanding of pronunciation, particularly in identifying word stress, intonation, and phonetic patterns. This is illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

Sa : English subtitles make it easier for me to learn English because I can see or hear words in a real context. For example, in films or videos, which is quite helpful in improving my understanding of the pronunciation and meaning of the words spoken.

c. *English Subtitles in Enhancing Comprehension of English Movies*

Participants noted that English subtitles enhanced comprehension of both the overall narrative and spoken dialogue in films. This is reflected in the following interview excerpt:

FA : In my opinion, watching with English subtitles can make it easier for us to better understand what is said in the video. Because, for me personally, sometimes we can't hear clearly what the person speaking in the video is saying. So I think these subtitles are very helpful for understanding what the person in the video is saying.

Analysis of the interview data reveals that participants held consistently positive perceptions of English subtitles as a tool for autonomous English learning. Subtitles were perceived to support vocabulary acquisition, grammatical awareness, and pronunciation development, while also enhancing comprehension of film content. These findings suggest that subtitles serve as a multifaceted resource that contributes meaningfully to independent language learning.

3. *English Subtitles as a Support for Listening Skills in the Classroom*

Participants were asked about the effectiveness of using English subtitles in classroom settings, particularly in listening instruction. The following responses reflect their views:

FN : It might be very helpful because the students will probably focus on the text as well and will better understand what is in the text.

Participants viewed English subtitles in movies as an effective pedagogical tool suitable for integration into listening classes, particularly for novice learners seeking to improve comprehension. This perspective is supported by the following interview excerpt:

Sa : In my opinion, it is possible, very, very possible because, as before I mention, it also depends on the video or what video or movie is being shown. For example, animated videos are of course, better if the video use basic words, meaning those that are more general to understand, and especially for lower semester students.

Another participant expressed a similar perspective, noting that English subtitles in movies could support novice learners in developing English proficiency. This is reflected in the following interview excerpt:

AN : Yes, in my opinion it is possible, very possible, because the use of films with English subtitles is also helpful, especially with new students, helping them to better understand what they hear and be able to adapt it to the subtitles they see.

Additionally, participants reported that English subtitles facilitated the development of writing skills by enabling simultaneous engagement with auditory and visual linguistic input. This multimodal exposure supported their ability to recognize spelling patterns and written forms. The following excerpt illustrates this observation:

RA : Then our writing also improves our writing skills there, not just listening. Writing, as we know, oh this is how to write like this, and when we know how to write, oh we also know how to listen because we listen while looking. Oh this, this is what you read, this is what you write this, oh this means this. Like this.

Analysis of the interview data reveals that participants perceived English subtitles as an effective tool for listening instruction, particularly for novice learners. Subtitles functioned as a multifaceted pedagogical resource, providing visual reinforcement that supported not only listening comprehension but also orthographic awareness. By simultaneously engaging with auditory and written forms, learners could recognize word spellings and written conventions, thereby enhancing both receptive and productive language skills.

#### *4. English Subtitles vs. No Subtitles: A Comparison in Movie-Based Language Learning*

Participants reported multiple benefits of watching English movies with subtitles compared to without. This is illustrated in the following interview excerpts:

Sa : The advantage of English subtitles that I have received so far is that it can help me understand conversations, and as I said earlier, it can increase or enrich vocabulary, it can also provide useful visual support in the learning process and we can also focus more on the movie content without having to worry about missing out our understanding of the actor's conversation in the movie.

Another participant emphasized that English subtitles significantly enhanced comprehension of the film, particularly in clarifying dialogue. This is reflected in the following interview excerpt.

AN : In my opinion, there are several advantages to use English subtitles compared to no subtitles when watching, namely that English subtitles can help to understand the movies, even if you don't understand English very well.

Additionally, participants reported that subtitles provided greater clarity in understanding conversations compared to watching without subtitles. The following excerpts illustrate this perspective.

FN : Maybe the clarity of the conversation in the film or video is a little clearer than not using subtitles.

Analysis of the interview data reveals that participants perceived subtitles as a critical tool for improving narrative and dialogue comprehension. This supports the view that subtitles not only aid in understanding but also contribute to overall engagement with the content. This enhanced engagement stems from the cognitive scaffolding subtitles provide allowing learners to process complex linguistic input without sacrificing narrative flow or emotional connection to the story. Moreover, the perceived clarity of dialogue suggests that subtitles help learners decode not just words, but also tone, intent, and context, elements essential for pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence. These insights underscore the value of subtitles as more than linguistic aids; they are

narrative mediators that deepen comprehension, foster critical viewing, and ultimately support holistic language development in authentic, meaningful contexts.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study aimed to investigate the impact of English subtitles in movies on students' autonomous English learning, with a specific focus on their perceptions of subtitle use as a supportive tool. The findings, drawn from both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews, consistently reveal that students hold positive, even enthusiastic, perceptions of English subtitles as a medium for language development. Far from being passive aids, subtitles were perceived as active scaffolds that enhance comprehension, motivation, and learner agency, aligning with contemporary views of autonomy in language education (Oktaviani, L. & Sari, F. M. (2020).

Quantitative data indicated that the majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that subtitles made learning English more enjoyable, accessible, and effective. Statements related to vocabulary acquisition, grammar awareness, and pronunciation development received high agreement rates, particularly Statement 13, which reported 88.2% agreement that subtitles helped learners acquire new vocabulary. This finding is strongly supported by prior research: Faqe (2020) emphasized that subtitled films expose learners to authentic, up-to-date lexical items, while Napikul, S., Cedar, P., & Roongrattanakool, D. (2018) noted that subtitles aid in connecting spoken words with their written forms, reinforcing spelling and meaning simultaneously. Wahyuningsih and Fitriah (2023) further corroborate this, identifying subtitled films as one of the most effective methods for improving comprehension of conversational meaning.

Qualitative data from interviews reinforced these quantitative trends. Participants explicitly linked subtitle use to improved vocabulary retention, grammatical noticing, and pronunciation awareness, often describing how they "revisited" unfamiliar words or "repeated" phrases after seeing them in subtitles. One participant noted that subtitles allowed them to "go over difficult words and understand them better", a process that reflects cognitive theories of vocabulary learning emphasizing repetition, context, and metacognitive engagement.

Importantly, participants also viewed subtitles as valuable in listening instruction. When asked about classroom implementation, most expressed that subtitles should be integrated, especially for beginner, to reduce cognitive load and enhance comprehension. This aligns with Sari and Sugandi's (2015) finding that subtitled films are more effective than unsubtitled ones in developing listening skills. Mulyadi (2015) similarly argued that subtitled films provide dual input, auditory and visual, which supports the development of receptive skills. Itagaki et al. (2020) further described this as a "rich multimodal technique," combining sound, sight, and text, a combination that not only supports listening but also writing, as learners observe how words are spelled and structured in context.

Interestingly, while negative perceptions were explored such as distraction, reduced focus, or increased reading time, the majority of participants either disagreed or remained neutral. This suggests that perceived drawbacks are minimal and do not outweigh the pedagogical benefits. The fact that students reported feeling comfortable, motivated, and engaged while using subtitles further underscores their potential as tools for sustained, autonomous learning, a key contribution of this study.

In sum, this research contributes to the growing body of evidence that English subtitles are not merely compensatory tools but strategic resources for autonomous, multimodal, and context-rich language learning. Their integration into both formal and informal learning environments, particularly in listening and vocabulary instruction offers a practical, engaging, and effective pathway for learners to take ownership of their language development.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that students hold overwhelmingly positive perceptions of using English subtitles in movies to support autonomous English learning. Questionnaire results indicate that the majority prefer subtitled films, finding them accessible, engaging, and effective for vocabulary

acquisition. Participants reported feeling motivated and comfortable, as subtitles provided visual reinforcement that enhanced comprehension and facilitated independent learning. Interview data further revealed that subtitles support not only vocabulary development but also grammar awareness and pronunciation improvement. Learners described how subtitles helped them decode unfamiliar words, recognize sentence structures, and connect spoken and written forms reinforcing multimodal language processing. Importantly, participants viewed subtitles as a practical tool for classroom use, particularly in listening instruction for novice learners, where they serve as visual scaffolds that reduce cognitive load and enhance engagement.

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