EXPLORING HOW EXPOSURE TO POP CULTURE ENGLISH MOVIES ENRICHES VOCABULARY

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Abstract: EFL students frequently face challenges in understanding cultural references, idioms, and slang, hindering vocabulary acquisition and overall language comprehension. This study sheds light on key questions about the accessibility and effectiveness of language learning tools for learners from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It focused on how pop culture English movies can help EFL college students improve their vocabulary. This study uses the qualitative paradigm with the inquiry method of case study involving 40 participants—10 students from each grade level. The primary data is collected by using questionnaires and following up by interview. The instrument of data collection included Likert-scale questionnaires to capture students' perceptions and semi-structured interviews to explore their strategies for learning vocabulary through movies. The Likert-scale questionnaires was analysed by using descriptive statistics and the interview result was transcribed, coded, categorized, condensed, and interpreted. The findings showed that students generally viewed movies as a valuable tool for building their vocabulary. They noted that improvements in listening skills and a better understanding of how words are used in context. Many students felt more confident using the new vocabulary they picked up from the movies. To maximize learning, students employed various strategies such as taking notes, using subtitles, and discussing the content with peers. However, they also faced challenges, including difficulty in understanding cultural references and keeping up with the fast pace of dialogues. Despite these hurdles, most students preferred learning vocabulary through movies over traditional classroom methods. The study concluded that pop culture English movies can be an effective way to learn vocabulary, especially when students are guided on how to use the right strategies. Looking ahead, future research could examine how movie-based learning impacts vocabulary retention over time and explore how different movie genres might benefit language learners.

Keywords: *Vocabulary acquisition; pop culture English movies; EFL college students; learning strategies; qualitative case study.*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary acquisition remains a pivotal component of the English language for EFL learners. Nevertheless, traditional methods, such as rotememorization and repetitive textbook exercises, often lack engagement and practical application.These methods are especially limiting for EFL college students, who benefit from more dynamicand contextually relevant strategies. As suggested by Nation (2013), interactive and context-based approaches are essential for making vocabulary learning more engaging and effective.

In this context, integrating multimedia resources, like pop culture English movies, into language education has gained traction as an innovative approach to enhancing vocabulary learning. Pop culture movies provide authentic and engaging content that goes beyond the artificial scenarios found in textbooks, presenting language in natural and varied contexts. Sánchez-Auñón et al. (2023) highlight movies' effectiveness as educational tools, noting their learning performance to improve understanding and new vocabulary input.

Mayer's (2009) Multimedia Learning Cognitive Theory strengthens this approach by positing that integrated visual and auditory inputs in movies facilitate deeper processing and new information input. This is particularly related to vocabulary learning, where the context in which words are used significantly aids their acquisition. Research conducted by Ashcroft et al. (2018) further demonstrates how movies with captions can enhance students' vocabulary recall,making pop culture movies powerful tools in language education.

Beyond vocabulary acquisition, pop culture movies offer exposure to authentic language use, including idiomatic expressions, slang, and cultural references—elements often missing in traditional classroom settings but crucial for real-world communication. Gilmore (2007) argues that this exposure better equips learners for authentic interactions. In particular, Simamora and Oktaviani (2020) emphasizes the important of repetition in watching English movie. The captivating nature of these films can significantly boost learners' motivation and enjoyment, resonating with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis. This theory highlights that language acquisition is more effective when learners feel confident, and motivated, and experience minimal anxiety. To minimize anxiety, for example, Indonesian subtitles may become a good strategy in understanding the English movie (Schmitt and Schmitt's 2020; Hestiana and Anita, 2022),

Research has shown that students view movies as a beneficial tool for language learning. Silvani (2020) and Hasby and Sugianto (2022) argued that movies provide learnersthe opportunity to develop their writing skills development. Kabooha (2016) discovers that learners regard movies as effective for building vocabulary and enhancing overall language skills. Likewise, Katemba and Wei Ning (2018) observes that students feel more confident applying vocabulary learned through movies compared to traditional approaches. These results indicate that movies not only support vocabulary acquisition but also boost learners' confidence and language proficiency (Rogerson-Revell's, 2021). Despite these advantages, movies also present challenges, such as potential distractions andvarying language difficulty levels. Careful selection of movie content is necessary to maximize its educational value (Ismaili (2013; Sánchez-Auñón et al., 2023). Despite the notable advantages of using pop culture movies for vocabulary learning, their influence on EFL college students has not been thoroughly examined. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the perceptions of EFL college students towards English pop culture movies in affecting their vocabulary development as well as their vocabulary learning strategies while watching these movies.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative research paradigm to investigate the influence of English pop culture movies on vocabulary acquisition among EFL college students. A qualitative approach was deemed suitable as it captures the complexities of human behaviour and the meanings individuals assign to their experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This methodology facilitated a detailed exploration of students' perceptions and vocabulary learning strategies, offering nuanced insights that quantitative methods might overlook (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The case study method was adopted to gain a thorough understanding of the specific experiences and perspectives of EFL college students regarding their use of English pop culture movies for vocabulary acquisition (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). The research was conducted at a university in Ciamis, involving 183 EFL students across four academic years. Stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation from each academic year, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2019; Saris & Gallhofer, 2014).

Data collection included questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. A closed-ended questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms to 40 students (10 from each academic year), used Likert-scale questions to assess perceptions of the impact of pop culture movies on vocabulary development. Mainly, the questionnaires was used to rate the frequency of degree to which the students agree or disagree with a statement. To delve deeper, 10 students were selected for semi-structured interviews, focusing on their vocabulary learning strategies, such as utilizing subtitles and note-taking. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated into English to ensure accuracy in analysis and interpreted. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics for the questionnaire responses and thematic coding for the interviews. Methodological triangulation was employed to enhance the credibility and rigor of the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research presents two key findings consisting of highlighting EFL college students' perceptions regarding the impact of English pop culture movies on their vocabulary development. Another finding deals with EFL college students' specific vocabulary learning strategies while engaging with English pop culture movies. These findings will be discussed in the following sections:

EFL College Students' Perceptions of the Impact of English Pop Culture Movies on Their Vocabulary Development

To address the first research question, "How do EFL college students perceive the impact of English pop culture movies on their vocabulary development?" the questionnaire results were analysed and organized into two subsections. Each subsection delves into distinct aspects of the student's experiences and perceptions, providing a comprehensive understanding of their views.

EFL college students' background and preferences

The first section examined EFL college students' backgrounds and preferences for Englishpop culture movies. This step used six questions to gather important information about their views. The results and explanations is given in the following Table 1.

Table 1. EFL college students' duration of study English

Duration of study English	Frequency of Student
<5 years	10
5-8 years	6
8-10 years	6
10-12 years	8
>12 years	10
Total	40

The Table 1 shows that EFL college students have varied durations of English learning. The largest groups, with 10 students each, had been studying English for less than 5 years and more than 12 years. This variety in experience levels might influence how students view the influence of English pop culture films on vocabulary mastery. The diverse learning backgrounds help achieve the study's goal of gathering broad insights from participants. The findings also shows the variety of EFL college students most frequently speak English in daily life as described in Figure 1.
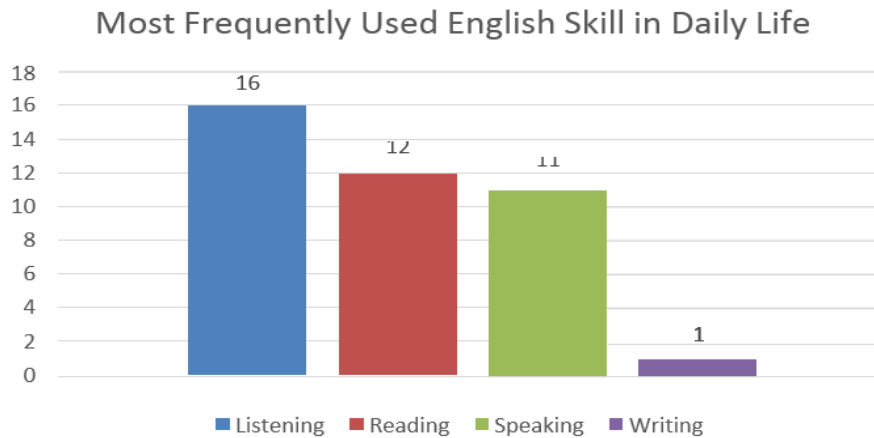
Figure 1. EFL college students most frequently speak English in daily life

Figure 1 displays that listening is the most used English skill in daily life for EFLcollege students, with 16 students identifying it as their primary skill. Reading follows with 12 students, 11 students with speaking, and writing is the least used with only 1 student. It is indicated that receptive skills like listening and reading are more central to their routines than productive skills. Additionally, the finding evidences of the EFL University students' reason for watching pop culture English movies as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. EFL University students' reason for watching pop culture English movies.

Reason for watching pop culture English movies	Frequency of Student
For entertainment	4
For performance improvement	5
Both	31
Total	40

Table 2 reveals that 31 students watch English pop culture movies for both entertainment and skill improvement, 5 students mainly for skill development, and 4 students just for entertainment. These results underscore the role of English pop culture movies in enhancing language skills and providing enjoyment, which likely supports the greateruse of receptive skills. Also, the findings reveals the EFL college students' frequency of using pop culture English movies as a learning medium as given in Figure 2.
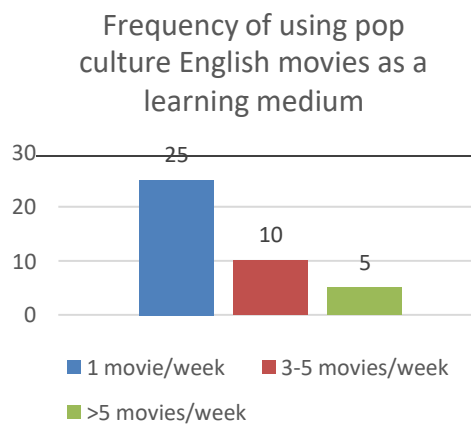

Figure 2. EFL college students' frequency of using pop culture Englishmovies as a learning medium

The data from Figure 2 reveals that most EFL college students regularly watch one Englishpop culture movie for learning, with 25 out of 40 students following this pattern. The others 10 participants watch between three and five movies, while 5 students watch more than five, indicating

varying levels of engagement. This is followed by data of EFL college students regarding genre preferences favored action movies as depicted in Figure 2.
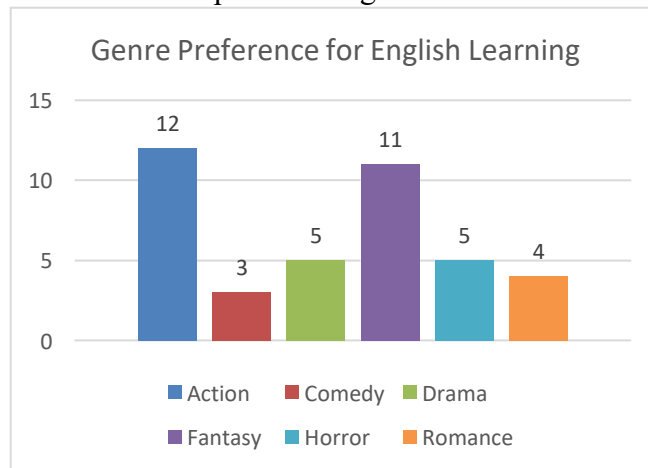

Figure 3. EFL college students' genre preference for English learning

The data from Figure 3 reveals genre preferences favored action movies, with 12 students, 11 students preferring fantasy, and 5students choosing drama and horror. Romance and comedy are less popular, with 4 and 3 respectively. These patterns reflect how different frequencies and genres of movie-watching align with students' individual learning goals and interests. With regards to EFL college students' preferred subtitle language is given in Table 3.

Table 3. EFL college students' preferred subtitle language

Preferred subtitle language	Frequency of Student
English	17
Indonesian	23
No subtitle	0
Total	40

The data from Table 3 shows that most EFL college students preferred Indonesian subtitles,with 23 out of 40 choosing this option. Meanwhile, 17 students preferred English subtitles. No students opted for movies without subtitles, highlighting their importance for understanding and enjoying films. This students' choice indicated that subtitles, whether in English or Indonesian, help students with comprehension and language learning.

EFL college students' perceptions of how exposure to pop culture English movies influences vocabulary and English skills development

The second subsection relating to the first research question, "How do EFL college students perceive the impact of English pop culture movies on their vocabulary development?" explores EFL college students' perceptions of how watching English pop culture movies impacted their vocabulary and overall English skills. A Likert scale questionnaire was used, offering responses from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The questionnaire included 20 statements grouped into six key areas: vocabulary growth, motivation and engagement, language skills development, cultural insights, the role of subtitles, and learning strategies. The more detaileddata from the questionnaire can be illustrated in the following Table 4.

Table 4. EFL college students' general perceptions

No.	Statement	Level of Agreement
1.	Pop culture English movies improve myvocabulary.	36
2.	Pop culture English movies are an active way to learn new vocabulary for EFL learners.	33
3.	English movies contribute a better framework for learning vocabulary rather than other English media which are normally held inclass, including textbooks.	26
4.	I think pop culture English movies are more efficient for learning vocabulary rather than multimedia resources like songs or podcasts.	18
5.	Pop culture English movies help me figure out unfamiliar idioms, proverbs, and slang.	35
6.	I recommended the use of pop culture English movies as teaching media for beginners.	17
7.	I think pop culture English movies are more fun for learning English compared to traditional educational materials.	32
8.	Pop culture English movies are useful formy English use in everyday life and inspire me to practice better daily conversations.	35

The data of Table 4 shows that most EFL college students believe pop culture English movies are effective for vocabulary learning. The first statement reveals that 36 students felt movies significantly enriched their vocabulary while also posed as an effective method to learn new vocabulary (Statement 2). It is also supported by Statement 3 and Statement 7, which shows that26 students agreed that English movies offer a better context for learning vocabulary than textbooks or traditional methods and provide more entertaining, engaging, and motivating materials, as noted from the level of agreement from 32 students in Statement 7. Additionally, from Statement no.5, pop culture English movies allow them to understand idioms, proverbs, andslang, which they weren't familiar with.

However, in Statement no. 4, opinions regarding movies and other multimedia resources like songs or podcasts are mixed. Only 18 of the students found movies more effective, while 16were neutral, and 6 disagreed. Moreover, opinions on recommending pop culture English movies as teaching tools for beginners are divided; 17 had a positive outlook, 18 remained neutral, and 5 disagreed. This suggested that while movies are generally valued for vocabulary acquisition, there are varied opinions on their effectiveness compared to other resources, and their effectiveness as teaching media for beginners is uncertain and may depend on factors likelearners' proficiency levels and the content of the movies. Completing the findings aforementioned, language and cultural skills improvement through pip culture English movies are also elaborated in the following Figure 4.
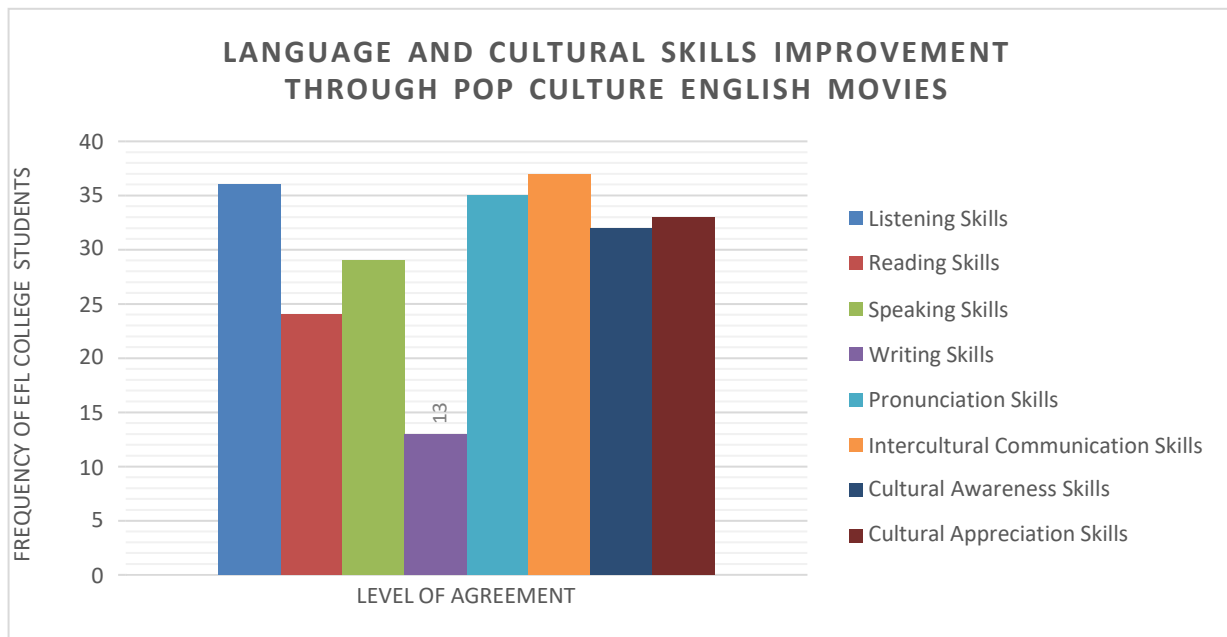
Figure 4. EFL college students' perception of language and cultural skills improvement through pop culture English movies

The data from Figure 4 reveals that most EFL college students believed in watching pop culture English movies improved their listening skills, with 36 participants expressing a positive perception. The participants viewed movies as beneficial in improving speaking skills, with 29 students agreeing, though 7 were neutral, and 4 disagreed. The students also recognized the value of movies in improving pronunciation, as 35 underscored the effectiveness of movies in this area. However, opinions on the impact of movies on reading skills were more varied, with 24 students seeing benefits, while a significant 12 remained neutral. Writing skills received the most mixed responses, with only 13 students agreeing, 15 remaining neutral, and 12 disagreeing. These findings suggest that while students generally viewed movies as effective for enhancing oral language skills—such as listening, speaking, and pronunciation—they were less convinced of their utility for improving reading and writing skills. While movies are a valuable resource for some aspects of language learning, they may need to be supplemented with other methods to address the full spectrum of language skills.

The Figure 4 also shows that EFL college students generally believed in that exposure to pop culture English movies significantly enhanced their intercultural communication skills and cultural understanding. Most students, 37, recognized the cultural insights and communicative nuances gained from watching these movies, which likely helped them interact better with people from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, 32 students agreed that these movies were effective in helping them understand cultural contexts, references, and customs associated with the English language, with no students expressing disagreement. Furthermore, 33 agreed that these movies fostered appreciation and respect for cultural diversity, highlighting their role in promoting cultural awareness and tolerance. Overall, students perceived pop culture movies as valuable resources for developing intercultural communication skills, deepening cultural insights, and enhancing cultural awareness. Besides, EFL college students employed various strategies to enhance their vocabulary and comprehension through pop culture movies as can be seen in Figure 5.
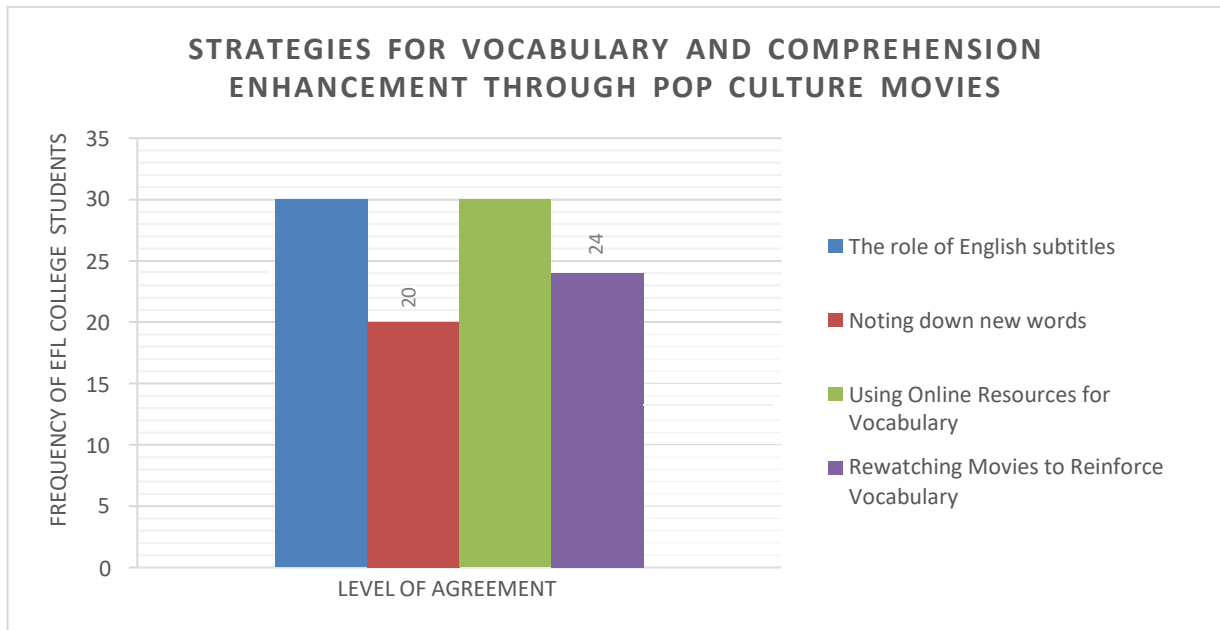
Figure 5. EFL college students' strategies for vocabulary and comprehension enhancement throughpop culture movies

As reflected in the Figure 5, EFL college students employed various strategies to enhance their vocabulary and comprehension through pop culture movies. A significant number of students, 30, emphasized the importance of English subtitles in aiding their understanding and vocabulary acquisition, though 9 remained neutral and a small minority, 1 student, did not find them essential. Additionally, 20 of the students actively noted down new words for later learning, while 12 were neutral, and 8 did not engage in this practice. Online resources were also a vital tool forvocabulary enhancement, with 30 students relying on them to understand difficult words, though 9 remained neutral. Furthermore, 24 of the students found rewatching movies beneficial for reinforcing their learning, while 11 were neutral and 5 disagreed. These responses highlight various strategies, from using subtitles and online resources to taking notes and rewatching content, indicating varied approaches among students in their language-learning process.

FL College Students' Vocabulary Learning Strategies When Watching English Pop Culture Movies
To answer the second research question, "What vocabulary learning strategies do EFL college students use when watching English pop culture movies?" the researcher employed semi-structured interviews to delve deeper into the students' approaches and techniques. This methodallowed the researcher to explore the nuances of how students interact with movies for language learning, uncovering personalized strategies that might not be captured through questionnaire data alone.
EFL college students employed various ways of learning new vocabulary during watching pop culture English movies, revealing a blend of personalized approaches as elaborated in the following Excerpt 1:
"...several strategies are utilized in learning new vocabulary while watching pop culture English movie…I prefer using Indonesian subtitles…Pausing, rewinding, and rewatching are strategies to reinforce understanding… " (Condense version of students' interview)

Excerpt 1 indicates that some students favored using English subtitles to identify and infer the meaning of new words, while others preferred Indonesian subtitles for direct translation. A common method involved pausing,rewinding, and rewatching scenes to reinforce their understanding, with some even creating personalized dictionaries by noting down unfamiliar words and looking up their meanings later.The diversity of these strategies highlights how students tailor their learning methods

to match their preferences and needs, combining both active and passive learning techniques, such as note-taking, repetition, and social interactions.

Despite these strategies, students encountered several challenges in learning vocabulary from movies, primarily due to diverse accents, slang, and fast-paced speech as depicted in the following Excerpt 2: "…*I rely heavily on the Indonesian subtitles because the accent, slang, and fast-paced speech are hard for me to be understood*…" (A condense version of students' interview). These difficulties as shown in Excerpt 2 often lead students to rely heavily on subtitles and online resources to grasp the dialogue. Culturalreferences, idioms, and humor were additional obstacles, requiring students to research or engagein discussions with friends to understand the content better. Some students also faced challengeswith vocabulary that had multiple meanings, necessitating repeated viewings and an in-depth engagement with the material. These challenges underscored the importance of adapting strategies to overcome specific hurdles, showing that students were proactive in refining their approaches to enhance their language acquisition.

Students also highlighted several crucial factors influencing the effectiveness of learning vocabulary through movies as illustrated in the following Excerpt 3:

"…*watching movie should be held sustainably …it sustain our engagement and motivation…we also take a note while watching movie and after that we discuss the movie with friends…overall, the Indonesian subtitles help us a lot in understanding the move…so that it can be practiced in our daily life after watching the movie…*" (A condense version of students' interview).

They emphasized the need to choose films aligned with their interests and language proficiency, as this helped sustain their engagement and motivation. Sustainability in using movies as a learning tool was also crucial, with students regularly integrating new vocabulary into their daily routines. Moreover, strategic use of subtitles, such asstarting with native language subtitles and gradually switching to English, was highlighted as anessential technique for progressively building comprehension and language skills. Active engagement while watching, including taking notes and discussing movies with friends, further contributed to a more immersive learning experience, ensuring that students could effectively retain and apply new vocabulary.

The role of subtitles in enriching vocabulary was universally acknowledged by the students, who viewed them as a critical aid in their language-learning journey. Subtitles not onlyhelped in understanding new words and phrases but also facilitated the development of listeningand reading skills. English subtitles were particularly valued for reinforcing students' understanding by synchronizing spoken dialogue with the text, making it easier to grasp fast-paced or slang-filled conversations. Some students also found Indonesian subtitles useful for providing context, especially when trying to comprehend the movie's overall plot. The consensus was that subtitles served as an indispensable tool for bridging gaps in understanding and enhancing both comprehension and retention of new vocabulary.

Finally, students shared how they integrated newly acquired vocabulary from pop culture English movies into their daily activities and academic work, demonstrating the practicalapplication of their language skills. Many students used new vocabulary in casual conversationswith friends and on social media, which helped solidify their understanding of colloquial language. In academic settings, students apply this vocabulary in assignments, essays, and presentations, thereby enriching their academic work and boosting their confidence. Additionally, the process of learning vocabulary through movies implicitly enhances other language skills, such as listening, pronunciation, and writing. This integration of vocabulary intovarious aspects of their lives showed how students made learning more enjoyable and meaningful, contributing to a holistic approach to language acquisition.

Discussion

This section examines the study's findings related to its two main research questions. The first focuses on how EFL college students perceive the role of English pop culture movies in their vocabulary development, while the second investigates the strategies these students use to enhance

their vocabulary while engaging with these movies. The discussion integrates insightsfrom previous research and highlights both supportive and contradictory findings within the context of this study.

In response to the first research question, the findings indicate that most EFL students view English pop culture movies as an effective resource for enhancing vocabulary. This perspective is consistent with existing literature, which highlights the benefits of multimedia tools in creating an interactive and context-rich language learning experience, as noted by Nation (2013) and Ashcroft et al. (2018). Specifically,29 of the students agreed or strongly agreed that these movies improved their speaking skills, supporting studies conducted by Ismaili (2013) and Sánchez-Auñón et al. (2023). Additionally, 35 of the students believed that movies helped improve their pronunciation, a finding consistent with Rogerson-Revell's (2021) research, highlighted the benefits of regular exposure to spokenEnglish in films for pronunciation improvement.

The impact of movies on writing skills appears to be less clear-cut. While 12 students acknowledged that movies helped improve their writing abilities, a considerable number expressed neutrality or disagreed with this perspective. This contrasts with the overwhelmingly positive perceptions regarding speaking and pronunciation. The varied responses suggest that while movies are effective for some aspects of language learning, they may be less so for others, particularly those that require more structured practice and feedback. This echoes findings reported by Silvani (2020) and Hasby and Sugianto (2022), who argued that if movies provide learnerswith new vocabulary, then writing skills development typically demands more explicit instruction and practice.

Addressing the second research question, the study found that students adopt diverse strategies to enhance their vocabulary while engaging with English pop culture movies. These strategies include jotting down unfamiliar words, leveraging subtitles for improved understanding, discussing the movie's content with peers, and incorporating newly learned vocabulary into everyday conversations and academic tasks. These results align with Schmitt and Schmitt's (2020) framework of vocabulary learning strategies, emphasizing the significance of both discovery-oriented and consolidation-focused approaches in effective language acquisition. Students' active engagement with movie content, such as note-taking and attemptingto use new words in sentences, strengthens the findings of Simamora and Oktaviani (2020), who emphasized the importance of repetition, context analysis, and subtitle referencing in vocabulary learning.

Meanwhile, subtitles emerged as a particularly significant tool for students, aiding both comprehensionand vocabulary acquisition. The use of English subtitles allowed students to connect spoken words with their written forms, contributing to improvements in both listening and reading skills. This aligns with the findings of Hestiana and Anita (2022), who underscored the effectiveness of subtitles in supporting vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, students emphasized the significance of motivation and consistency in their language-learning journey. They noted that choosing movies aligned with their interests and language proficiency is essential for maintaining engagement and optimizing learning. These insights reflect the conclusions of Ashcroft et al. (2018) and Sánchez-Auñón et al. (2023), who highlighted the importance of authentic language exposure and active practice in building vocabulary.

Nonetheless, some contradictory findings emerged regarding the overall efficacy of moviesas learning media. While many students recognized the benefits of movies for vocabulary acquisition and other language skills, a notable minority expressed skepticism, particularly regarding their impact on writing skills. This contradiction suggests that while movies can be a powerful resource for certain aspects of language learning, they may not fully address all areas, particularly those requiring more formalized instruction. Additionally, some students indicated that they found it challenging to apply new vocabulary learned from movies in more structured academic contexts, which may limit the overall impact of this medium on their language development.

In conclusion, the study's findings highlight both the potential and the limitations of using English pop culture movies as a tool for vocabulary development among EFL college students. While the majority of students perceive movies as beneficial for vocabulary acquisition, particularly for speaking and pronunciation, there is less consensus regarding their impact on writing skills. The strategies employed by students, including the use of subtitles and active engagement with movie

content, suggest that movies can play a significant role in enhancing language proficiency. However, the contradictions in student perceptions also underscore the need for a more nuanced understanding of how movies can be integrated with other instructionalmethods to support comprehensive language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how English pop culture movies influence vocabulary acquisition among EFL college students. The results reveal that these movies can be both an effective and enjoyable tool for vocabulary learning. However, they also pose certain challenges, such as dealing with cultural nuances and complex language. Students expressed that learning through pop culture movies boosted their motivation and engagement, highlighting the value of encountering new words in meaningful and contextualized settings. They employed strategies like using subtitles, taking notes, and discussing content with peers, which underscores the value of these movies in enriching vocabulary.

The efficient use of pop culture movies in learning language, educators must support students in navigating cultural and linguistic challenges. The study also suggests that while subtitles can be helpful, they should be used strategically to encourage activelistening. Future research could delve deeper into the everlasting effects of using pop culture movies on language proficiency and explore the effectiveness of different genres in vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, examining the role of cultural familiarity in comprehension could provide valuable insights for enhancing language learning through multimedia resources.

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