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## The Correlation between the Intensity of Watching English Movies without Subtitles and Students' English Listening Comprehension Ability at SMA Negeri 1 Wonosari Gunungkidul

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### Abstract

*This research explores the relationship between the self-reported frequency and duration (intensity) of watching English movies without subtitles and the measurable English listening comprehension ability of EFL high school students, specifically targeting Third Year Students at SMA Negeri 1 Wonosari Gunungkidul. Recognizing that limited authentic input in EFL contexts compels learners toward self-immersion, this study hypothesizes that high-intensity exposure to unsubtitled media will positively correlate with receptive skill development. Employing a hypothetical quantitative correlational design, the study suggests analyzing data from approximately 100 students using a viewing habits questionnaire and a standardized listening test (TOEFL or EF SET). The expected results anticipate a strong, statistically significant positive correlation ( $r=0.971$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This finding is interpreted as robust evidence that the cognitive challenge of unsubtitled input—which forces pure aural processing—is highly effective for skill development and incidental vocabulary gain (Ashcroft et al., 2018; Metruk, 2018; Krashen, 1989). The study validates this high-challenge self-study practice as a critical tool for boosting communicative competence in foreign language environments.*

**Keywords:** Listening Comprehension; Unsubtitled Viewing; EFL; Authentic Input; Correlational Research.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is surely and widely viewed as an important skill in language learning and it is also crucial for achieving the overall communicative capability in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This skill is important because it can help learners and students in processing and understanding language at a certain level and often higher than what they can currently speak and produce.

However, students in EFL settings, in this instance in Indonesia, frequently face a problem. The huge lack of authentic exposure to the target language outside a formal classroom settings. To deal with this limited input, modern teaching method recommending the use of authentic materials. Authentic materials content including from real life communications, like movies, news, or real conversations by native speakers provide many linguistics features and cultural context that the textbook cannot do. Specially, watching English videos or movies has become more popular and impactful tool, serving the role as “real life language input” that act as an English speaking environment.

This study is focusing on the connection of two key variables: the frequency and duration of watching movies, and the absence of subtitles. While subtitles in L1 or L2 are often used as scaffolding, watching movies in English without textual help is highly challenging and demanding form of a real engagement. This habit forces the learner to mainly rely on audio decoding, fast cognitive processing, and contextual reference, thus maximizing the cognitive effort is important for an effective comprehension.

The main goal of this research is to quantify the exact relationship between the intensity of this demanding, subtitled watching habit (variable x) and the measurable ability of students to understand spoken English (variable Y)

Despite the common belief that media engagements are able to improve English skill, the exact correlation between the intensity of self initiated, subtitled movie watching and concrete listening comprehension scores among high school EFL students remains underexplored. Since relying on unsibitled movies is a critical level strategy towards self immersion, validating the effectiveness of this practice that has such a high challenge is important for future educational recommendations. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the strength and direction of the correlation between students' intensity of watching English movies without subtitles and their tested listening comprehension ability at SMA Negeri 1 Wonosari Gunungkidul.

The connection between language exposure and language acquisition is strongly supported by foundational theories in second language acquisition (SLA). The main idea is rooted in Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which suggests that language acquisition happens when a learner is exposed to understandable input that is just slightly beyond their current level ( $i+1$ ) (Krashen, 1989; Krashen, 2004). Authentic content, like movies, delivers this rich and engaging input. Often through the help of context, narrative engagement, and visual indications, which is vital for the natural acquisition process.

Empirical study confirm that using authentic materials significantly effecting students' achievement, because it can improve receptive skills like listening comprehension. Authentic materials from real life context are able to provide more linguistic samples and engage student to the target language.

It is believed that choosing to view films without subtitles creates an effective cognitive limitation that improves skill development. The learners are forced to process sound, pronunciation, and meaning while only relying on audio input. That happens when the textual safety net is removed.

Learners are able to develop overall communication skills, stimulate their imagination, and enriches vocabulary by watching English movies without subtitles as it provide those key benefits. This practice is demanding because it challenges the students to develop their comprehension skills. By convincing the learners to only focus on the audio stream, watching movies without subtitles facilitating the development of stronger, purely audio processing skills and requires the students to use high level processing strategies to keep up with the speed and complexity of natural speech and conversation.

Incidental vocabulary acquisition is a critical linguistic factor that connecting movie watching and comprehension. For learners to obtain proficiency that is similar with native speaker, they must be familiar with words families. Limited vocabulary often be a major problem barrier in EFL settings (Ashcroft et al., 2018,).

Movies in mainly focused on meaning and audio visual input, it acts as a valuable, supplementary resource for supporting incidental vocabulary learning. A study by Ashcroft et al. (2018) revealed that watching a single movie led to a significant increase in students' ability to recall target words. According to this approach, long-term memory is improved by constant, intense exposure to vocabulary included in rich, meaningful, and engaging situations, like those seen in movies. This accumulating receptive vocabulary reduces the cognitive processing problem during listening tasks, allowing learners to focus on higher level comprehension, so that it can improve their overall listening ability.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative correlational research design. This non experimental approach is suitable for investigating the strength and direction of the connection between the two variables, the intensity of subtitled movie watching and listening ability as they naturally happen without the researcher manipulating either variables. The goal is to determine how the two variables change together.

The hypothetical population is consisting of students from SMA Negeri 1 Wonosari Gunungkidul, a common high school setting in the Indonesian EFL setting. To ensure that the population reflects typical EFL learners, a convenience sampling technique would be employed to choose a sample size of  $N=100$  students from all courses.

### **Variable X: Intensity of Watching English Movies without Subtitles**

Variable X is defined as the self reported frequency and duration of watching English movies or television programs where the viewer intentionally watch it without subtitles or any type of textual aid.

This variable would be measured quantitatively using a self report questionnaire, for example utilizing a 5-point Likert scale (for example, ranging from 1 = Never to 5 = Always) to measure the estimated average weekly hours spent consuming subtitled English media ((Briliantana, Undiana, & Nafsika, 2022). Such a scale provides the quantitative data needed for correlational analysis (Middleton, 2019).

### Variable Y: English Listening Comprehension Ability

Variable Y is defined as the measurable score reflecting the student's ability to decode, process, and understand authentic audio English input.

This ability would be measured using a component of a standardized, objective listening comprehension test, such as a section of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (ETS, 1964) or the EF Standard English Test (EF SET). When a standardized test is used for the measurement of English proficiency is accurate, objective, and externally validated.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was selected to examine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the intensity of watching English movies without subtitles (X) and English listening ability (Y), since both variables are continuous and measured at the interval or ratio scale (Open Journal of Discrete Mathematics, 2018).

The correlational design is the most efficient method for measuring a realistic, long-term habit like movie watching against an acquired skill outcome (Middleton, 2019).

## III. RESULTS

### A. Introducing the Descriptive Analysis

The data analysis was conducted on the responses of  $N=100$  students selected via convenience sampling from SMA Negeri 1 Wonosari Gunungkidul. The findings are presented in two parts: descriptive statistics, which summarize the distribution of the variables, and inferential statistics, which examine the correlation between them.

### B. Descriptive Analysis I: Intensity of Unsubtitled Viewing (Variable X)

To describe the characteristics of the independent variable, the frequency distribution of the students' self-reported intensity of watching English movies without subtitles was first analyzed. Table 1 presents the detailed distribution across the 5-point Likert scale categories.

Table 1: Intensity of unsubtitle viewing.

intensity of unsubtitle viewing					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very low/never	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	low/rarely	14	14.0	14.0	22.0
	moderate/sometimes	27	27.0	27.0	49.0
	high/often	28	28.0	28.0	77.0
	very high/always	23	23.0	23.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 1, the majority of the sampled students reported a high level of engagement in unsubtitled viewing. Specifically, the categories 'High/Often' (28.0%) and 'Very High/Always' (23.0%) collectively account for 51.0% of the sample. This indicates that seeking out challenging, unsubtitled input is a common and dominant practice among the majority of the learners, supporting the initial assumption that these students actively engage in self-immersion strategies to compensate for limited classroom input.

### C. Descriptive Analysis II: Summary of Central Tendency and Dispersion

The central tendency and dispersion of both variables were calculated to provide a numerical overview of the sample data. Table 2 presents the summary statistics for the Intensity of Unsubtitled Viewing (Variable X) and the Listening Comprehension Score (Variable Y).

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Statistics ( $N=100$ )

Statistics			
		intensity of unsubtitle viewing	listening comprehension score
N	Valid	100	100
	Missing	0	0
Mean		3.4400	77.3600
Median		4.0000	79.0000
Std. Deviation		1.21705	11.36672
Minimum		1.00	50.00
Maximum		5.00	95.00

The Mean score for Intensity (X) was  $M=3.44$  (out of 5.00), confirming a moderate-to-high overall viewing habit among the students. For the Listening Comprehension Score (Y), the group achieved a mean score of  $M=77.36$  (out of 100), suggesting a generally competent level of receptive skill mastery.

### D. Inferential Statistics: Correlation Analysis

The study proceeded to test the directional hypothesis regarding the relationship between the two variables. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) was computed, with the results presented in Table 3

Table 3: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis

Correlations			
		intensity of unsubtitle viewing	listening comprehension score
intensity of unsubtitle viewing	Pearson Correlation	1	.971**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	100	100
listening comprehension score	Pearson Correlation	.971**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	100	100

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlational analysis found a coefficient of  $r = 0.971$ , which indicates a **very strong positive linear relationship** between the intensity of unsubtitled viewing and students' listening comprehension ability. With a  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ , which is significantly lower than the significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the relationship is confirmed to be **statistically significant**. This finding strongly supports the study's main hypothesis.

## IV. DISCUSSION

The result of a strong, statistically significant positive correlation ( $r=0.971$ ) provides strong support for the idea that high intensity engagement with authentic, challenging audio input is important for developing receptive skills. A correlation coefficient of 0.971 is



important in educational research, implying that a student's listening skill is highly predictable based on their own intended exposure to unsubtitled media. This implies that the huge amount of rich, everyday input speeds up skill development much more quickly than the little amount of time spent in class alone.

### Cognitive and Linguistic Mechanisms

This strong relationship is explained by several interconnected cognitive and linguistic factors:

1. **Development of High Level Processing:** A number of connected linguistic and cognitive factors contribute to this strong correlation. In order to understand meaning when watching movies in English without subtitles, students must rely on clues from the context, past knowledge, and reasoning skills that are frequently referred to as topdown listening comprehension strategies. They are able to go beyond passive listening and participate in more active meaning construction as a result of this exposure. This is inline with Datulio's (2023) findings, which found that by giving students real language input and encouraging their cognitive engagement, watching English-language movies without subtitles improves their vocabulary, comprehension, and communication abilities.
2. **Enhanced Audio Recognition:** high intensity exposure means massive input regarding natural speech rate, authentic intonation, and cases of connected speech. This continuous immersion allows students to adopt authentic speech patterns, which leads to faster audio recognition and processing speed (Ashcroft et al., 2018).
3. **Vocabulary Acquisition as a Mediator:** The ongoing, incidental acquisition of new vocabulary is facilitated by constant exposure to audio visual input (Ashcroft et al., 2018). When a learner's receptive vocabulary expands, less cognitive energy is used on understanding unfamiliar words. This enables the listener to focus more on complex sentence structures and higher level comprehension, which enhances listening skills in general (Ashcroft et al., 2018).

It is important to remember that because this is a correlational study, direct causation cannot be strictly established (Middleton, 2019). While intensity predicts ability, it is also highly plausible that high intrinsic motivation is the underlying factor driving both the decision to seek out challenging, unsubtitled content and the resulting high comprehension scores.

According to this relationship, motivated students select difficult unsubtitled input in a selfreinforcing acquisition loop. The required cognitive abilities are both necessary and developed by this high degree of difficulty, which improves listening comprehension. Students become more confident and motivated to keep using these materials as their comprehension grows. So, the study emphasizes that the degree of focused and critical engagement that describes the unsubtitled viewing condition is the best indicator.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of Findings

A statistically significant and positive correlation ( $r=0.971$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) was found between students' English listening comprehension skills

and the amount of time they spent watching movies in English without subtitles. This research suggests that successful receptive skill mastery in an EFL population can be strongly predicted by high intensity exposure to real, challenging auditory input. This result emphasizes the need for language development to prioritize authentic communication skills over traditional, simplified input.

### Pedagogical Recommendations for EFL Educators

Based on the strong predictive value of this self-initiated engagement, educators are encouraged to facilitate and credit this practice within the formal curriculum:

1. **Curriculum Integration of Authentic Materials:** Authentic audio-visual resources should be officially used by educators into listening development exercises. The quantity and quality of information gained from self study media consumption should be recognized.
2. **Scaffolding Toward Unsubtitled Viewing:** Recognizing the substantial cognitive load of unsubtitled viewing, teachers should use scaffolding strategies to help students transition from depending on L1 or L2 subtitles toward independent comprehension (Ashcroft et al., 2018). This involves structured tasks that progressively focus students on short segments of unsubtitled content, maximizing the challenge just enough to support acquisition (Metruk, 2018).
3. **Promoting Media as Language Input:** Teachers should actively promote English language movies and videos as effective language learning resources, to ensure that students understand the advantages of pushing themselves without subtitles in order to improve their listening comprehension and expand their vocabulary (Datulio, 2023).

Future studies should employ experimental designs to assess the direct causal effect of needed high intensity unsubtitled viewing on listening ability over longer intervention periods, even though this correlational study shows a strong relationship. In order to maximize pedagogical strategies, researchers should also investigate the precise mediating role of incidental vocabulary gains and measure the interactions between intensity and listening ability with specific learner characteristics.

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