"THE IMPACT OF FILM AND SERIES SUBTITLES ON STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES"

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the use of film subtitles and students' translation ability. A quantitative approach with a correlational design was employed, involving 31 students from the English Language Education program who had been exposed to translation theory and regularly watched foreign-language films with subtitles. The data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale, consisting of 20 items that measured both the frequency of subtitle use and translation ability. After testing for normality, the data were analyzed using Spearman's rank correlation due to its ordinal nature. The results revealed a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.449) between the use of subtitles and translation ability, with a significance value of 0.013 (p < 0.05), indicating a statistically significant relationship. These findings suggest that subtitles can serve as an effective medium to support language learning, especially in enhancing students' understanding of vocabulary, sentence structure, and context in translation. This study highlights the potential of integrating multimedia tools like film subtitles into language education to improve students' translation competence.

Keywords: *Film Subtitles, Translation Ability, Language Learning*

INTRODUCTION

In the current era, subtitles in film and serial have become a popular tool for language learners to increase their understanding of foreign languages more interesting and fun. Fengyu (2023) states

that by watching foreign language films, students can increase their language skills while gaining deeper insights about the context of the language of the language they learn. According to Maulida and Warni (2024) Building strong vocabulary skills is essential for learning a language, as it supports all other language abilities. Compared to other types of media, movies are seen as one of the most engaging and effective tools for teaching English as a second language because they hold students' attention better and make it easier for them to stay focused.

English is still a big challenge for many Indonesians. Most people can't speak it fluently, and this puts Indonesia behind countries like Vietnam and the Philippines, which are ranked 66th and 18th (Maharani et al., 2024). This indicates a need for more engaging and effective learning method. As mentioned by Yusupovna (2025) Traditional learning methods often fail to reflect real-life interactions, making it difficult for students to understand native speakers. In contrast, movies expose learners to natural language use, diverse accents, and cultural contexts, helping them become more familiar with everyday conversation variations.

Having a strong vocabulary is very important when getting a new language. Effective communication is very dependent on how well someone understands and uses vocabulary. Without adequate vocabulary, expressing the mind clearly becomes difficult, and the listener may struggle to understand the message (Juhansar et al., 2024). As found by Monida et al. (2024), students tend to learn more new words when they watch movies with subtitles compared to the vocabulary they usually come across in everyday life. In line with this, Al Murshidi (2020) revealed that recently, watching English movies has become a popular method to assist learners in improving their language skills. This approach encourages learners to develop their abilities in an enjoyable and effective manner.

In addition to vocabulary development, watching movies with

subtitles facilitates language learning through multimodal learning. The combination of audio, visual, and text inputs supports implicit learning, where repeated exposure to language structures in context reinforces long-term retention (Williams & Rebuschat, 2022). Subtitles help learners connect spoken words with their written forms, improving listening comprehension and word recognition, especially for beginners who need support in decoding speech. This method makes learning more intuitive and less cognitively demanding, accelerating overall language proficiency.

From a cultural perspective, films also expose learners to the sociopragmatic and intercultural elements of the target language. By watching subtitled films, students observe how native speakers interact, including gestures, humor, social norms, and cultural values. This awareness contributes to intercultural communicative competence, which is essential for effective and respectful intercultural communication. As demonstrated in a systematic review by Sánchez-Auñón et al. (2023), integrating films into English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom significantly enhances students' understanding of cultural context and pragmatic language use, making their learning experience more authentic and meaningful.

This research focuses on seeing whether the subtitles in the film series can help students better understand foreign languages, especially in terms of translating. Through subtitles, students can more easily understand the meaning of words and sentence structure because they see and hear directly in a real context. From there, it is hoped that their ability to translate will also develop.

REASEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is a quantitative approach. According to Ghanad (2023), quantitative research focuses on measuring data using numbers. It aims to identify patterns, test hypotheses, and explain trends by analyzing numerical data.

Researchers commonly use questionnaires to gather consistent responses, which are then analyzed using statistical methods to draw conclusions. In line with this, Bao (2024) explains that quantitative research, commonly associated with the positivist paradigm, emphasizes transforming observable phenomena into numerical data and statistics. This approach enables researchers to test theories and reach conclusions that are generalizable.

This study employs a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationship between two variables: the use of subtitle films (variable X) and students' translation ability (variable Y). A correlational design is a research method used to explore how two or more variables are related within one group. These relationships can exist in varying degrees or levels, depending on the nature of the data (Devi et al., 2022). Since the data collected from the questionnaire did not meet the assumption of normal distribution, the analysis was conducted using Spearman's rank-order correlation. This non-parametric technique is appropriate for ordinal-scale data and is used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables.

Population in this study is all students of the English Language Education, who have followed the course of translation or have a film watching experience with subtitles. The population was chosen because it was considered relevant to the research objectives that wanted to examine the influence of film subtitles on the ability to translate students.

The sample in this study was selected using purposive sampling, which is a non-probability technique where participants are intentionally chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This method allows researchers to focus on individuals who are most likely to provide the information needed (Tajik et al., 2024). In this case, the criteria include students who actively watch foreign language films with subtitles and have already

acquired the basics of translation theory. The total number of participants was 31, which was considered sufficient to represent the population and meet the requirements of correlational analysis in small-scale quantitative research.

A closed-ended questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale was used as the main instrument in this study. It was designed to measure two key variables: the use of film subtitles (variable X) and students' translation ability (variable Y). Comprising 20 statements evenly divided between the two variables, the questionnaire employed a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

All items were developed by the researcher, drawing on relevant theories related to media in learning and translation skills, and adapted to the context of English Language Education students. Each statement was constructed independently, with close attention to both the research indicators and objectives. As Mohd Rokeman (2024) points out, although Likert scales offer an ordered range of responses, the distance between categories (e.g., "Agree" and "Strongly Agree") may not be equal. For this reason, responses were treated as ordinal data, and non-parametric analysis was applied to ensure accurate interpretation.

Questionnaires were distributed online to respondents, a method chosen for its efficiency in collecting responses from a large number of students in a short time. The online format also allowed greater flexibility, enabling students with different schedules and locations to participate without disrupting their academic routines. The structure of the questionnaire was carefully aligned with the research aim, focusing on the potential influence of film subtitles on translation ability.

After collection, responses were reviewed for completeness and organized in Microsoft Excel before being processed in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Since the data were derived from a Likert scale and did not meet the assumptions of

normality, non-parametric statistical procedures were used. Specifically, Spearman's rank correlation was applied to determine the relationship between the use of film subtitles and students' ability to translate.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

FINDINGS

This study collects data from students of the English Language Education Study Program through the distribution of questionnaires. The main goal is to find out whether the use of subtitles in watching movies has a connection with their ability to translate. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements that include two aspects: how often and how effective students use subtitles when watching, and how confident they are and are able to translate.

In general, responses from students show that many of them feel subtitles help them understand the use of language in a more tangible context. Some say that seeing the text together with the conversation helps them associate the meaning and structure of the sentence. However, there are also a small portion of who still doubt - especially if the film is too fast or uses vocabulary that is not yet familiar.

After all data is collected, researchers analyze them using the Spearman ranking statistical method, which is suitable for this type of data. The analysis was carried out to find out whether there was a significant relationship between the use of subtitles and the ability to translate students. The results are presented in the next section.

Table 1. Test of Normality

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.

Subtitle Variable X Total	.124	30	.200*	.949	30	.161
Translation Variable Y Total	.146	30	.104	.923	30	.033
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.						
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Based on Table 1, the Subtitle variable (X) has a Shapiro-Wilk significance value of 0.161 (> 0.05), indicating that the data are normally distributed. In contrast, the Translation variable (Y) has a significance value of 0.033 (< 0.05), indicating that the data are not normally distributed.

Because of this, the Spearman non-parametric test was chosen for the subsequent analysis, as it is more appropriate for data that do not follow a normal distribution.

Table 2. Correlation

Correlations			Subtitle Variable X Total	Translation Variable Y Total
Spearman 's rho	Subtitle Variable X Total	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.449*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.013
		N	30	30
	Translation Variable Y Total	Correlation Coefficient	.449*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.
		N	30	30
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Based on the results of the Spearman correlation test, the correlation value between the use of subtitles and students' translation ability is 0.449 with a significance value of 0.013. This indicates a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables.

The Spearman correlation value of 0.449 suggests a moderate positive relationship between students' use of subtitles and their ability to translate. This means that the more frequently students use subtitles when watching foreign-language films, the better their translation skills tend to be. A positive relationship implies that both variables move in the same direction as the use of subtitles increases, translation ability also tends to improve.

The significance value (p-value) of 0.013, which is lower than the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicates that this relationship is statistically significant. In other words, there is strong enough evidence to suggest that the relationship between the two variables did not occur by chance.

This study involved 31 respondents, which is considered sufficient for conducting a correlation analysis in small-scale quantitative research. The participants were English Education students who had previously been exposed to basic translation theory and regularly watched foreign films with subtitles.

Additionally, the correlation value of 1.000 shown in the diagonal of the table (i.e., a variable correlated with itself) is automatically perfect and does not need to be interpreted, as it only confirms that a variable is fully correlated with itself.

Overall, these findings support the hypothesis that using film subtitles can be an effective medium to help students enhance their translation skills, particularly by improving vocabulary recognition, comprehension of sentence structures, and contextual language understanding.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings above, researchers found that there was a positive relationship between the use of subtitles in watching foreign language films with the ability to translate students. That is, the more often students use subtitles when watching, the better their ability to understand and translate foreign languages.

In line with Akhmadjanova dan Roziqova (2025) findings, incorporating English-language films into educational settings allows students to interact with the language in a more natural and immersive way, which positively contributes to the development of their speaking skills. The study revealed that most students responded favorably to this method. English major students acknowledged that watching such films helps them build vocabulary, improve their pronunciation, intonation, and articulation, and become more familiar with commonly used English idioms. They also expressed an interest in having more educational films available as supplementary learning tools. Overall, films serve as a valuable medium for enhancing students' English-speaking abilities. And also supported by the findings of Fauzi et al. (2021) states that learning media has an important role in increasing student motivation and involvement. The participants in his research believe that the use of media such as films makes the learning process more fun and effective. They prefer practical tools such as smartphones and laptops to access films, because the device is easy to use and flexible. Watching English films, especially with popular genres such as action, fantasy, and romance, is proven to improve listening and speaking skills of students. Exposure to the pronunciation of native speakers and authentic dialogue helps students practice speaking more naturally. Even when using Indonesian language subtitles, students still feel an increase in mastery of vocabulary and understanding of the context of language, showing that film can be a valuable tool in learning

language, regardless of the type of subtitles used.

To analyze the relationship between the use of film subtitles and students' translation ability, this study applied Spearman's rank correlation due to the ordinal nature of the data collected through the Likert scale. As stated by Al-Hameed (2022), Spearman's rank correlation is used to assess the strength and direction of a monotonic relationship between two variables, without being affected by the units of measurement.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESSTION
CONCLUSION

This study concluded that there was a positive relationship between the use of subtitles when watching foreign language films with the ability to translate students. The findings show that the more often students use subtitles, the better their understanding of vocabulary, sentence structure, and contextual meaning, which ultimately contributes to increasing the ability to translate. The analysis using the Spearman correlation also confirmed that this relationship was statistically significant.

The results of this study confirm that film subtitles can be an effective learning medium in language education, especially for students who are developing translating competencies. Subtitles not only help understanding, but also increase self -confidence and motivation in learning foreign languages.

Further research can explore the long -term impact of the use of subtitles on other language skills, such as speaking or writing. It will also be more useful for conducting similar studies with experimental design or involving larger and varied samples, in order to compare the effectiveness of various types of subtitles (for example, Maternal

Language Subtitles, Target Language, or without Subtitles) in supporting the results of language learning.

SUGGESTION

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that English teachers begin to consider the use of film subtitles as additional aids in learning translation. The teacher can design tasks that involve subtitle-based activities to help students better understand the vocabulary and sentence structure in a real context. Students are also encouraged to routinely watch foreign language films with subtitles. Aside from being entertainment, this can be an effective independent way of learning to improve translating ability. Instead, gradually students start switching from the mother tongue subtitles to English subtitles so that their language processing and understanding are growing.

In addition, educational institutions can also consider the use of multimedia materials such as subtitle films as part of the curriculum, so that the learning process feels more modern and in accordance with a variety of student learning styles.

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