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A CORRELATIONAL STUDY ON SUBTITLED MOVIE WATCHING AND VOCABULARY MASTERY AMONG EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles and their vocabulary mastery in an EFL context, addressing the limited evidence on how informal audiovisual exposure functions in natural learning settings. A quantitative correlational design was employed, involving 27 students selected through total sampling. Data were collected using a 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire to measure viewing habits (Cronbach's α = .763) and a 25-item multiple-choice vocabulary test to assess vocabulary mastery. The results revealed a positive but weak and statistically non-significant correlation (r = .115; p = .568), indicating that frequent exposure to subtitled movies is not a strong predictor of vocabulary mastery. These findings suggest that informal exposure alone may not lead to substantial vocabulary development without sufficient cognitive engagement. The study highlights the importance of learner involvement and supports the view that the effectiveness of audiovisual input depends on how learners process the input rather than the exposure itself. This study contributes to the understanding of informal language learning by emphasizing the gap between perceived and actual learning outcomes in natural contexts.

Keywords: EFL Students; Informal Learning; Subtitled Movie Viewing; Viewing Habits; Vocabulary Mastery

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is widely recognized as a fundamental component in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as it enables learners to comprehend and express meaning across various language skills. Learners with limited vocabulary often experience difficulties in understanding texts and communicating ideas effectively, which may restrict their overall participation in language use. Nation (2018) emphasizes that vocabulary knowledge plays a central role in supporting the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, in many EFL contexts, vocabulary learning remains heavily dependent on formal classroom instruction, where exposure to language is often limited by instructional time and structured activities. This condition raises concerns about whether classroom-based learning alone is sufficient to support vocabulary development.

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In response to these limitations, learners increasingly turn to informal sources of language exposure, one of which is watching English movies. Movies provide rich audiovisual input that reflects authentic language use and present vocabulary in meaningful and contextualized situations. Rodgers and Webb (2020) argue that such input can facilitate vocabulary learning by embedding words within realistic communicative contexts. The presence of subtitles further enhances this process by linking spoken and written forms of language. Peters and Webb (2018) highlight that subtitles assist learners in recognizing unfamiliar words and understanding their meanings, while Pérez-Serrano et al. (2021) demonstrate that subtitles can promote noticing, which is a crucial step in vocabulary acquisition. In addition, exposure to authentic input outside formal instruction has been shown to contribute to vocabulary development by providing learners with more varied and meaningful language encounters (Lee & Drajati, 2019).

Despite these reported benefits, the effectiveness of audiovisual input in vocabulary learning remains inconsistent. Several studies suggest that exposure alone does not guarantee meaningful learning outcomes. For instance, Kord et al. (2022) found that simply watching audiovisual materials does not necessarily result in significant vocabulary acquisition. This indicates that learning outcomes are influenced not only by the availability of input but also by how learners engage with it. From a theoretical perspective, this issue can be understood through the distinction between passive and active learning. Schmitt (2010) argues that vocabulary acquisition requires deeper cognitive processing, while Zhou and Wei (2018) emphasize that the quality of engagement plays a more critical role than exposure frequency. These perspectives suggest that informal learning activities may vary in effectiveness depending on the level of learner involvement.

Another important dimension in this discussion is the concept of habit. With the widespread availability of digital media, learners are increasingly exposed to English through repeated and routine activities, including watching movies. Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016) note that habitual exposure can increase opportunities for encountering vocabulary items. However, frequency of exposure alone does not necessarily lead to substantial learning gains. Pellicer-Sánchez et al. (2022) demonstrate that repeated exposure may influence vocabulary processing, but its impact on long-term acquisition is not always significant. This suggests that while habit may increase exposure, it does not automatically ensure effective vocabulary development, particularly when cognitive engagement is limited.

Furthermore, much of the existing research on audiovisual input has been conducted in controlled experimental settings. In such contexts, learners are often required to focus on specific vocabulary items or engage in structured tasks designed to enhance learning. Wei and Fan (2022) explain that audiovisual input combined with on-screen text can support vocabulary learning through multiple input channels under such conditions. However, these findings may not fully reflect how learners interact with English movies in real-life situations, where viewing is often driven by entertainment rather than learning objectives. Adrefiza et al. (2024) report that students perceive watching English movies as beneficial for vocabulary development, while Mubarokah and Rizal (2025) highlight that learners find movies engaging and enjoyable. Nevertheless, these positive perceptions do not necessarily

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correspond to measurable vocabulary mastery, indicating a potential mismatch between perceived and actual learning outcomes.

In addition, previous studies tend to conceptualize vocabulary learning in terms of short-term gains, often measured immediately after exposure. While such measures provide insight into immediate recall, they may not adequately capture vocabulary mastery, which involves deeper and more durable knowledge of words across contexts. Hidayad et al. (2024) emphasize that vocabulary development is shaped not only by exposure but also by the strategies learners employ, including cognitive and metacognitive processes. This suggests that examining vocabulary mastery, rather than short-term gains, may offer a more comprehensive understanding of learning outcomes.

Based on these considerations, a clear gap can be identified in the existing literature. While previous studies have demonstrated the potential benefits of audiovisual input and subtitles, many of them rely on controlled conditions that may not represent real-life learning environments. In addition, limited attention has been given to the relationship between habitual exposure to English movies and vocabulary mastery in natural, unstructured contexts. More importantly, the interaction between exposure, engagement, and learning outcomes remains insufficiently explored, particularly in EFL settings where informal learning plays a significant role.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the relationship between students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles and their vocabulary mastery in an EFL context. The study is guided by the following research question: Is there a significant relationship between students' movie-watching habits and their level of vocabulary mastery? By focusing on naturally occurring learning behavior rather than controlled instructional conditions, this study seeks to provide a more realistic understanding of how informal exposure contributes to vocabulary development. The novelty of this study lies in its emphasis on habitual engagement in real-life contexts, offering an alternative perspective to experimental research on audiovisual input.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design to investigate the relationship between students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles and their vocabulary mastery. A quantitative approach was selected as the study aimed to analyze numerical data and examine the degree of association between two variables. Rather than establishing causal relationships, the study focused on identifying whether a statistically significant relationship exists between naturally occurring behaviors and learning outcomes. As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2018), correlational research is appropriate when the purpose is to determine the strength and direction of relationships among variables within a population.

The research was conducted at Ma'ahad Assultan Ahmad Shah Addini (SAS), located in Pahang, Malaysia, involving students of Class 3 Al-Jazari. This context was considered relevant as students were exposed to English both in formal classroom settings and through informal activities. The participants consisted of 27 students, selected using a total sampling technique. Although the class originally consisted of 30 students, three were excluded due to

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absence and incomplete responses. Total sampling was considered appropriate given the small and manageable population size, allowing all available participants to be included in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study involved two variables. The independent variable was students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles, while the dependent variable was vocabulary mastery. Habit, in this context, refers to repeated viewing behaviors, including frequency, duration, and consistency. Vocabulary mastery refers to students' knowledge of word meanings and their ability to recognize appropriate usage in context.

Data were collected using two instruments: a questionnaire and a vocabulary test. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items designed to measure students' movie-watching habits. The items were constructed to represent several aspects of habit, including frequency of watching, regularity, and level of attention to language features while viewing. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). For example, items included statements such as "I like watching movies" and "I watch movies regularly every week." The total score was obtained by summing all item responses, with higher scores indicating stronger habitual engagement.

The vocabulary test consisted of 25 multiple-choice items, each with four answer options. The items were designed to assess students' understanding of word meanings and contextual usage. Each correct answer was scored as 1, while incorrect answers were scored as 0. The total score represented students' overall vocabulary mastery. The test items were developed based on students' proficiency level to ensure that the difficulty was appropriate and aligned with their learning context. As suggested by Nation (2018), structured vocabulary tests are effective in providing measurable evidence of lexical knowledge.

To ensure the quality of the instruments, both validity and reliability were considered. Content validity was addressed by aligning the questionnaire items with the theoretical concept of habit and ensuring that the vocabulary test covered essential aspects of lexical knowledge. The instruments were reviewed prior to data collection to ensure clarity and appropriateness of the items. In addition, reliability analysis was conducted for the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha. The result showed a coefficient of .763, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency. According to Cohen et al. (2017), a reliability coefficient above .70 is generally considered acceptable in educational research.

The data collection procedure was carried out in a structured classroom setting. The questionnaire was administered first, followed by the vocabulary test, to minimize potential influence between instruments. Participants were provided with clear instructions before completing each task. They were also informed that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for research purposes, encouraging honest and unbiased responses.

The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values, were used to summarize the data. Prior to conducting correlation analysis, assumption testing was performed to ensure the suitability of the data. Normality was assessed to determine whether the data distribution met the requirements for parametric analysis, and linearity was examined to confirm the presence of a linear relationship between variables.

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To examine the relationship between students' movie-watching habits and vocabulary mastery, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied. This method is commonly used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables (Cohen et al., 2017). The correlation coefficient (r) indicates the strength of the relationship, while the significance value (p-value) determines whether the relationship is statistically significant. The level of significance was set at .05, meaning that a p-value below .05 indicates a significant relationship (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed about the purpose of the research prior to data collection. Confidentiality was ensured by not disclosing any personal information in the reporting of the results. Maintaining ethical standards is essential in conducting educational research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data obtained from the questionnaire and vocabulary test. The results are organized into descriptive statistics, assumption testing, and correlation analysis to provide a structured overview of the data and to examine the relationship between the variables under investigation.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the general characteristics of the data collected from the participants. These statistics include the number of participants, mean, median, standard deviation, as well as minimum and maximum scores for each variable.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Questionnaire_Total	27	60.8	62	6.08	47	75
Vocab_Total	27	22.6	23	2.52	15	25

The data indicate that all 27 participants completed both the questionnaire and the vocabulary test, with no missing responses recorded, suggesting that the dataset is complete and suitable for further analysis.

For the variable of students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles, the mean score was 60.8, while the median was 62. This close proximity suggests that the distribution of scores is relatively balanced. The standard deviation of 6.08 indicates a moderate level of variation among participants, reflecting differences in how frequently and consistently students engage in watching English movies. The scores ranged from 47 to 75, showing a relatively wide spread of responses.

In terms of vocabulary mastery, the mean score was 22.6, with a median of 23, again indicating a relatively balanced distribution. The standard deviation of 2.52 suggests that the

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variation in vocabulary scores is smaller compared to the habit variable. The scores ranged from 15 to 25, indicating that most students performed within a narrower band.

Overall, these descriptive results suggest that while students vary considerably in their movie-watching habits, their vocabulary scores tend to be more clustered.

Assumption Testing

Prior to conducting correlation analysis, normality testing was performed using the Shapiro–Wilk test to determine whether the data met the assumptions required for parametric analysis.

The results show that the questionnaire data were normally distributed ($W = .988$, $p = .986$), as the p-value is higher than the significance level of .05. However, the vocabulary data were not normally distributed ($W = .796$, $p < .001$), indicating a deviation from normality.

These findings suggest that while one variable meets the assumption of normality, the other does not fully satisfy the requirement. Nevertheless, Pearson correlation was still applied, considering that the test is relatively robust to violations of normality, particularly in small sample sizes and exploratory educational research contexts.

Correlation Analysis

To determine whether there is a relationship between students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles and their vocabulary mastery, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied.

Table 2. Correlation matrix

Variables	r	df	p
Questionnaire – Vocab	.115	25	.568

The results of the correlation analysis show a positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .115$). This indicates that higher levels of viewing habits are associated with slightly higher vocabulary scores. However, the strength of this relationship is considered weak.

The significance test indicates that the p-value is .568, which is higher than the threshold of .05. This means that the observed correlation is not statistically significant. The degrees of freedom for this analysis are 25, corresponding to the number of participants.

These findings suggest that although a positive relationship exists, the magnitude of the relationship is minimal and not strong enough to be considered statistically meaningful. In practical terms, this implies that students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles does not appear to have a strong or consistent association with their vocabulary mastery in this context.

Visual Representation

A scatter plot was used to provide a visual representation of the relationship between students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles and their vocabulary mastery.

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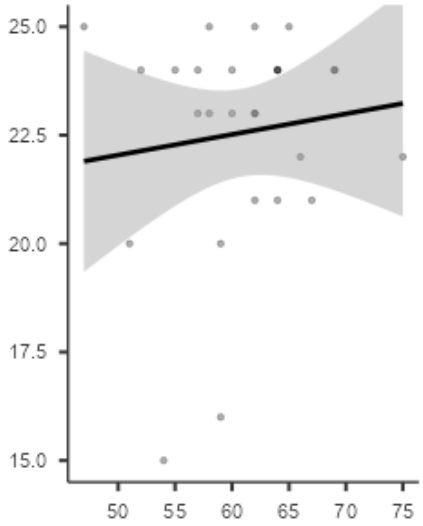


Figure 1. Scatter Plot of the relationship between students' habit and vocabulary mastery

The scatter plot illustrates the distribution of individual data points across the two variables. A slight upward trend can be observed, which is consistent with the positive correlation identified in the statistical analysis. However, the data points are widely dispersed and do not form a clear linear pattern, indicating that the relationship between the variables is weak and inconsistent.

Despite the dispersion, the overall pattern suggests a generally linear tendency, indicating that the assumption of linearity is reasonably met for the purpose of correlation analysis.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of the Relationship Between Viewing Habit and Vocabulary Mastery

The findings of this study indicate that the relationship between students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles and their vocabulary mastery is positive but weak and not statistically significant. Rather than suggesting a direct contribution of viewing habits to vocabulary development, this result points to a more complex relationship in which exposure alone may not function as a reliable predictor of learning outcomes. In this sense, the findings highlight that the presence of English input in informal settings does not automatically translate into measurable vocabulary gains. This result is in line with previous research on incidental vocabulary learning, which emphasizes that exposure alone does not guarantee vocabulary acquisition unless it is accompanied by meaningful engagement and appropriate learning conditions (Hajiyeva, 2026).

One possible explanation for this pattern lies in the nature of informal exposure itself. Watching English movies provides access to authentic and contextualized language input, which has been widely recognized as beneficial for vocabulary development (Peters & Webb,

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2018; Rodgers & Webb, 2020). However, these benefits are not inherent to the input alone, but depend largely on how learners engage with it. In the present study, the weak correlation suggests that students' engagement with audiovisual input may not consistently involve the level of attention and processing required for vocabulary acquisition.

This interpretation is closely related to the distinction between passive and active learning. While movie-watching can expose learners to a wide range of vocabulary, passive engagement, such as focusing primarily on the storyline, may limit the depth of processing needed for retention. Schmitt (2010) emphasizes that vocabulary learning is more likely to occur when learners actively notice and process lexical items. Therefore, the findings of this study support the view that exposure without sufficient cognitive involvement may result in limited learning outcomes.

In addition to engagement, the variability in students' viewing habits may also help explain the weak relationship observed. The descriptive results showed a relatively wide range in the habit variable, indicating differences in frequency and consistency of movie-watching among students. However, this variation does not appear to correspond with comparable differences in vocabulary mastery. This suggests that frequency of exposure alone may not be a determining factor, as the effectiveness of language input depends not only on how often learners are exposed to it, but also on how the input is processed and utilized Feng and Webb (2019). In other words, repeated exposure without meaningful interaction may lead to limited vocabulary development.

Furthermore, the non-significant correlation indicates that the observed relationship may not be strong enough to be generalized beyond the sample. While this does not imply the absence of any relationship, it suggests that other variables may play a more influential role in shaping vocabulary mastery. As noted by Cohen et al. (2017), the strength of statistical relationships is often influenced by sample size and variability within the data. In small-scale studies, weak patterns may not reach statistical significance even when some degree of association exists. In addition, the effectiveness of multimedia input is often mediated by learner-related factors, including attention and engagement, rather than the input itself (Teng, 2023).

When compared to previous research, the findings of this study appear to diverge from studies that reported stronger effects of audiovisual input on vocabulary learning. For instance, Kord et al. (2022) and Pérez-Serrano et al. (2021) found that exposure to subtitled audiovisual materials can significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition. However, it is important to note that these studies were conducted in controlled environments, where learners were guided to focus on specific vocabulary items and often required to engage in structured follow-up tasks. Such conditions are likely to increase learners' attention and promote deeper processing, which in turn leads to stronger learning outcomes.

In contrast, the present study reflects a natural learning context in which students watch English movies without explicit instructional guidance. This difference in context may account for the weaker relationship observed, as learners in informal settings are less likely to engage in deliberate learning strategies. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of audiovisual input is context-dependent, and that results obtained in experimental settings may not fully represent how learning occurs in everyday situations.

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The role of subtitles also needs to be interpreted with caution. While subtitles are generally considered supportive for vocabulary learning, their effectiveness depends on how they are used by learners. Some students may rely on subtitles primarily for comprehension, without actively processing unfamiliar vocabulary, while others may use them as a tool to connect spoken and written forms. This variation in strategy use may reduce the consistency of learning outcomes across individuals, even when the same input is provided (Peters & Webb, 2018).

Taken together, these findings suggest that watching English movies with subtitles should not be viewed as a direct or standalone predictor of vocabulary mastery. Instead, it may function as one of several contributing factors within a broader learning process. While previous studies have demonstrated that captioned viewing can facilitate vocabulary acquisition under certain conditions (Kurokawa et al., 2024), the present study indicates that in natural, unstructured contexts, the impact of such exposure may be more limited. This reinforces the idea that vocabulary development is influenced by a combination of factors, including engagement, learning strategies, and contextual conditions, rather than exposure alone.

Implications of Informal Exposure in Vocabulary Learning

The findings of this study offer important insights into the role of informal learning in vocabulary development, particularly in relation to audiovisual input. While watching English movies with subtitles provides learners with access to authentic language, the results indicate that such exposure alone may not be sufficient to produce significant improvements in vocabulary mastery. This suggests that informal learning activities should not be viewed as inherently effective, but rather as opportunities that require appropriate engagement to support learning outcomes. This interpretation is supported by recent findings showing that informal digital learning can contribute to vocabulary development, although its effectiveness largely depends on the quality of engagement, diversity of input, and learner involvement (Rezai et al., 2026).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the view that vocabulary acquisition is not solely determined by exposure, but also by the depth of cognitive processing involved during learning. Incidental vocabulary learning can occur through repeated exposure to language input; however, its effectiveness is often influenced by the level of attention and engagement demonstrated by learners (Soleimani et al., 2022). In line with this, vocabulary development tends to be more successful when learners are actively involved in meaning-making processes rather than relying on passive exposure (Arslan, 2024). Therefore, the results of this study contribute to the broader understanding that exposure must be accompanied by active processing in order to support meaningful vocabulary acquisition.

The Role of Learner Engagement

One of the key implications emerging from this study is the importance of learner engagement in determining the effectiveness of audiovisual input. Although students in this study were frequently exposed to English through movie-watching, the weak relationship

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with vocabulary mastery suggests that such exposure may not have been accompanied by sufficient cognitive involvement. This finding supports the argument that vocabulary acquisition requires more than repeated exposure, as it involves processes such as noticing, attention, and integration of new lexical items into existing knowledge (Schmitt, 2010).

In this context, watching English movies can be considered a potentially beneficial learning activity, but its effectiveness depends largely on how learners approach it. Learners who actively engage with the content, such as by paying attention to unfamiliar words, replaying scenes, or attempting to infer meaning from context are more likely to benefit from the input. In contrast, those who approach movie-watching primarily as a form of entertainment may not engage in the level of processing required for vocabulary development. This distinction highlights the need to promote active engagement strategies, even in informal learning environments, in order to maximize the potential benefits of audiovisual exposure.

The Influence of Learning Context

Another important implication concerns the role of learning context in shaping the effectiveness of audiovisual input. As discussed earlier, many previous studies reporting positive effects of subtitles were conducted in controlled or instructional settings, where learners were guided to focus on specific language features (Kord et al., 2022; Pérez-Serrano et al., 2021). In such contexts, learners are more likely to engage in structured learning processes, which can enhance vocabulary acquisition.

In contrast, the present study reflects a natural learning environment in which students engage with English movies based on personal interest, without explicit instructional support. Under these conditions, learners may not consistently apply strategies that facilitate vocabulary learning, which may reduce the overall effectiveness of exposure. This finding suggests that the impact of audiovisual input is highly context-dependent, and that results obtained in controlled settings may not fully represent learning outcomes in everyday situations. This is consistent with previous research indicating that findings from controlled or experimental settings may not always be generalizable to authentic learning environments, where learner behavior and learning conditions are less structured (Rogers & Cheung, 2021).

In addition, contextual factors within EFL environments may further influence learning outcomes. In contexts where English is not widely used in daily communication, learners often rely on limited sources of input. In such situations, audiovisual materials can serve as an important source of exposure. However, without appropriate guidance or strategies, this exposure may remain superficial. Previous research has shown that subtitles can facilitate vocabulary learning by helping learners understand word meanings and forms more effectively (Napa et al., 2025), indicating that contextual and instructional support may play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of audiovisual input.

The Role of Individual Differences

The findings of this study also highlight the importance of individual learner differences in shaping vocabulary learning outcomes. Factors such as language proficiency,

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motivation, and learning strategies may influence how effectively students benefit from watching English movies. Learners with higher proficiency levels may find it easier to process spoken language and connect it with subtitles, thereby increasing their chances of acquiring new vocabulary. In contrast, learners with lower proficiency may rely more heavily on subtitles for basic comprehension, which may limit deeper processing of lexical items. This perspective is supported by research on self-regulated learning, which shows that learners' motivation, strategic behavior, and self-regulation profiles play a significant role in determining learning outcomes (Chen et al., 2023).

This interpretation is consistent with previous research suggesting that vocabulary learning is influenced by the level of cognitive involvement during language exposure, with deeper engagement leading to more effective learning outcomes (Yanagisawa & Webb, 2022). In addition, motivation plays a significant role in determining how learners interact with input. Students who are motivated to improve their language skills are more likely to engage actively with audiovisual materials, whereas those with lower motivation may approach such activities primarily for entertainment.

Similarly, research on learning through audiovisual input has shown that the effectiveness of viewing activities is influenced by various learner-related factors, including attention, engagement, and individual differences (Puimège & Peters, 2019). These findings suggest that variability in learner characteristics may contribute to the weak relationship observed in this study, as not all students benefit from the same learning activity in the same way.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, the relatively small sample size may limit the statistical power of the analysis, making it more difficult to detect significant relationships. This limitation is consistent with broader methodological concerns indicating that small sample sizes can restrict statistical power and reduce the ability to identify meaningful patterns in the data (McDermott, 2023). Future studies with larger samples may provide more robust and generalizable findings.

Second, the measurement of students' viewing habits relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias. Participants may not always accurately recall or report their behaviors, which could affect the reliability of the data. Alternative approaches, such as observational or longitudinal methods, may provide more detailed insights into learners' actual engagement with audiovisual materials.

Third, this study focused primarily on the frequency and general patterns of movie-watching, without examining the specific strategies used by learners during viewing. As suggested by previous research, the effectiveness of exposure may depend on how learners interact with the input. Although frequency of exposure plays a role in vocabulary development, it does not necessarily guarantee substantial learning gains (Pellicer-Sánchez et al., 2022). Future research could explore this aspect further by examining the role of specific learning strategies in informal contexts.

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Directions for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several directions for future research can be proposed. First, future studies could involve larger and more diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of the findings. A broader sample may also allow for more detailed analysis of subgroup differences, such as proficiency levels or learning backgrounds.

Second, further research could investigate the role of learner strategies more explicitly, particularly in relation to how learners engage with audiovisual input. For example, studies could explore the effects of strategies such as note-taking, repetition, or selective attention on vocabulary acquisition during movie-watching. Moreover, future studies may also examine learners' perceptions of audiovisual input and their preferred viewing modes, as these factors have been shown to influence engagement and perceived learning outcomes across different proficiency levels (Pattemore et al., 2024).

In addition, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches may provide a more comprehensive understanding of informal learning processes. While quantitative data can identify patterns and relationships, qualitative data such as interviews or observations can offer deeper insights into learners' experiences and perceptions. Previous research has indicated that subtitles can enhance learners' motivation and engagement (Nurfauziah et al., 2023), suggesting that affective factors may also play an important role in vocabulary learning.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between students' habit of watching English movies with subtitles and their vocabulary mastery in an EFL context. The findings reveal a positive but weak and statistically non-significant relationship, indicating that while frequent exposure to subtitled movies may be associated with slightly higher vocabulary scores, it does not function as a strong predictor of vocabulary mastery. This highlights that informal exposure alone is insufficient to produce substantial vocabulary development without deeper cognitive engagement.

The significance of these findings lies in their contribution to understanding the role of informal learning in real-life contexts. Unlike controlled experimental studies that often report stronger effects of audiovisual input, this study demonstrates that in natural settings, the effectiveness of such exposure is shaped by how learners interact with the input. This suggests that vocabulary acquisition is not merely a matter of exposure frequency, but also involves attention, processing depth, and learner-related factors.

This study also acknowledges several methodological limitations. The relatively small sample size (n = 27) may have limited the statistical power of the analysis, making it difficult to detect significant relationships. In addition, the use of self-reported questionnaire data may introduce bias, and the study did not examine specific learning strategies that could influence vocabulary acquisition.

Building on these findings, several recommendations can be proposed. For pedagogical practice, educators are encouraged to promote more active engagement when using

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audiovisual media, for example by guiding students to focus on unfamiliar vocabulary, reflect on meaning, or revisit key scenes. Such strategies may help transform informal exposure into more effective learning opportunities. Future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples to improve generalizability, as well as to adopt mixed-method approaches in order to gain deeper insights into how learners engage with audiovisual input. Further studies may also explore specific learning strategies, such as note-taking, repetition, and selective attention, to better understand how informal learning activities can contribute to vocabulary

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