

The Significant Role of Multimedia in Motivating EFL Learner's Interest in English Vocabulary Learning

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Abstract: *Multimedia has emerged as a transformative tool in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, with subtitled videos playing a pivotal role in enhancing vocabulary acquisition. This study examines the effectiveness of integrating TED Talk videos with subtitles into the EFL curriculum, focusing on their impact on students' listening and reading skills related to vocabulary learning. A sample of 423 undergraduate students from National Pingtung University, aged 18 to 22 years, participated in this investigation. The study employed pre- and post-tests, alongside a preference questionnaire, to evaluate the participants' vocabulary knowledge and perceptions of subtitled videos. Findings revealed a significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition, with post-test scores showing a 45.74% increase compared to pre-test results. Subtitled TED Talk videos facilitated comprehension and retention of vocabulary by leveraging audiovisual input and contextual cues, aligning with Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and Krashen's Input Hypothesis.*

Analysis of student feedback further highlighted the pedagogical value of subtitled videos, with over 60% of participants expressing positive perceptions. Students reported that these videos created a comfortable, engaging learning environment that reduced anxiety and enhanced motivation. Minimal drawbacks were reported, underscoring the overall effectiveness of this instructional approach. The findings confirm the utility of subtitled TED Talk videos as a dynamic and impactful resource for vocabulary learning, supporting both linguistic development and learner engagement. This study contributes valuable insights into modern EFL pedagogy, emphasizing the benefits of integrating multimedia tools into language instruction.

Keywords: *Multimedia, Vocabulary Learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, multimedia has emerged as a transformative tool in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, significantly impacting how vocabulary is taught and acquired. The integration of multimedia technologies—ranging from audio-visual aids to interactive applications—has revolutionized traditional pedagogical practices, fostering greater motivation and engagement among learners. This paper explores the critical role multimedia plays in stimulating EFL learners' interest in vocabulary acquisition, highlighting its benefits, theoretical underpinnings, and practical implications. The use of multimedia in EFL instruction is underpinned by several learning theories, particularly the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) by Mayer, which emphasizes the integration of

verbal and visual modalities to enhance cognitive processing. According to this theory, presenting information through dual channels—textual and pictorial—facilitates meaningful learning, as it reduces cognitive overload and aids in the retention and retrieval of vocabulary. Furthermore, Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that comprehensible input, when combined with contextual cues such as images and videos, becomes more accessible and engaging for learners. Multimedia tools inherently provide such contextualized input, enabling learners to associate new words with their meanings in real-world contexts.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

There are few studies that have proved that vocabulary instruction through TED TALK has strongly positive impacts. Comas-Quinn and Gutiérrez (2019) pointed out that TED TALK possesses dual advantages that render them a valuable learning resource: (1) adhering to the traditional translate-review-approve system, involving two feedback rounds from experienced volunteers. (2) offering extensive support resources, including online video tutorials, subtitle instructions, a wiki compiling various translation sources, and language coordinators for volunteers. Therefore, it is crucial to delve into the impact that watching TED TALK has on enhancing vocabulary acquisition. Examining the positive outcomes of incorporating TED TALK into language learning strategies will contribute valuable insights to the field of education.

1.2. Research Question

1. To what extent does audiovisual input provided by TED TALK videos followed by listening and reading skills have different impacts on the vocabulary learning of EFL college students?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using instructional subtitled videos in vocabulary learning for EFL college students?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Video Teaching and English Learning

Several decades ago, individuals primarily relied on traditional resources such as textbooks, newspapers, and magazines—rich in text—to learn English. However, the advent of digital technology has significantly altered this paradigm. Contemporary learners are extensively engaged with 3C products (computers, communication, and consumer electronics), making it increasingly difficult for them to sustain focus on lengthy textual materials for extended periods. Simultaneously, the pervasive presence of video content in daily life has reshaped how people consume information, as videos now occupy a substantial portion of individuals' time and attention (Metruk, 2018). This shift has led to the growing prominence of multimedia as a primary tool for acquiring English proficiency, effectively replacing traditional methods of instruction.

Aidinlou and Moradinejad (2016) emphasized the importance of incorporating authentic videos into language instruction to maximize learners' exposure to genuine language use. Authentic video materials, such as TV shows, movies, and soap operas, serve as valuable resources for enhancing listening comprehension and refining speaking skills. These materials provide learners with opportunities to engage in active repetition, improving pronunciation and accent. According to Metruk (2018), oral communication proficiency in any language hinges on one's ability to comprehend spoken language accurately, a skill critical for capturing nuances and subtleties that contribute to effective

communication. By engaging with authentic audiovisual content, learners not only strengthen their listening and speaking abilities but also build a robust foundation for overall English proficiency.

Sitcoms, in particular, have been highlighted as highly effective resources for language development due to their explicit, engaging, and culturally rich content (Aidinlou & Moradinejad, 2016). These audiovisual materials allow learners to immerse themselves in the cultural and social context of the target language, fostering deeper motivation and enhancing the learning experience.

The contextual richness of audiovisual input also plays a pivotal role in vocabulary acquisition. Rashtchi et al. (2021) observed that learners can infer the meanings of unfamiliar words within the contextual framework of video content, making vocabulary learning more effective. Moreover, the ability to pause, review, and replay videos offers learners a unique advantage, enabling them to reinforce content and process language input at their own pace (Karunakar, 2019). Consequently, the results derived from using audiovisual materials surpass those achieved through traditional textbooks, highlighting the transformative impact of multimedia in contemporary English learning.

2.2. Implementation of TED Talks' Integration into English Teaching

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners now have access to various avenues for acquiring information in English, including video content from platforms like TED Talks and YouTube. Among these, TED Talks hold a distinct advantage due to their provision of accurate subtitles and comprehensive transcriptions for each video, which sets them apart as a superior educational tool (María et al., 2018). Since their inception in 1984, TED Talks—focusing on Technology, Entertainment, and Design—have delivered concise and impactful presentations designed to inform, engage, and inspire audiences (Salem, 2019).

One of the notable advantages of TED Talks, as highlighted by Karunakar (2019), is their brevity, with most talks lasting less than 20 minutes. This concise format makes them an ideal resource for classroom integration, enabling learners to process information effectively without feeling overwhelmed. Furthermore, TED Talks are renowned for their rich and easily comprehensible content. The availability of multilingual transcripts further enhances their accessibility, allowing learners to follow the spoken content while improving their listening and reading skills. Salem (2019) emphasizes that TED Talks cover a broad range of topics, including business, science, and global issues, often employing professional vocabulary that is particularly beneficial for learners pursuing specific fields of study or work. Additionally, the integration of TED Talks into classroom discussions catalyzes for critical thinking and meaningful engagement. By introducing thought-provoking ideas, educators can foster dynamic debates and discussions that encourage learners to ask insightful questions and explore diverse perspectives, thereby creating an intellectually stimulating environment (Salem, 2019).

Incorporating TED Talks into pedagogical practices also aligns with task-based instructional approaches. According to García-Pinar (2019), simulating authenticity by using real-life tasks enhances students' focus and engagement. TED Talks, as authentic materials, expose learners to genuine language use while familiarizing them with cultural nuances and communicative subtleties. This approach bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world language application, fostering a deeper connection with the target language. García-Pinar (2019) further asserts that such resources motivate students to invest greater time and effort in language acquisition, reinforcing their commitment to

mastering English. In conclusion, the integration of TED Talks into EFL instruction offers learners a dynamic, authentic, and enriching experience. Their versatility, brevity, and professional content make them an indispensable tool for fostering linguistic proficiency and critical thinking.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of enhancing vocabulary acquisition by integration of TED Talk videos with subtitles. The research design was structured into four primary components: (1) participant selection, (2) description of the research instruments, (3) overview of the methodology, and (4) data analysis and interpretation.

The study's participants comprised a sample of 423 undergraduate students enrolled at National Pingtung University, aged between 18 and 22 years. The research sought to evaluate the potential correlation between engaging with TED Talk videos accompanied by English subtitles and the improvement of vocabulary acquisition. To achieve this, the study employed a combination of a pre-test, a post-test, and a preference questionnaire as the primary instruments. Additionally, six TED Talk videos, each lasting approximately three minutes, were utilized. The selected videos covered various topics, including personal privacy, the pursuit of success, and the role of whistleblowers, all presented with English subtitles.

These videos were shown in the classroom setting following the administration of the pre-test. Upon viewing the TED Talk clips, participants completed the post-test to measure vocabulary acquisition and a preference questionnaire to assess their perceptions and engagement with the intervention.

3.1. Pre-test & Posttest

The primary aim of the pre-test was to assess participants' baseline vocabulary proficiency prior to the integration of TED Talk videos into the instructional framework. The pre-test consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions designed to evaluate students' ability to define unfamiliar terms drawn from the vocabulary featured in the subtitled TED Talk videos. Participants were allotted 30 minutes to complete the test, during which they were required to identify the most appropriate word for each question. Conversely, the post-test was developed to measure the extent of vocabulary acquisition following exposure to the TED Talk videos. The post-test mirrored the format of the pre-test, comprising the same 50 multiple-choice questions, albeit presented in a restructured sequence to minimize recall bias. Participants were again provided with a 30-minute timeframe to select the correct responses, ensuring consistency in testing conditions between the pre- and post-test administrations.

4. RESULTS

This research aimed to examine the impact of TED Talk videos, accompanied by English subtitles, on vocabulary acquisition among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. The study was guided by two primary research questions. The first research question explored the effect of TED Talk videos with subtitles on the listening and reading proficiency of EFL college students, with a specific focus on their ability to comprehend and interpret vocabulary meanings. The second research question investigated the advantages and challenges associated with the use of TED Talk videos with subtitles as a tool for vocabulary acquisition in EFL college students.

4.1. Findings for Research Questions

Research Question One:

To what extent does audiovisual input provided by TED TALK videos followed by listening and reading skills have different impacts on the vocabulary learning of EFL college students?

Table1. *Participants’ Test Results of Pre-test and Posttest (N=423)*

Score of Pre-test	Score of Posttest
Mean	Mean
42.13	77.64

The first research question sought to evaluate the impact of TED Talk videos with subtitles on EFL college students’ listening and reading skills, specifically in the context of vocabulary acquisition. Table 1 presents the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test for the full sample of 423 EFL students. The mean pre-test score was 42.13, whereas the mean post-test score increased significantly to 77.64, reflecting a percentage improvement of 45.74%.

These results indicate a substantial enhancement in vocabulary knowledge among EFL students following exposure to subtitled TED Talk videos. Accordingly, the findings demonstrate that TED Talk videos with subtitles significantly improved the vocabulary acquisition and comprehension abilities of EFL college students in both listening and reading domains.

Research Question Two:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using instructional subtitled videos in vocabulary learning for EFL college students?

Table2. *Participants’ Responses on Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning with Subtitled Videos (N=423)*

	Whole participants
Item	Mean
Question 1	2.31
Question 2	4.01
Question 3	3.81
Question 4	3.21
Question 5	4.14
Question 6	4.35
Question 7	3.79
Question 8	4.34

The second research question aimed to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using subtitled videos for vocabulary acquisition among EFL college students. Table 2 summarized the perceived benefits and challenges associated with this instructional approach. The findings revealed that the advantages of learning new vocabulary through subtitled videos significantly outweighed the drawbacks. Among the survey items, Questions 6 and 8 recorded the highest mean scores, highlighting that most participants viewed subtitled videos as creating a supportive and anxiety-reducing environment for learning unfamiliar words. Conversely, Questions 1 and 4 recorded the lowest mean scores, indicating that the majority of participants did not perceive subtitled videos as presenting significant barriers to vocabulary acquisition.

Overall, the results suggest that the use of subtitled videos in EFL contexts was regarded more positively

than negatively, with students perceiving this approach as a valuable tool for enhancing vocabulary learning.

Table3. The Number and Percentage of Whole Participants' Responses on Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning with Subtitled Videos (N=423)

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N*	%**	N*	%**	N*	%**	N*	%**	N*	%**
Question 1	16	3.78	47	11.11	108	25.53	134	31.68	118	27.90
Question 2	148	34.99	174	41.13	67	15.84	24	5.67	10	2.36
Question 3	130	30.73	137	32.39	112	26.48	32	7.57	12	2.84
Question 4	32	7.57	150	35.46	137	32.39	82	19.39	22	5.20
Question 5	181	42.79	147	34.75	73	17.26	18	4.26	4	0.95
Question 6	225	53.19	141	33.33	43	10.17	8	1.89	6	1.42
Question 7	131	30.97	131	30.97	117	27.66	30	7.09	14	3.31
Question 8	228	53.90	126	29.79	55	13.0	11	2.60	3	0.71

Note. *Number. **Percentage.

Table 3 presented the distribution of responses, including frequencies and percentages, for all participants across survey questions 1 to 8. Questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8, which addressed the positive impacts of subtitled videos, predominantly fell within the "strongly agree," "agree," and "neutral" response categories. In contrast, Questions 1 and 4, which focused on potential negative influences, were more frequently rated as "disagree" or "strongly disagree." These findings indicate that the use of subtitled videos for vocabulary acquisition was perceived as significantly more beneficial than harmful by EFL college students. This reinforces the conclusion that subtitled videos serve as an effective and favorable tool for enhancing vocabulary learning in this context.

5. DISCUSSION

Research Question One:

To what extent does audiovisual input provided by TED TALK videos followed by listening and reading skills have different impacts on the vocabulary learning of EFL college students?

Table4. Participants' Test Results and Growth of Pre-test and Posttest (N=423)

Pre-test	Posttest	Growth
Mean		
42.13	77.64	45.74%

Table 4 demonstrated the score of vocabulary tests before and after the implementation of TED TALK subtitled videos in EFL courses. Based on the outcomes, the scores of the means of pre-test and posttest were 42.13 and 77.64 respectively. Furthermore, the mean of the score of the posttest was 45.74% higher than pretest. Considering the information mentioned earlier, TED TALK videos played a crucial role in enhancing the listening and reading skills of EFL college students, thereby improving their comprehension and understanding of new words in English.

Research Question Two:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using instructional subtitled videos in vocabulary learning for EFL college students?

Table5. *The Rank of EFL Students’ Responses on Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning with Subtitled Videos (N=423)*

Rank	Item	Statement	Mean
1	Question 6	Watching TED TALK videos with subtitles reduce my anxiety to learn vocabulary.	4.35
2	Question 8	TED TALK videos with subtitles provide a comfortable atmosphere to vocabulary learning.	4.34
3	Question 5	Watching TED TALK videos with subtitles motivates me to acquire new words.	4.14
4	Question 2	Subtitles on the screen reduce my power of concentration.	4.01
5	Question 3	Watching TED TALK videos with subtitles makes me understand the lesson better.	3.81
6	Question 7	Authentic videos help me comprehend the meanings of new words better.	3.79
7	Question 4	Watching TED TALK videos with subtitles makes me neglect the key point of learning.	3.21
8	Question 1	Subtitles on the screen increase my power of concentration.	2.31

Table 5 showed the rank of EFL college students’ responses on positive and negative impacts on vocabulary learning with subtitled videos. According to the result, the positive influences were ranked as the top, and the negative impacts were ranked as the last. Consequently, subtitled videos offered significantly more benefits than drawbacks in vocabulary learning, aiding EFL college students in enhancing their English proficiency.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary of Findings

The findings of this study revealed a significant improvement in the vocabulary knowledge of EFL college students, as evidenced by the higher average posttest scores compared to the pretest. The integration of six TED Talk subtitled videos, aligned with EFL course topics, into the curriculum yielded a marked enhancement in students’ vocabulary acquisition. This improvement was particularly evident in the listening and reading components, where subtitled videos facilitated the comprehension and retention of new vocabulary. Rashtchi et al. (2021) highlighted that subtitled videos serve as an effective strategy for vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners, enabling them to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words through contextual cues. Moreover, their study emphasized that the simultaneous integration of visual and auditory elements in videos provides a robust audiovisual input, effectively capturing learners’ attention and supporting the process of deducing word meanings. Accordingly, the findings addressing the first research question confirmed significant gains in students’ listening and reading skills related to vocabulary learning following their exposure to subtitled TED Talk videos.

An analysis of students’ feedback regarding the advantages and disadvantages of using subtitled videos

further underscored their pedagogical value. Over 60% of participants expressed positive perceptions, with responses categorized under "Strongly Agree" and "Agree," particularly regarding the creation of a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment for vocabulary development. Conversely, responses to questions concerning the drawbacks of subtitled videos predominantly fell under "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree," indicating minimal perceived disadvantages. These findings align with Aloqaili's (2014) assertion that subtitled videos are not only effective tools for vocabulary acquisition but also engaging learning aids that foster positive learner attitudes. Aloqaili's research further established that subtitled videos serve dual functions: they act as facilitators of learning while simultaneously entertaining learners, thereby creating an appealing and motivational learning experience.

Overall, the benefits of incorporating subtitled videos in vocabulary instruction far outweighed any perceived limitations. This study highlights the role of subtitled TED Talk videos as a dynamic and impactful resource for enhancing vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts. Their dual audiovisual input, contextual richness, and ability to create a positive and engaging learning atmosphere contribute to their effectiveness, positioning them as a valuable tool in modern EFL pedagogy. The findings reaffirm the utility of subtitled videos in improving learners' linguistic skills, promoting both comprehension and retention while fostering a favorable attitude toward language learning.

6.2. Pedagogical Implication

This study was conducted in alignment with the Ministry of Education's policy on bilingual education for higher education institutions, which mandates the establishment of bilingual instructional environments across universities and colleges in Taiwan. A core component of this policy is the requirement for instructors from diverse academic disciplines to employ English as the medium of instruction in a wide range of courses. This initiative is designed to enhance students' English language proficiency, a key objective of bilingual education at the tertiary level.

Given the extensive body of research underscoring the pivotal role of vocabulary in second language acquisition, it is imperative that instructors prioritize vocabulary development in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. To facilitate this, integrating audiovisual aids, such as subtitled videos, into teaching practices can provide students with an immersive and engaging learning experience. Audiovisual materials create a more relaxed and stimulating environment that promotes active learning. Subtitles serve as a critical tool in this context, enabling students to comprehend content more rapidly while acquiring essential vocabulary.

Among available audiovisual resources, TED Talk videos with subtitles stand out as a highly effective medium. These videos, presented by expert speakers on a wide range of topics, provide precise contextual usage of vocabulary, thereby facilitating deeper comprehension and retention. The integration of subtitled TED Talks into EFL courses allows instructors to tailor content to align with curricular objectives, thereby optimizing learning outcomes and enhancing student motivation. In such an environment, students can acquire vocabulary not only in its most accurate contextual framework but also within a broader knowledge base that fosters intellectual engagement.

Instructors can further encourage students to document unfamiliar vocabulary encountered in the videos to reinforce learning and improve retention. This active learning strategy complements the use of TED

Talk videos, enabling learners to develop a more robust and practical command of English vocabulary. The incorporation of subtitled TED Talk videos into vocabulary acquisition strategies represents a pedagogically sound and efficient method to enhance EFL instruction. By fostering an engaging and context-rich learning environment, this approach not only aligns with institutional bilingual education policies but also contributes to the development of students' linguistic and cognitive competencies, ensuring optimal learning outcomes in higher education settings.

6.3. Limitations

The study on the integration of TED Talks in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, while offering valuable insights into their pedagogical advantages, is not without limitations. These limitations merit consideration to contextualize the findings and guide future research.

The study may have been conducted with specific EFL learner populations, such as university students or professionals, which could limit the applicability of the findings to other groups, such as younger learners, beginners, or those in informal learning contexts. Differences in learner demographics, proficiency levels, and learning environments can influence the outcomes of using TED Talks. While TED Talks are suggested to enhance intrinsic motivation, the study may not sufficiently account for variations in individual learners' motivation and ability to engage autonomously with the material. Learners with low motivation or limited self-regulatory skills might not derive the same benefits from TED Talks compared to highly motivated individuals.

The assumption of ubiquitous access to the internet and familiarity with digital tools may not hold universally. Learners in regions with limited technological infrastructure or insufficient digital literacy might face barriers in accessing and utilizing TED Talks effectively, potentially limiting the general applicability of the study's recommendations.

While TED Talks are effective for developing listening and reading comprehension, the study might not address their limitations in fostering productive skills, such as speaking and writing, unless accompanied by complementary pedagogical strategies. The passive nature of watching TED Talks does not inherently facilitate active language production. TED Talks, despite their thematic diversity, may not always align with the cultural backgrounds, interests, or immediate needs of certain learner groups. The study may overlook how cultural disconnects or topic irrelevance could impact learners' engagement and comprehension.

The availability of accurate subtitles and transcripts, while advantageous, may inadvertently lead to over-reliance by learners, potentially hindering the development of natural listening skills. The study may not sufficiently address this potential drawback or propose strategies to mitigate it. The study may lack robust, longitudinal data to measure the long-term impact of TED Talks on learners' language proficiency and critical thinking skills. The reliance on short-term or subjective assessments could limit the depth of the findings. Addressing these limitations in future research could provide a more nuanced understanding of how TED Talks contribute to EFL pedagogy and identify strategies to maximize their effectiveness across diverse learner populations and contexts.

6.4. Suggestions for the Future Studies

Future research on the integration of TED Talks in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction

could explore several promising avenues to optimize their pedagogical potential. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine the long-term effects of TED Talks on learners' overall language proficiency, including speaking, writing, and critical thinking, using mixed-method approaches to assess both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Comparative research could evaluate the effectiveness of TED Talks relative to other multimedia resources, such as YouTube or podcasts, in fostering specific language skills like listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, studies could investigate how cultural relevance and topic familiarity influence learners' engagement and comprehension, focusing on preferences for themes or speakers and their impact on motivation and retention. Research could also explore methods for integrating TED Talks into activities that promote productive skills, such as speaking and writing, through tasks like debates, presentations, or essay writing.

Another avenue involves assessing the adaptability of TED Talks for learners by examining simplified content, shorter clips, or animated versions, providing insights into their suitability for learners at lower proficiency or developmental levels. Teacher-focused studies could explore educators' experiences and challenges in incorporating TED Talks into instruction, including the effectiveness of teacher training programs to optimize their pedagogical use. Further, research on multimodal learning could analyze how elements such as visuals, speech, and subtitles interact to influence cognitive processing and retention, identifying the most effective combinations for diverse learner groups. Addressing technological accessibility and equity is another critical area, with studies examining barriers faced by under-resourced learners and proposing scalable or offline alternatives.

Moreover, research could evaluate the development of customized TED Talk playlists tailored to specific EFL proficiency levels, academic disciplines, or professional goals. Finally, investigating the role of TED Talks in fostering intercultural awareness and competence would provide valuable insights into how exposure to diverse speakers, accents, and global topics enhances learners' appreciation of cultural diversity. By addressing these areas, future studies can provide a more nuanced understanding of the pedagogical value of TED Talks, leading to more effective, inclusive, and innovative EFL teaching practices.

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