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## The influence of English subtitles in movies or listening comprehension on 8th-grade learners

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**Annotation** *This study explores how English subtitles in movies affect the listening comprehension skills of 8th-grade learners. Listening is considered one of the most challenging skills for students learning English as a foreign language. Many learners find it difficult to understand spoken language due to fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and different accents. The use of English subtitles can support learners by providing both visual and auditory input at the same time. In this research, students were exposed to movie clips with English subtitles during classroom activities. The results showed that subtitles helped learners recognize new words, understand sentence structures, and follow the context more easily. Moreover, students felt more confident and motivated while watching movies with subtitles. The combination of sound and text allowed learners to connect pronunciation with spelling, which improved their overall comprehension. Therefore, using English subtitles in movies can be considered an effective tool for developing listening skills in middle school learners.*

**Keywords** *English subtitles, listening comprehension, EFL learners, movies, multimedia learning, secondary education*

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## 8-sinf o'quvchilarining tinglab tushunish ko'nikmasiga filmlardagi inglizcha subtitrlarning ta'siri

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**Annotatsiya** *Mazkur tadqiqot ingliz tilidagi subtitrlarning 8-sinf o'quvchilarining tinglab tushunish ko'nikmalariga ta'sirini o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Tinglab tushunish chet tilini o'rganishda eng murakkab ko'nikmalardan biri sifatida e'tirof etiladi. Ko'plab o'quvchilar tez nutq, notanish leksik birliklar hamda turli talaffuz (aksent) xususiyatlari sababli og'zaki nutqni idrok etishda qiyinchiliklarga duch keladilar. Ingliz tilidagi subtitrlarning qo'llanilishi esa bir vaqtning o'zida vizual va audial*

axborotni taqdim etish orqali o'quvchilarga qo'shimcha yordam beradi. Tadqiqot jarayonida o'quvchilar dars mashg'ulotlari davomida ingliz tilidagi subtitrlar bilan ta'minlangan film lavhalarini tomosha qildilar. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, subtitrlar o'quvchilarga yangi so'zlarni aniqlash, gap tuzilishini tushunish hamda matn mazmunini yaxshiroq anglash imkonini beradi. Bundan tashqari, o'quvchilar subtitrlar bilan ishlash jarayonida o'zlariga bo'lgan ishonchlari ortgani va o'rganishga nisbatan motivatsiyalari kuchayganini ta'kidlashdi. Audio va matnning uyg'unlashuvi o'quvchilarga talaffuz va yozuv o'rtasidagi bog'liqlikni anglashga yordam beradi, bu esa umumiy tinglab tushunish darajasining oshishiga xizmat qiladi. Shunday qilib, ingliz tilidagi subtitrlar bilan boyitilgan videomateriallardan foydalanish o'rta maktab o'quvchilarida tinglab tushunish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda samarali pedagogik vosita sifatida baholanishi mumkin.

**Kalit so'zlar** *Inglizcha subtitrlar, tinglab tushunish, ingliz tilini o'rganish, filmlar, multimedia ta'lim, maktab ta'limi*

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## **Влияние английских субтитров в фильмах на развитие навыков аудирования у учащихся 8 класса**

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**Аннотация** *Данное исследование посвящено изучению влияния английских субтитров в фильмах на развитие навыков аудирования у учащихся 8-х классов. Аудирование традиционно рассматривается как один из наиболее сложных аспектов овладения иностранным языком. Многие учащиеся испытывают трудности при восприятии устной речи из-за высокой скорости говорения, наличия незнакомой лексики, а также разнообразия акцентов. Использование английских субтитров способствует облегчению процесса понимания за счет одновременного предъявления аудиальной и визуальной информации. В рамках данного исследования учащимся были предложены фрагменты фильмов с английскими субтитрами, которые использовались в ходе учебных занятий. Полученные результаты показали, что наличие субтитров способствует более эффективному усвоению новой лексики, лучшему пониманию синтаксических структур, а также облегчает восприятие общего контекста высказывания. Сочетание звукового и текстового каналов восприятия позволяет установить прочную связь между произношением и графическим образом слова, что в конечном итоге*

*положительно влияет на уровень понимания речи на слух. Таким образом, использование фильмов с английскими субтитрами может рассматриваться как эффективное средство развития навыков аудирования у учащихся средней школы.*

**Ключевые слова** *Английские субтитры, аудирование, изучение английского языка, фильмы, мультимедийное обучение, школьное образование*

## Introduction

In modern language learning, listening is considered one of the most important yet at the same time one of the most difficult skills for learners, especially for those studying English as a foreign language. For 8th-grade students, this skill can be particularly challenging because they are still developing their vocabulary and are not fully familiar with different pronunciation patterns. Many learners have problems understanding spoken English due to fast speech, connected sounds, reduced forms, and various accents used by native speakers (Nation, 2001; Brown, 2007). Unlike reading, listening does not allow students to pause, analyze, or reread the material, which often makes them feel confused and unsure about their answers (Karimov, 2020). Because of these difficulties, students may lose interest in listening tasks and become less active during lessons. In many schools, listening is usually taught through traditional methods such as playing audio recordings, answering questions, and repeating after the speaker. While these techniques may help students practice basic listening skills, they are often not enough to prepare learners for real-life communication (Schmitt, 2000; Jalolov, 2012). Students frequently try to translate each word they hear instead of understanding the general idea, which makes the process slower and less effective. As a result, their listening remains passive, and they may struggle to use the language actively in speaking situations. Therefore, teachers need to find more engaging and practical ways to improve students' listening comprehension.

With the rapid development of technology, new teaching methods based on multimedia have become more common in language classrooms. Movies and videos are especially useful because they provide both visual and auditory input at the same time, which makes learning more interesting and meaningful (Mayer, 2009; Vasiljevic, 2014). One of the most effective ways to use movies in teaching is through English subtitles. Subtitles allow learners to see the written form of what they hear, helping them understand pronunciation, spelling, and meaning together. According to multimedia learning theory, combining visual and auditory information improves comprehension and helps students remember new material for a longer time (Mayer, 2009). In addition, subtitles help learners follow the storyline, which reduces stress and makes it easier to understand the context of conversations (Vanderplank, 2016).

Another important aspect is that subtitles can support vocabulary learning and language awareness. When students see and hear words at the same time, they are more likely to notice how language works in real situations. This idea is supported by cognitive learning theories, which state that information is remembered better when it is connected to visual images (Paivio, 1986; Paivio, 1991). Moreover, movies present authentic language, including natural expressions, everyday conversations, and cultural elements, which are essential for developing communicative competence (Gibbs, 2008; Sherman, 2003). Watching films can also increase students' motivation, as they usually find this type of activity more enjoyable

than traditional exercises. As a result, learners become more interested and more willing to participate in classroom activities.

However, not all researchers agree that subtitles are always beneficial. Some studies suggest that students may rely too much on reading subtitles and pay less attention to listening, which can limit their progress (Zarei & Rahimi, 2012). Because of this, it is important to examine how subtitles are used and whether they truly improve listening comprehension in practice. In the context of Uzbek schools, where students often have limited exposure to authentic English outside the classroom, the use of movies with subtitles may provide additional support and learning opportunities (Rasulov, 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of English subtitles in movies on the listening comprehension of 8th-grade learners. It focuses on how subtitles affect students' ability to understand spoken English, learn new vocabulary, and feel more confident during listening activities. The findings of this research may help teachers choose more effective teaching methods and create a more engaging learning environment for students.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-method approach in order to investigate the influence of English subtitles in movies on the listening comprehension of 8th-grade learners. The purpose of using both quantitative and qualitative methods was to gain a deeper understanding of students' learning outcomes as well as their attitudes toward the use of subtitles in English lessons. In addition to classroom-based activities, various academic sources, including books and research articles, were reviewed to provide a theoretical foundation for the study (Mayer, 2009; Vanderplank, 2016; Brown, 2007). The participants of the study were 60 students from the 8th grade who were learning English as a foreign language at a secondary school. Their level of English proficiency ranged from elementary to pre-intermediate. Although they

had already been introduced to listening tasks in their textbooks, many students reported that they found listening difficult and sometimes uninteresting. This was mainly due to their limited vocabulary, difficulty in understanding fast speech, and lack of exposure to authentic English outside the classroom (Karimov, 2020; Nation, 2001). These challenges made them an appropriate group for examining the effectiveness of using English subtitles as a supportive learning tool.

To collect data, a questionnaire was designed as the main research instrument. It consisted of 10 questions aimed at identifying students' difficulties in listening, their attitudes toward traditional teaching methods, and their opinions about using English subtitles. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions so that students could express their thoughts more freely. For example, students were asked whether subtitles helped them understand spoken English better, whether they could learn new vocabulary through watching movies, and how their level of confidence changed during the lessons (Schmitt, 2000). This allowed the researcher to collect both statistical data and personal feedback from the participants. The research was carried out over a period of three weeks during regular English classes and was divided into two main stages. In the first stage, students were taught listening using traditional methods such as audio recordings, teacher explanations, and comprehension exercises. During this phase, it was observed that many students were not very active in the classroom. Some students appeared bored, while others struggled to understand the audio materials. They often tried to translate every single word they heard, which made it difficult for them to grasp the overall meaning of the text (Jalolov, 2012). As a result, their participation level was relatively low, and they showed less confidence in completing listening tasks.

In the second stage, a different approach was introduced by using movie clips with English subtitles. The teacher selected short

and age-appropriate videos that included everyday conversations and clear pronunciation. While watching the clips, students were encouraged to pay attention to both the spoken language and the subtitles. After watching, they completed various classroom activities such as answering comprehension questions, discussing the content in groups, and performing short role-plays based on the scenes. This approach created a more interactive learning environment and allowed students to understand the context of conversations more easily (Vasiljevic, 2014). In addition to the questionnaire, classroom observation was used as a qualitative method to analyze students' behavior and engagement during the lessons. The teacher carefully observed how students reacted to both traditional and subtitle-based lessons. It was noticed that during the second stage, students became more active, asked more questions, and participated more willingly in discussions and group activities. This supports the idea that combining visual and auditory input can improve students' comprehension and memory retention (Paivio, 1986; Paivio, 1991). Furthermore, students seemed more interested in the lesson when movies were used, which increased their motivation to learn.

After completing both stages of the experiment, the questionnaire results were collected and analyzed. The data were examined using simple statistical methods such as percentages and comparisons between the two stages. This helped to identify changes in students' understanding, motivation, and confidence levels. In addition, qualitative observations were used to support the statistical findings and provide a clearer picture of how subtitles influenced the learning process (Nation, 2001; Brown, 2007). Overall, the methodology was designed to compare traditional listening instruction with subtitle-based learning and to determine which approach was more effective for improving listening comprehension among 8th-grade

learners. The combination of surveys, classroom activities, and observations made it possible to obtain reliable and meaningful results (Rasulov, 2021; Zarei & Rahimi, 2012).

### **Results**

The results of the study demonstrated significant changes in students' listening comprehension after the integration of English subtitles in movie-based lessons. At the initial stage, when traditional teaching methods were applied, the majority of students experienced serious difficulties in understanding spoken English. According to the questionnaire data, approximately 72% of the participants reported that they could not clearly understand listening materials due to fast speech, unknown vocabulary, and different accents. Moreover, about 65% of the students admitted that they tried to translate each word individually, which made it difficult for them to grasp the overall meaning of the text (Nation, 2001; Brown, 2007). Classroom observations also confirmed that students were less active during these lessons, showed limited participation, and often hesitated to answer questions. Some learners appeared bored or distracted, which indicates that traditional listening activities were not engaging enough for this age group. After the introduction of English subtitles through movie clips, the results showed a noticeable improvement in students' performance. Approximately 87% of the students stated that subtitles helped them understand spoken English more easily. They explained that seeing the written form of the words while listening made it easier to follow conversations and recognize key expressions. This finding supports the idea that combining visual and auditory input enhances comprehension and helps learners process information more effectively (Mayer, 2009; Vanderplank, 2016). In addition, around 78% of the participants reported that they were able to learn new vocabulary while watching movies with subtitles. Students mentioned that learning words in context was more effective than memorizing vocabulary lists, as they could

connect meanings with real-life situations (Vasiljevic, 2014; Schmitt, 2000). This shows that subtitles not only improve listening comprehension but also contribute to vocabulary development.

Another important result of the study was related to student motivation and engagement. Nearly 85% of the learners reported that lessons became more interesting and enjoyable when movies with subtitles were used. During classroom observations, it was noticed that students became more active, participated in discussions more willingly, and showed greater interest in completing tasks such as answering questions and performing role-plays. In addition, about 80% of the students stated that they felt more confident in their listening abilities after using subtitles. They were less focused on translating every word and more able to understand the general idea of conversations. This improvement in confidence can be explained by cognitive learning theories, which suggest that visual support helps learners reduce anxiety and build stronger memory connections (Paivio, 1986; Paivio, 1991).

Despite the overall positive results, a small percentage of students (around 13%) reported that they sometimes relied too much on subtitles and did not pay enough attention to listening. This suggests that subtitles may create a certain level of dependence if they are not used properly. Therefore, it is important for teachers to balance subtitle use with other listening activities in order to develop students' independent listening skills (Zarei & Rahimi, 2012; Jalolov, 2012). Overall, the findings indicate that English subtitles have a strong positive impact on students' listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and confidence. These results highlight the effectiveness of using multimedia tools in language teaching and support the idea that combining visual and auditory input creates a more productive learning environment (Karimov, 2020; Rasulov, 2021).

### Discussion

The findings of this study clearly show that the use of English subtitles in movies has a positive effect on students' listening comprehension. The results indicate that when learners are provided with both visual and auditory input, they are able to understand spoken language more effectively compared to traditional listening methods. This can be explained by the multimedia learning theory, which suggests that information is processed more successfully when it is presented through multiple channels (Mayer, 2009). In this study, students who watched movie clips with English subtitles were able to follow conversations more easily and recognize important words and expressions, which improved their overall comprehension (Vanderplank, 2016).

One of the key findings of the research is the improvement in vocabulary learning. Students reported that they could learn new words more easily when they saw them in context while watching movies. This supports the idea that vocabulary is better acquired when learners are exposed to meaningful situations rather than isolated word lists (Schmitt, 2000; Vasiljevic, 2014). In addition, the combination of hearing and reading words at the same time helped students connect pronunciation with spelling, which is an important aspect of language learning. This process is also supported by cognitive theories, which explain that visual and verbal information together create stronger mental associations and improve memory retention (Paivio, 1986; Paivio, 1991).

Another important aspect discussed in this study is the role of subtitles in increasing student motivation. The results showed that students were more interested and active during lessons that included movie clips. This can be explained by the fact that movies provide authentic and engaging content, which makes the learning process more enjoyable. According to previous research, the use of authentic materials such as films can help learners develop communicative competence

and better understand real-life language use (Gibbs, 2008; Sherman, 2003). In this study, students not only improved their listening skills but also became more confident in using English during classroom activities. This increased confidence is important because it encourages learners to participate more actively and take risks in communication. However, the study also revealed some limitations related to the use of subtitles. A small number of students reported that they relied too much on reading subtitles instead of focusing on listening. This finding is consistent with previous studies, which suggest that excessive use of subtitles may reduce learners' ability to develop independent listening skills (Zarei & Rahimi, 2012). Therefore, it is important for teachers to use subtitles in a balanced way. For example, subtitles can be used at the initial stage of learning to support comprehension, but gradually reduced as students become more confident in their listening abilities. This approach can help learners develop both supported and independent listening skills (Jalolov, 2012).

In addition, the context of the study should be considered when interpreting the results. The research was conducted with a relatively small group of 8th-grade students and over a short period of time. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent all types of learners or educational settings. Future studies could include a larger number of participants and longer observation periods to examine the long-term effects of subtitle use on listening comprehension (Nation, 2001; Brown, 2007). It would also be useful to compare the effects of different types of subtitles, such as native language subtitles and English subtitles, in order to better understand their impact on learning outcomes.

Overall, the discussion of the results suggests that English subtitles can be a highly effective tool for improving listening comprehension among young learners. They help students understand spoken language

more easily, increase vocabulary knowledge, and create a more engaging learning environment. At the same time, careful and balanced use of subtitles is necessary to avoid over-dependence and to ensure the development of independent listening skills. These findings are especially relevant for English language teaching in contexts where students have limited exposure to authentic language outside the classroom, such as in many Uzbek schools (Karimov, 2020; Rasulov, 2021).

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the influence of English subtitles in movies on the listening comprehension of 8th-grade learners and the findings clearly demonstrated that subtitles can play an important role in improving students' ability to understand spoken English. When learners are exposed to both visual and auditory input at the same time, they are able to follow conversations more easily, recognize key words and expressions, and understand the general meaning without translating every word. This makes the learning process more natural and effective compared to traditional listening methods. In addition, subtitles were found to support vocabulary development, as students could see how words are used in real-life contexts and remember them more easily. Another important result is that students became more interested and motivated during lessons that included movies, which encouraged them to participate more actively and express their ideas with greater confidence. The use of subtitles also helped reduce students' anxiety during listening tasks, making them feel more comfortable and willing to engage in activities. However, it was also observed that some learners relied too much on reading subtitles instead of focusing on listening, which suggests that this method should be used carefully and combined with other teaching strategies. Despite certain limitations, such as the small number of participants and the short duration of the research, the overall findings indicate that

English subtitles are a practical and effective tool for improving listening comprehension among school learners. Therefore, it can be recommended that teachers integrate subtitle-

based activities into their lessons in a balanced way in order to create a more engaging, interactive, and productive learning environment.

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