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## “Vocabulary Acquisition Through Incidental Learning Using English Subtitled Videos In ESL Learners”

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### **Abstract**

This research paper explores the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning using subtitled videos in ESL Learners. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, using pre- and post-tests, as well as a questionnaire to assess vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning using English subtitled videos in ESL learners. A representative group of 70 students participated, divided into an experimental group exposed to English subtitled videos and a control group exposed to non-subtitled videos. The primary objective of the study is to determine whether vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning using English subtitled videos in ESL learners is supported by statistical analysis, with the experimental group showing remarkable progress. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated significant differences between the groups, further strengthening the argument for the effectiveness of subtitled videos. A structured questionnaire was developed for experimental group in order to elicit the participants views on the English subtitled videos as well as their attitudes and habits in relation to watching English subtitled videos for English vocabulary acquisition purpose in general. This research emphasizes the influence of vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning using English subtitled videos in ESL learners, supporting their potential as an innovative pedagogical tool. This study provides compelling evidence for the successful incorporation of subtitled videos in language education, facilitating immersive and impactful learning experiences.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary acquisition, Incidental learning, Subtitled videos, ESL learners

## Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition is a fundamental component of language proficiency development in English as a Second Language (ESL) education. ESL learners encounter various challenges in the acquisition of vocabulary, many of which revolve around grammatical inflections, idiomatic expressions homophones and heteronyms. Grammatical inflections, such as verb conjugations, plural forms, and comparative and superlative adjectives, add layers of complexity to vocabulary acquisition. Homophones, words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings, present a formidable challenge. Heteronyms, words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and pronunciations depending on context, further compound the complexity of vocabulary acquisition.

Incidental learning of vocabulary through English subtitled videos occurs when learners pick up new words or phrases while watching videos with English subtitles, without intentionally focusing on vocabulary acquisition. As they follow the video's dialogue and read the subtitles, learners encounter unfamiliar words and phrases in context, allowing them to infer meanings based on the visual and auditory cues provided. Subtitled videos help learners not only expand their vocabulary but also improve their listening comprehension and overall language proficiency.

## Objectives

- ❖ To find out the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning using subtitled videos in ESL Learners
- ❖ To assess the views, attitudes, and habits of the experimental group regarding the general use of English subtitled videos for vocabulary acquisition purpose

## Null Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in vocabulary acquisition between ESL learners exposed to English subtitled videos and those not exposed to such videos.

## Research Question

- ❖ Does vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning using English subtitled videos ha significant effect in ESL Learners?

## Review of Literature

Laufer, B., & Hulstijn, J. (2001) The study focuses on how different reading tasks affect vocabulary learning in a second language. Researchers look at how tasks engage learners' minds and affect vocabulary learning during reading. They studied a group of ESL learners who did various reading tasks. The study shows that how tasks are designed and how much learners think about new words impacts how well they

learn. It suggests that tasks where learners really think about new words help them learn better. Teachers and those making learning plans can use these ideas to make tasks that make learners think about words. This can help ESL learners learn more words as they read.

Jelani, N. a. M., & Boers, F. (2018) conducted a study called 'Examining incidental vocabulary acquisition from captioned video: Does test modality matter?' This study looked at whether hearing test questions or reading them made a difference in showing if watching captioned videos helps learn new words better than uncaptioned ones. Intermediate EFL learners watched a ten-minute TED Talks video, some with captions and some without. Later, they took tests to recognize words and understand their meanings, with half of the questions written and half spoken. While the results for recognizing words were unclear, those who watched the captioned video scored significantly better on understanding word meanings.

Dang, T. N. Y., Lu, C., & Webb, S, (2022) conducted a study on 'Incidental learning of collocations in an academic lecture through different input modes.' This study involved 165 EAP learners at a Chinese university in a quasi-experiment. They were split into five different groups and a control group. Each group learned 19 target collocations in various ways: reading, listening, reading while listening, viewing, and viewing with captions. The control group did not receive any instruction. The results showed that reading, viewing, and viewing with captions helped learners recognize collocations, but there were not significant differences between these methods. Factors like nonverbal elaboration and type of vocabulary influenced learning, but others like frequency of occurrence and comprehension did not. The study suggests that academic lectures can be beneficial for learning collocations incidentally and supports the multimedia learning theory.

## **Methodology**

### **Selection of Area**

A school in Trivandrum district, Kerala was chosen for the study.

### **Selection of Sample**

The sample of the study consists of 70, VIII<sup>th</sup> standard students which was split into two groups with 35 students chosen for the experimental group and another 35 students selected for the control group.

### **Experimental design**

A quasi -experimental research design with pre-test and post-test non equivalent control group was used for the study,

### **Description of the tools used for the study**

The researcher selected two lessons from the 8th standard textbook to develop both English subtitled and non-subtitled videos. TweenCraft software was used for the development of the videos, while VEED

software was used to add English subtitles. The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) is a five-point self-report scale developed by Wesche and Paribakht's (1996) in order to help assess the depth of an individual's foreign language vocabulary knowledge. It has since become a commonly used scale in research relating to foreign language vocabulary learning (YukselTanriverdi2009) and is particularly suited to tracking the early development of knowledge of specific words in an instructional or experimental situations (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996.). The version of the VKS utilized in this research required participants to self-report their level of familiarity with a particular word on a scale of five levels, whereby learners assess how well they know a word in terms of both receptive and productive knowledge.

I. I have never seen this word before.

II. I have seen this word before but I do not know what it means.

III. I have seen this word before, and I think I know what it means.

IV. I have seen this word before, and I know what it means.

V. I have seen this word before; I know what it means and I can use it in a sentence.

Laufer and Nation's Vocabprofile is a method used to analyse the vocabulary complexity and richness of a text. It is based on the work of researchers Paul Nation and Baita Laufer. The vocabprofile typically includes information such as the total word count (tokens), the group of words with a common base or root form (families), and the count of distinct words (types). The transcript of the video was processed using the online version of Laufer and Nations four-way word sorter to determine the target words for the VKS selection.

Laufer and Nations four -way sorter program sorts the words of any text file into four categories: 'K1 words', 'K2 words', 'academic words' and 'off-list words'. The 'K1 words' category consists of all the words in the transcript which appear in a list of the first 1000 most common words of the English language; the K2 words 'category features words appearing in a list of the next 1000 most common words; the 'academic words' category (AWL) includes words appearing in a list of the most common academic words, and the 'off-list words category is comprised of any words not appearing in any of the three preceding lists.

The transcript of the video 1 was processed using the online version of Laufer and Nations four-way word sorter to determine the target words for the VKS selection. Laufer and Nations four -way sorter program sorts the words of any text file into four categories:'K1 words','K2 words','academic words' and 'off-list words'. Ten words were chosen as the target vocabulary from the transcript of video 1;four words from the K1 category, three words from the K2 category, one word from the AWL category and two words from the off list category. Ten words were chosen as the target vocabulary from the transcript of video2;four words from the K1 category, three words from the K2 category, one word from the AWL category and two words from the off list category. A structured questionnaire was developed for experimental group in order to elicit the participants views on the English subtitled videos as well as their attitudes towards and habits in relation to watching English subtitled videos for English vocabulary acquisition purpose in general.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Simple random sampling was used to select the sample. The population for the present study comprises secondary school students. A representative group of 70 students was selected for the experimental study. The group was split into two groups, with 35 students chosen for the experimental group and another 35 students selected for the control group. Prior to commencing the study, participants in both the groups were informed that, for ethical considerations, that their responses and thoughts would remain anonymous and would have no impact on their grades or marks in the English subject.

The participants in the control group were given a brief explanation of the experiment and told how to answer the VKS test clarifying the meaning of each statement. The VKS pre-test was distributed among the participants in the control group and were asked to complete the VKS pre-test. The control group was exposed to two videos twice without subtitles and was instructed to focus on the video content. After the video viewing session, the control group participants were given VKS post-test and instructed to fill it out.

The participants in the experimental group were given a brief explanation of the experiment and told how to answer the VKS test clarifying the meaning of each statement. The VKS pre-test was distributed among the participants in the experimental group and were asked to complete the VKS pre-test. The experimental group was exposed to two videos twice with English subtitles and was instructed to focus on the video content and English subtitles. After the video viewing session, the experimental group participants were given VKS post-test and instructed to fill it out. The questionnaire was given to the participants in the experimental group and asked to complete it.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of data**

The primary objective of the study is to find out the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning using subtitled videos in ESL Learners. The findings are based on two groups: the control group and the experimental group, both consisting of 35 students. In the control group, there is a notable increase in mean scores from pre-test (29.25) to post-test (50.2). This enhancement is supported by a low p-value and a substantial t-value of -17.93. Similarly, the experimental group exhibits a considerable difference between post-test mean (30) and pre-test (30.31), substantiated by a t-value of -29.66.

**Table 1: ANOVA**

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	59731	3	19910.3333	591.4821611	8.29E-78	2.671177951
Within Groups	4578	136	33.6617647			
Total	64309	139				

The F-statistic (591.4821611) is much larger than the critical F-value (2.671177751). This suggests that there is a statistically difference between the groups being compared. The extremely low p-value indicates that the observed differences between the groups are unlikely to have occurred due to random chance. This strengthens the evidence against the null hypothesis between - groups mean square (MS=33.6617647), further supporting the idea that there are significant differences between the groups. It rejects the null hypothesis and conclude that there are significant differences between the groups being analysed.

The questionnaire aims to examine how effective subtitled video content is as a tool for vocabulary acquisition and language learning within an experimental group. The study evaluates how subtitled videos impact various aspects of vocabulary learning, including word recognition, spelling, pronunciation, and comprehension. The questionnaire also seeks to delve into the specific advantages participants associate with subtitled videos, such as improved word recognition, better comprehension of spoken English, increased vocabulary retention, and enhanced pronunciation skills.

The analysis of percentages indicates that a significant number of students highly appreciate the utilization of subtitles across different contexts. In movies, 40% of students prefer subtitles, indicating their significance in enhancing the viewing experience. Similarly, 30% opt for subtitles in TV shows. While documentaries attract a moderate interest with 20%, only 10% of students choose subtitles for educational videos. The findings emphasize a strong inclination toward subtitles in movies and TV shows, highlighting their importance in comprehension and enjoyment. In the context of vocabulary acquisition through subtitled videos, word recognition and spelling garner the highest preference at 30% each. Pronunciation follows at 15%, and 25% of students emphasize the importance of all aspects.

Diverse approaches to vocabulary learning are highlighted, showcasing varied methods of acquiring new words. The perception of challenges in reading subtitles varies, with 35% finding it "not challenging at all" and 25% finding it "very challenging." Furthermore, the impact of subtitled videos on vocabulary improvement varies, with 25% noting substantial enhancement, 40% moderate improvement, and 15% no noticeable change. Students differ in their strategies for vocabulary acquisition, including writing down new

words (15%), practicing pronunciation (20%), and looking up unfamiliar words (30%). Lastly, opinions vary on the benefits of subtitled videos, including improved word recognition (30%), comprehension (20%), retention (25%), and all benefits (25%). The data highlights the complex role of subtitles in language learning, showcasing diverse perceptions and preferences among students. The students' varied perspectives highlight the positive influence of subtitles on language acquisition across different dimensions. The survey's outcomes will provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of subtitled videos in language learning, shedding light on their potential efficacy when compared to alternative methods like reading English books. Ultimately, this research endeavour aims to enrich the field of language education by offering insights that inform effective vocabulary acquisition through multimedia resources and influence instructional approaches.

## Conclusion

This research has explored into a critical aspect of language education, focusing on vocabulary acquisition through the incidental learning approach using English subtitled videos among ESL learners. Through meticulous investigation and analysis, it is evident that the integration of subtitled videos into the ESL learning environment offers a promising approach for promoting vocabulary acquisition. The findings of this study underscore the various benefits of incorporating subtitled videos in ESL instruction. Firstly, the visual aid provided by subtitles reinforces word meanings, aids in comprehension, pronunciation, and contextual usage. This multimodal approach caters to diverse learning styles, facilitating more effective engagement with the material.

Moreover, subtitled videos stimulate active engagement and participation among ESL learners. The dynamic nature of audio-visual content captures learners' attention, fostering a positive learning environment and increasing motivation to explore the language more deeply. The implications of this research extend beyond the ESL classroom. In an increasingly interconnected global landscape, proficiency in English vocabulary is a valuable asset for academic and professional pursuits. The potential use of visual and auditory stimuli in subtitled videos helps ESL learners not only expand their vocabulary but also cultivate a holistic understanding of language usage. As educators and curriculum designers consider the future of ESL pedagogy, embracing subtitled videos could pave the way for more immersive and impactful learning experiences, equipping ESL learners with essential language skills for effective communication in the digital age.

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