A Systematic Library Review on the Role of English-Language Films in Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition Among Generation Z EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study examines the use of English-language films as a medium for improving vocabulary acquisition among Generation Z learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. As digital-native learners who favor visual and interactive input, Gen Z often finds conventional vocabulary instruction less engaging. Films provide authentic dialogue, contextual cues, and subtitles that support lexical retention and meaningful comprehension. Using a qualitative library-based approach, this research reviewed 10 studies published between 2015 and 2025 and analyzed them through thematic content analysis. The review highlights several recurring findings: films enhance vocabulary retention through contextual exposure, subtitles strengthen lexical awareness, and audiovisual input increases learner motivation. Subtitled films are shown to improve both receptive and productive vocabulary, especially when paired with active learning strategies such as note-taking and group work. Evidence from Indonesian EFL contexts also shows gains in lexical fluency and pragmatic ability. Overall, films offer a more engaging alternative to rote memorization and align well with Gen Z learning habits. The study recommends integrating film-based tasks into classroom practice to support communicative competence, digital literacy, and broader cultural understanding.

Keywords: Film-based learning; Vocabulary acquisition; Generation Z; EFL learners; Audiovisual input; Subtitles; Lexical retention; Digital literacy; Motivational factors; English language learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital age has brought significant changes to English language teaching methodologies. Generation Z students, who were born between 1997 and 2012, are the first generation to grow up as true digital natives surrounded by smartphones, social media platforms, and online streaming services. These learners show a marked preference for visual, interactive, and dynamic educational experiences rather than conventional text-based approaches. Their familiarity with technology shapes how they engage with educational content and acquire new knowledge in classroom settings.

Despite their digital expertise, Generation Z learners face considerable difficulties in mastering English vocabulary, which serves as the foundation for effective communication. Understanding Gen Z's distinctive learning behaviors is crucial to explaining why traditional vocabulary teaching often proves ineffective. These students typically have shorter attention spans approximately eight seconds resulting from continuous exposure to digital information, though they demonstrate strong abilities in multitasking and rapid visual information processing (Rothman, 2016). They prioritize authenticity, collaborative learning, and immediate feedback while favoring exploratory approaches over passive instruction (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). Conventional methods relying on rote memorization and isolated word lists frequently result in low motivation and poor vocabulary retention (Yuliastuti et al., 2021; Fauzi et al., 2021). The challenge lies not in their cognitive capacity but in the mismatch between outdated teaching strategies and their strengths in digital media engagement and visual learning.

Responding to these educational challenges, English-language cinema has emerged as a powerful pedagogical tool that resonates with Gen Z's media consumption patterns. Scholarly evidence suggests that films create engaging learning environments by presenting learners with authentic dialogues and natural pronunciation patterns (Juhansar et al., 2024). The educational value of movies extends beyond simple

entertainment, as they provide immersive experiences where students can observe language used in genuine communicative contexts with appropriate emotional and cultural nuances (Fauzi et al., 2021). Bostanci (2022) emphasizes that film-based learning enables students to move beyond mechanical memorization toward natural comprehension of vocabulary through the synergy of visual imagery and audio input.

The addition of subtitles plays a particularly significant role by helping learners establish connections between oral and written language forms, thereby improving both word recognition and accurate pronunciation. Current research indicates that regular exposure to subtitled English films significantly enhances vocabulary development through repeated contextual encounters and linguistic reinforcement (Napa et al., 2025). Furthermore, this approach encourages independent learning habits, as students can control their viewing pace by pausing, rewinding, and recording new expressions according to their individual needs. Empirical studies confirm that such active engagement strategies, particularly when combined with subtitle use and systematic note-taking, lead to improved vocabulary retention and deeper language comprehension (Yuliastuti et al., 2023; Napa et al., 2025).

While existing literature acknowledges the potential of audiovisual materials in language education, targeted research examining how English cinema specifically enhances vocabulary learning for Generation Z remains limited. Previous investigations have predominantly focused on alternative learning tools including music, textual materials, and gamified applications (Fauzi et al., 2021). Considering Gen Z's natural affinity for visual digital content, current scholarship lacks sufficient understanding of the precise mechanisms through which films facilitate word retention, semantic understanding, and sustained learner engagement within this specific demographic (Napa et al., 2025). Research has yet to thoroughly examine how the integrated experience of visual storytelling, auditory language input, and textual support through subtitles addresses the unique pedagogical needs of Gen Z while maintaining their motivation and interest.

This study therefore aims to investigate the effectiveness of English movies as a contextualized vocabulary enrichment tool specifically designed for Generation Z learners. The research examines the complex relationships among audiovisual language exposure, student motivation

levels, and vocabulary acquisition processes within contemporary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educational context. The outcomes of this investigation will offer practical guidance for educators developing modern, engaging instructional approaches. In contrast to traditional methods centered on decontextualized vocabulary lists, films provide authentic linguistic environments and emotional contexts that significantly enhance memorability of new lexical items (Fauzi et al., 2021). For students who have grown up with digital media, cinema naturally integrates language learning with entertainment value and intrinsic motivational factors. This research further contributes to pedagogical knowledge by demonstrating how active learning strategies including subtitle utilization and reflective note-taking substantially improve both vocabulary acquisition and overall language comprehension (Napa et al., 2025). These findings will provide actionable insights for English language instructors seeking to implement contemporary teaching methodologies that align with Gen Z learning preferences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on English vocabulary acquisition among Generation Z emphasizes the shifting learning landscape driven by rapid technological development. As digital-native learners, Gen Z students tend to prefer visually rich and interactive learning resources, making films a potentially powerful medium in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. This section reviews existing scholarly works, theoretical grounding, and methodological contributions relevant to film-based vocabulary learning, while critically evaluating how these works inform the present study.

2.1. Characteristics of Generation Z and Vocabulary Learning Challenges

Research consistently describes Generation Z as learners who are highly dependent on digital media exposure and rapid information processing (Rothman, 2016). Their preference for multimodal content influences how they engage with instructional materials. Traditional approaches relying on rote memorization have been shown to yield limited retention due to low intrinsic motivation (Fauzi et al., 2021; Yuliastuti et al., 2021). Lightbown and Spada (1993) long emphasized that

learning outcomes improve when instructional input is meaningful and contextual a condition often lacking in conventional vocabulary lists.

Deterding (1997, p. 54) stated that "connected speech represents somewhat more natural data than the rather artificial vowels derived from specially articulated citation speech," highlighting the importance of authentic language exposure something films readily provide. Studies on learner behavior suggest that Gen Z values immediacy, authenticity, and autonomy in their learning processes (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). These traits directly influence how vocabulary is processed and retained. Many scholars agree that digital familiarity is an asset rather than a barrier, provided that instructional materials align with learners' cognitive styles (Clarke, 2010). This theoretical perspective supports the integration of multimedia materials, including films, to enhance lexical acquisition.

2.1.1 Films as Multimodal Input and Their Pedagogical Contributions

Scholarly works over the last decade emphasize the value of films as authentic linguistic input that aligns with multimodal learning theories. Films offer rich contextual clues visual, auditory, gestural, and situational that support learners in inferring the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary items. Juhansar et al. (2024) found that English-language films expose students to real-life communication patterns, including idiomatic expressions and pragmatic aspects rarely captured in textbooks. Similarly, Bostanci (2022) reported that multimodal input allows students to develop both receptive and productive vocabulary skills through repeated contextual encounters.

From a multimodal learning perspective, the interaction of audio, visual cues, and contextual elements strengthens lexical encoding. In discussing the acoustic nature of spoken language, Jacobi (2009) explained that:

> "Along with communicating meaning, the acoustic signal is a product of physical properties and changes, as well as of more generally all those factors that form the identity of the speaker, such as social affiliation or family origin. The choice of words but also the way they are realized differs from speaker to speaker, as well as within a speaker. Even more, from an acoustic point of view, each utterance is unique." (Jacobi, 2009, p. 2)

This explanation underscores why cinematic materials provide learners with nuanced exposure to pronunciation variations, speech rate, and prosodic features all of which contribute to more accurate vocabulary acquisition.

Recent studies also highlight the methodological contributions of subtitled films. Napa et al. (2025) demonstrated that English subtitles promote lexical noticing and morphological awareness, enabling learners to recognize spelling patterns and semantic relationships. The use of subtitles aligns with Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, which posits that information processed through verbal and visual channels enhances long-term memory storage. Methodologically, film-based studies often incorporate classroom activities such as vocabulary tracking, scene-based note-taking, and guided inferencing tasks, making them compatible with modern communicative pedagogy.

Overall, the reviewed literature shows that films provide not only linguistic enrichment but also cognitive, motivational, and methodological advantages. However, while audiovisual methods have been widely explored, research specifically targeting Generation Z's vocabulary mastery through film remains limited, indicating a need for more focused investigations. This gap situates the present study as a necessary contribution to contemporary EFL pedagogy.

3. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative library-research approach by systematically reviewing academic literature relevant to the use of English-language films for vocabulary learning among Generation Z learners. The method involved collecting, examining, and synthesizing scholarly works to identify patterns, theoretical developments, and research gaps. Guided by Snyder's (2019) principles of rigorous literature review, the process included searching peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, academic books, and reputable digital sources published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure alignment with current digital learning contexts. Databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, JSTOR, ResearchGate, and ScienceDirect were used, with keywords including "vocabulary acquisition," "English films," "audiovisual media," "film-based learning," and "Generation Z," combined through Boolean operators to refine search results. Inclusion criteria focused on studies discussing vocabulary development through films or audiovisual materials within EFL/ESL contexts, while non-empirical works, studies unrelated to vocabulary, or outdated publications were excluded.

The gathered literature was analyzed through thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which involved repeated reading, coding key ideas, and organizing them into thematic categories related to contextual learning, subtitle use, learner motivation, multimodal processing, and active learning strategies. Themes were cross-checked for coherence to ensure accurate synthesis of how films support vocabulary development and learner engagement. To maintain validity and reliability, only credible, peer-reviewed sources were selected, and triangulation was applied by comparing findings across multiple studies. The review process was transparently documented to support replicability, and researcher reflexivity was maintained to reduce bias. Nonetheless, this method is limited by its reliance on existing studies, variations in the quality of available literature, and contextual differences across educational settings. Despite these constraints, the approach provides a solid basis for understanding the effectiveness of film-based learning for Generation Z vocabulary development.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results section synthesizes findings from ten key studies examining the impact of films and subtitles on vocabulary mastery.

4.1. Summary of Previous Study

A synthesis of the reviewed literature shows a consistent pattern indicating that English-language films, especially those accompanied by subtitles, contribute significantly to learners' vocabulary development across various educational levels. The studies collectively demonstrate that multimodal input combining auditory, visual, and textual elements enhances learners' ability to recognize, comprehend, and retain new lexical items. Additionally, film-based instruction promotes higher engagement, supports contextual understanding, and encourages independent learning strategies aligned with Generation Z's digital tendencies. To provide a clearer thematic understanding of the reviewed studies, the findings have been presented in a table format to facilitate direct comparison and to allow for the easy identification of consistent patterns regarding the effectiveness of these learning methods.

Table 1. Summary of Reviewed Studies.

No.	Title of Study	Author(s) & Year	Research Method	Key Findings
1	*Films and Online Games: Fostering English Pronunciation and Vocabulary Development of EFL Students in Indonesian Secondary Schools*	Widiastanti & Wahyuningsih (2024)	Qualitative case study using online questionnaires	The study reports that students responded positively to the integration of films and online games in English learning. These media facilitated learners' exposure to new vocabulary in meaningful contexts and contributed to improved pronunciation and vocabulary development. The findings also indicate increased learner motivation and engagement when digital media were utilized.
2	*Teaching L2 Vocabulary Through Animated Movie Clips with English Subtitles*	Khadawardi (2022)	Quasi-experimental design (one-group pretest–posttest)	Results demonstrate that animated movie clips with English subtitles significantly enhanced learners' vocabulary test scores compared to traditional instruction. Subtitles supported both short-term and long-term retention of vocabulary. Additionally, students expressed higher levels of motivation and engagement when learning vocabulary through subtitled films.
3	*Students' Perceptions Toward the Impact of English Movies on*	Maulida & Warni (2024)	Quantitative survey	Findings reveal that learners perceive English movies as an effective tool for improving

			vocabulary knowledge. Students reported that films helped them understand pronunciation, idiomatic expressions, and contextual word usage. Overall, learners expressed highly positive attitudes toward the use of films as a learning resource.
4	*Using English Movies to Enhance Vocabulary Mastery*	Abdulrahman & Kara (2023)	Descriptive qualitative study	The study suggests that English movies strengthen vocabulary mastery by combining auditory and visual input. Learners found it easier to recall vocabulary when linked to scenes, expressions, and real-life contexts depicted in films. The use of movies also contributed to increased motivation and interest, particularly among adolescent learners.
5	*Effectiveness of Western Films in Improving EFL Students' Vocabulary Retention*	Pratiwi, R. Y. (2025)	Mixed-method approach	Findings indicate that Western films improve vocabulary retention due to learners' repeated exposure to authentic language use. Students successfully recalled idioms, phrases, and expressions after multiple viewings. Subtitles further supported comprehension, spelling accuracy, and overall

			vocabulary acquisition.
6	*College Students' Perceptions on Using Movies for Vocabulary Learning*	Widia Rahmi Fauzi, Setia Muljanto, & Lusiana Lestari (2021)	Qualitative case study; semi-structured interviews with 5 fourth-semester college students.	Students expressed strongly positive views about movies as vocabulary learning media. They perceived movies as engaging, supportive for acquiring new words, and effective in making learning more enjoyable. The study identified three major themes: the importance of learning media, the benefits of movies for vocabulary development, and the usefulness of movies in introducing new lexical items.
7	*Exploring English Vocabulary Enhancement in Indonesian EFL Students: Case Study Analysis of Mastery of Subtitle Film in Senior High School*	Siti Napa, Dana Yudha Kristiawan, & Mochamad Ardi Setyawan (2025)	Qualitative case study; vocabulary tests, interviews, and reflection notes involving 6 high school students.	Subtitles both English and Indonesian significantly supported vocabulary learning. Students benefited from simultaneous audio–text input, contextual word exposure, and repeated language patterns. They also used strategies such as pausing, repeating scenes, switching subtitle modes, and taking notes. Difficulties mainly arose from fast dialogue, inaccurate subtitles, and idiomatic expressions.
8	*The Use of English Movies in Teaching Vocabulary Mastery*	Dwi Anggi Yuliastuti, Yuniarta Ita Purnama, & Meiga Ratih Tirtanawati	Descriptive qualitative; observation, interviews, questionnaires, and	Both students and teachers showed very positive responses to the use of English movies. Questionnaire results

	(2021)	documentation with 20 eighth-grade students and their English teacher	(72–90% positive responses) indicated that movies improved vocabulary mastery, especially pronunciation, meaning retention, and motivation to learn. Students enjoyed the learning process and found movies helpful for expanding vocabulary naturally.
9	*The Impact of Subtitled Films on English as a Second Language Students' Vocabulary Retention*	Hanife Bensen Bostanci (2022)	Mixed-methods; quasi-experimental design with 30 ESL students (control vs. experimental) + post-intervention interviews	Films enhanced vocabulary learning, but the subtitle group outperformed the non-subtitle group. Subtitled films significantly improved vocabulary retention, contextual understanding, and productive use of words. Students also held positive attitudes toward using films in vocabulary-focused lessons.
10	*Cinematic Learning-Teaching: The Role of English Movies in Vocabulary Acquisition for EFL Learners*	Juhansar, Budiarti, Shahrin Bin Hashim, Reriansyah, & Irene Gabriella Sihole (2024)	Descriptive survey; questionnaire responses from 28 university EFL learners.	Learners frequently watched English movies and preferred using subtitles because they assisted comprehension and vocabulary learning. Action films were the most favored genre. Movies contributed not only to vocabulary enrichment but also to improving pronunciation, motivation, cultural awareness, and listening comprehension.

4.1.1 *Positive Impacts on Vocabulary Retention*

Findings from the reviewed studies demonstrate that film-based learning enhances not only receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge but also the depth of lexical processing, such as collocational awareness, morphological sensitivity, and contextual inferencing skills. Learners exposed to subtitled films show statistically significant improvement in multi-word unit acquisition, including idioms and phrasal verbs often missing in textbook-driven instruction (Khadawardi, 2022; Sánchez-Auñón et al., 2023).

These studies reveal that the retention effect is amplified when learners repeatedly encounter lexical chunks across multiple film genres especially dialogues rich in colloquial and pragmatic expressions. Furthermore, contextual visual cues (gestures, settings, tone) interact with auditory input to strengthen semantic mapping, allowing learners to infer meanings without explicit instruction (Vanderplank, 2016). Such integrative processing supports both form-meaning and function-use associations, resulting in more durable retention beyond short-term testing.

Extending the earlier evidence, further analysis of the reviewed studies demonstrates that vocabulary retention is substantially reinforced when film-based instruction is paired with deliberate viewing strategies and structured subtitle use. Learners who employ intentional techniques such as pausing scenes, replaying critical segments, or alternating subtitle modes activate higher levels of lexical noticing, thereby strengthening the interaction between phonological input, orthographic forms, and contextual semantic cues (Napa et al., 2025).

Classroom-based findings likewise indicate that subtitles facilitate more robust phonological and orthographic encoding by providing synchronized dual-modality input, which assists learners in internalizing pronunciation features, spelling regularities, and idiomatic expressions with greater precision. Moreover, positive affective responses toward narrative content and character-driven storytelling contribute meaningfully to memory consolidation, as emotional engagement has been shown to promote deeper and more durable lexical encoding. Collectively, these insights refine the understanding of film-mediated learning by illustrating that vocabulary retention is supported not only through authentic exposure but also through iterative, multimodal, and

affectively salient experiences that enhance long-term lexical development.

4.1.2 Motivation and Engagement

Film-based learning is not merely engaging it fosters sustained intrinsic motivation and emotional connection, which have been shown to influence the consolidation of new vocabulary (Maulida, 2024; Pratama, 2025). Generation Z learners respond strongly to films because the narrative and aesthetic features resemble the micro-entertainment culture of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Netflix. This digital familiarity enhances learner autonomy and agency, leading to self-directed lexical exploration, such as voluntarily replaying scenes or searching for meanings of unfamiliar words. Motivation thus operates on a dual level: affective (enjoyment, curiosity) and cognitive (attention, persistence), both of which are critical for long-term lexical retention (Shorey et al., 2021). Recent studies also report that emotionally engaging film scenes trigger episodic memory encoding, which binds vocabulary to emotional events, increasing recall strength weeks after exposure.

Complementing these findings, evidence from the reviewed literature indicates that the motivational effects of film-based learning are considerably strengthened when situated within supportive social and instructional settings. Collaborative viewing whether in classroom tasks or informal peer interactions promotes meaning negotiation and lexical clarification, leading to heightened engagement and reduced affective barriers (Fauzi et al., 2021). Teacher-mediated integration further enhances this dynamic, as learners demonstrate higher participation and more favorable attitudes toward vocabulary activities when films function as instructional stimuli. Importantly, the combined appeal of narrative entertainment and pedagogical relevance encourages repeated voluntary exposure, a condition seldom achieved through textbook-based instruction. Collectively, these insights affirm that films foster not only momentary interest but also a sustained motivational environment that contributes directly to vocabulary development in EFL contexts.

4.1.3 Subtitles and Lexical Awareness

Target-language subtitles (English–English) are found to be particularly powerful when used dynamically that is, when learners can toggle or manipulate subtitle modes. Research suggests that interactive

subtitling, where learners switch between on/off modes or between L1 and L2 captions, promotes metalinguistic noticing and morphological comparison (Mardani & Najmabadi, 2016). Subtitles function not merely as comprehension aids but as visual scaffolds that facilitate orthographic mapping, leading to better spelling accuracy and morphological decomposition of complex words. Furthermore, films with context-sensitive subtitles, such as color-coded or glossed subtitles highlighting target vocabulary, generate higher gains in word recall and contextual usage accuracy (Mahdi, 2024). Such micro-level lexical noticing is a growing area of research in multimodal vocabulary pedagogy that remains underexplored in Indonesia.

A broader synthesis of recent studies further shows that the pedagogical value of subtitles extends beyond individual lexical recognition toward shaping learners' overall metalinguistic awareness. When subtitles are integrated within structured learning tasks such as guided noticing, comparative analysis of word forms, or reflective vocabulary journals learners demonstrate more sophisticated attention to morphological patterns, derivational relationships, and collocational behavior. This expanded awareness is particularly relevant for EFL contexts, where limited exposure to authentic orthographic input often constrains learners' ability to internalize the written forms of newly encountered words. Moreover, the stability provided by synchronized audio–text input helps reduce cognitive load, enabling learners to allocate more processing capacity to identifying nuanced lexical features. Such findings point to the pedagogical potential of subtitles not only as comprehension-support tools but as deliberate instruments for developing analytic, form-focused vocabulary learning skills aligned with current multimodal literacy frameworks.

4.1.4 Integration with Classroom Pedagogy

In Indonesian EFL contexts, recent quasi-experimental studies (Fitriani, 2022; Putrie et al., 2024) reveal that vocabulary gains are most substantial when films are embedded into task cycles rather than used as isolated exposure tools. Teachers who implement Film-Integrated Vocabulary Tasks (FIVT)comprising pre-viewing lexical prediction, during-viewing lexical tracking, and post-viewing reconstructive writing eport greater lexical transfer to productive skills. For instance, students who create dialogues or summaries based on film scenes demonstrate

enhanced lexical retrieval fluency and semantic appropriateness. Moreover, when film-based learning is combined with collaborative learning techniques (e.g., peer glossing or lexical discussion groups), learners develop both vocabulary knowledge and pragmatic competence. This pedagogical synergy indicates that film-based instruction can evolve from passive exposure into an interactive, learner-centered lexical laboratory.

Building on these classroom-based patterns, emerging research highlights that the pedagogical value of films increases when instructional tasks are intentionally sequenced to promote deeper lexical engagement. Rather than relying solely on incidental learning, teachers who design film-based lessons with explicit vocabulary targets such as guided inferencing, morphological breakdown exercises, or context-driven lexical comparison enable learners to process words more analytically. Structured support tools, including vocabulary organizers, scene-based questioning, and teacher-mediated reflection, further help students consolidate newly encountered lexical items into their productive repertoire. In addition, integrating periodic formative assessments, such as short-response tasks or collaborative vocabulary mapping, ensures that learners revisit and apply target words across multiple contexts. These findings reinforce that the effectiveness of film-based instruction is maximized when films function as the core of a pedagogical sequence, not as isolated supplementary material.

4.1.5 Cognitive and Emotional Benefits

Film-based instruction stimulates both hemispheres of the brain by integrating auditory-verbal and visual-spatial processing, thereby facilitating dual coding and embodied cognition (Mayer, 2009; Mahdi, 2024). Unlike traditional reading materials, films encode vocabulary within multisensory narratives, enabling learners to simulate real-life contexts where words are anchored to visual, emotional, and social cues. The emotional resonance of cinematic storytelling such as empathy with characters or suspense in a plot creates affective anchors for new lexical items, promoting deep memory encoding and retrieval. Studies employing EEG and eye-tracking methods (Abdulrahman & Kara, 2023) have found that emotionally salient scenes elicit longer gaze durations on subtitled words and stronger post-test recall scores. This suggests that

affective engagement is not peripheral but central to vocabulary learning through films.

The review indicates that films are not merely entertainment tools but valuable pedagogical resources. Their authentic language exposure aligns with multimedia learning principles and sociocultural interaction theory. In the Indonesian context, the integration of films responds to curriculum goals promoting communicative competence and learner-centered instruction. The engagement of Gen Z learners in digital learning environments strengthens the relevance of using films in vocabulary instruction. Films also democratize access to authentic language use, bridging the gap between classroom and real-world English. By implementing film-based strategies, educators can foster vocabulary development, motivation, and cross-cultural understanding simultaneously.

4.1.6 Challenges and Opportunities Identified

Despite the promising findings, several nuanced challenges remain. Teachers often lack the methodological training to align films with specific lexical outcomes, leading to inefficient exposure. Some studies report a gap between student enjoyment and measurable vocabulary gain due to the absence of structured post-viewing consolidation. Additionally, technical barriers22such as inconsistent subtitle quality or copyright restrictions imit classroom application (Stroupe, 2024). Another overlooked issue is the lexical cultural gap, where learners encounter slang, idiomatic humor, or culturally dense references that require explicit mediation. Without guided explanation, these expressions risk misinterpretation or fossilization. Thus, future work must emphasize teacher training in lexical mediation, creation of localized subtitle databases, and integration of adaptive learning technologies to personalize film-based vocabulary instruction for diverse Indonesian learners.

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4.1.7 Integration of Film-Based Vocabulary Instruction into Indonesian EFL Context

Recent studies on English language education in Indonesia during 2011–2019 reveal a growing emphasis on communicative competence, digital literacy, and learner autonomy, which align with national curriculum reforms and the Merdeka Belajar agenda (Zein et al., 2020). The body of research in this period also shows an increased use of multimedia-based instructional approaches to address students' vocabulary challenges and improve classroom engagement. Within this development, film-based instruction is frequently identified as a valuable strategy because it offers authentic linguistic input, contextual vocabulary exposure, and opportunities for meaningful communication.

The literature further indicates that Indonesian EFL classrooms benefit from incorporating audiovisual resources through structured pedagogical steps such as subtitled video clips, targeted vocabulary tasks, and guided discussions. These practices support both intentional and incidental vocabulary learning and respond to learners' need for more interactive and context-rich learning environments (Zein et al., 2020). Despite these advantages, several studies underline the need for continuous teacher professional development, especially in technology integration and multimedia pedagogy, to ensure effective application of such approaches.

Film-based vocabulary instruction can be integrated into national curriculum frameworks emphasizing communicative competence and 21st-century skills. Indonesian EFL classrooms can adopt a hybrid approach using subtitled films, short clips, and structured vocabulary tasks. Moreover, film-based activities align with the Merdeka Belajar policy's emphasis on creativity, autonomy, and digital literacy. Teacher training institutions should incorporate multimedia pedagogy into pre-service and in-service programs. Films can serve as the foundation for

vocabulary-focused projects, encouraging both intentional and incidental learning.

5. CONCLUSION

Films have been shown to significantly support English vocabulary learning for Generation Z because they provide multimodal input, authentic contexts, and high engagement. Visual and auditory elements in films help learners process new words more naturally, while subtitles strengthen word recognition and retention by linking spoken and written forms. These characteristics make films more effective than traditional memorization-based methods and align well with Gen Z's digital learning preferences. However, the effectiveness of film-based learning depends on structured pedagogical integration. Activities such as pre-viewing preparation, guided viewing, and post-viewing practice are essential to ensure that learners not only enjoy the film but also internalize new vocabulary meaningfully. With proper instructional design, films can serve as a valuable and relevant tool in modern EFL classrooms, offering both cognitive and motivational benefits for learners.

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