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English Subtitle Viewing Tasks in EFL Listening Instruction: Changes in Listening Comprehension and Students' Learning Perception

Destina Kasriyati[1*], Refika Andriani[2], Herdi[3], Wulandari Simbolon[4]

[1]English Department,Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, Indonesia
destina@unilak.ac.id
[2]English Department,Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, Indonesia
refikaandriani@unilak,ac.id
[3]English Department,Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, Indonesia
herdi@unilak.ac.id
[4]English Department,Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, Indonesia
wulandarisimbolon@unilak.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Listening comprehension remains one of the most challenging skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly in higher education where students are expected to comprehend authentic spoken English. Although previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of subtitles for language learning, limited research has examined English subtitle viewing tasks as structured classroom activities while simultaneously investigating students' listening achievement and learning perceptions. This study therefore aimed to examine the effect of English subtitle viewing tasks on students' listening comprehension and to explore their perceptions of the instructional approach. A quantitative pre-experimental study employing a one-group pretest-posttest design was conducted with 24 third-semester undergraduate students in an English Education program at a private university in Indonesia. Data were collected using a listening comprehension test and a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics, a paired-samples t-test, and normalized gain (N-Gain) analysis. The findings revealed a statistically significant improvement in students' listening comprehension, with the mean score increasing from 77.54 to 84.29 ($t = 12.597$, $p < .001$), while the mean N-Gain score (0.308) indicated a moderate level of learning improvement. Students also reported highly positive perceptions of the instructional approach, with an overall mean score of 3.82 across five measured dimensions. These findings suggest that English subtitle viewing tasks provide meaningful support for listening comprehension while fostering positive learning experiences. The study offers empirical evidence for the effective integration of subtitle-assisted learning into university EFL listening instruction.

KEYWORDS
English subtitle viewing tasks; listening comprehension; subtitle assisted learning;students' perception; EFL higher education

ABSTRAK

Kemampuan menyimak (listening comprehension) masih menjadi salah satu keterampilan yang paling menantang bagi pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL), khususnya di pendidikan tinggi yang menuntut mahasiswa memahami bahasa Inggris autentik. Meskipun berbagai penelitian telah menunjukkan manfaat penggunaan subtitle dalam pembelajaran bahasa, penelitian mengenai penerapan English subtitle viewing tasks sebagai kegiatan

KATA KUNCI
Tugas teks terjemahan Bahasa Inggris; kemampuan menyimak; pembelajaran berbantuan penerjemahan;

pembelajaran yang terstruktur sekaligus mengkaji hasil belajar dan persepsi mahasiswa masih terbatas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh English subtitle viewing tasks terhadap kemampuan menyimak mahasiswa serta mengeksplorasi persepsi mereka terhadap pendekatan pembelajaran tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain one-group pretest-posttest yang melibatkan 24 mahasiswa semester tiga Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di salah satu universitas swasta di Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes kemampuan menyimak dan angket skala Likert empat poin, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji paired-samples t-test, dan analisis normalized gain (N-Gain). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan pada kemampuan menyimak mahasiswa, dengan nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 77,54 pada pretest menjadi 84,29 pada posttest ($t = 12,597$; $p < 0,001$), sedangkan skor rata-rata N-Gain sebesar 0,308 menunjukkan peningkatan pada kategori sedang. Mahasiswa juga menunjukkan persepsi yang sangat positif terhadap pendekatan pembelajaran tersebut dengan nilai rata-rata keseluruhan sebesar 3.82 pada lima dimensi yang diukur. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa English subtitle viewing tasks memberikan dukungan yang bermakna terhadap kemampuan menyimak sekaligus menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang positif. Penelitian ini memberikan bukti empiris mengenai integrasi pembelajaran berbantuan subtitle sebagai pendekatan yang efektif dalam pembelajaran menyimak EFL di perguruan tinggi.

persepsi pembelajar; EFL pada pendidikan tinggi

***Corresponding Author:**
Destina Kasriyati
Department of English Education
Universitas Lacang Kuning, Pekanbaru, Indonesia
destina@unilak.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is widely recognized as one of the most essential skills in English language learning because it provides learners with the linguistic input needed to acquire vocabulary, construct meaning, and develop communicative competence (Rost, 2024). For students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), listening serves as the foundation for developing other language skills, particularly speaking, as meaningful spoken input enables learners to internalize pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and language use before producing the language themselves. In higher education, listening competence becomes increasingly important because university students are expected to comprehend lectures, participate in academic discussions, collaborate in classroom activities, and access a wide range of English-language learning resources. Consequently, the ability to understand spoken English is not only a linguistic requirement but also an essential component of academic achievement and future professional communication.

Despite its importance, listening remains a challenging skill for many Indonesian EFL learners. Previous research in the Indonesian higher education context has also highlighted challenges in students' listening performance. Kasriyati et al., (2022), for example, examined

students' ability in an interpretive listening course and reported that students experienced difficulties in understanding listening materials during online learning. This finding highlights the need for appropriate instructional support to facilitate students' comprehension of spoken English. Listening requires learners to process spoken language in real time while simultaneously recognizing pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and contextual meaning. Research involving Indonesian university students has reported difficulties related to unfamiliar expressions, speech processing, limited vocabulary, and insufficient opportunities to engage with authentic spoken English (Wahyuningsih & Salsabila, 2023). More recent research also indicates that technological features such as captions can support learners when processing authentic audiovisual input, particularly when speech rate and linguistic complexity increase (Almusharraf et al., 2024). These challenges suggest that listening instruction requires not only appropriate materials but also carefully structured activities that guide learners in processing spoken input actively and strategically.

The development of educational technology has expanded opportunities for integrating audiovisual input into language learning. Within this context, subtitles and captions can provide learners with simultaneous access to spoken and written forms of language. Research on audiovisual input suggests that on-screen text can support comprehension by helping learners establish connections between auditory information and linguistic form (Perez et al., 2013). From the perspective of the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, learners process information through verbal and visual channels, and appropriately designed multimedia materials can facilitate meaningful integration between these sources of information (Perez et al., 2013). However, the availability of written text does not automatically guarantee better learning. The instructional value of subtitles depends on how they are designed and incorporated into learning activities, particularly because excessive dependence on textual information may increase processing demands or reduce opportunities for independent listening. Recent research has therefore increasingly examined subtitle conditions, cognitive load, speech rate, and learners' proficiency as factors influencing the usefulness of captions and subtitles (Almusharraf et al., 2024; Baranowska, 2020)

Previous research has consistently demonstrated the pedagogical value of subtitle-assisted learning across different EFL contexts. A substantial body of evidence indicates that subtitles facilitate listening comprehension by helping learners recognize spoken words, connect pronunciation with written forms, and interpret meaning more accurately while engaging with authentic audiovisual materials. Previous research has consistently demonstrated the pedagogical value of audiovisual materials in EFL listening instruction. Kasriyati, (2019), for example, reported improvement in students' listening performance following the use of video-based learning materials in an English listening course. Garza (1991) reported that subtitles enabled learners to process authentic spoken language more effectively by strengthening the relationship between auditory and textual input. Similarly, Danan (2004) argued that subtitle-assisted viewing provides comprehensible input that promotes vocabulary recognition and supports listening development through simultaneous exposure to spoken and written language. A meta-analysis conducted by Perez et al., (2013) further confirmed that captioned videos generally produce positive effects on listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, although the magnitude of these effects varies according to learners' proficiency levels, instructional design, and assessment characteristics.

Recent empirical evidence continues to support the value of captioned audiovisual input while also showing that its benefits depend on learning conditions. For example, Yu et al. (2022) found that captioned videos supported listening comprehension and vocabulary learning among EFL university students, while Li et al. (2024) reported that captions influenced listening comprehension across different playback speeds and proficiency levels. Similarly, Almusharraf et al., (2024) found that captioning was particularly beneficial when learners processed fast-paced spoken input, although the magnitude of the benefit varied according to speech conditions. These findings indicate that subtitles should be understood not simply as an additional feature of audiovisual materials but as a form of instructional support whose value depends on how learners interact with the material.

Within the Indonesian context, Firdausi (2024) demonstrated that the integration of English-subtitled videos into listening instruction significantly enhanced university students' listening comprehension, providing further evidence of the effectiveness of subtitle-assisted learning in EFL classrooms. Beyond measurable gains in listening achievement, subtitle-assisted learning has also been associated with increased learning motivation, greater confidence, and stronger classroom engagement because learners feel more capable of understanding authentic English input (Mitterer & McQueen, 2009; Vanderplank, 2016). Collectively, these findings indicate that subtitles provide both cognitive and affective support, making them a promising instructional resource for improving listening instruction in EFL classrooms.

Despite the growing evidence supporting captioned and subtitled audiovisual materials, an important instructional gap remains. Much of the existing literature has examined subtitles primarily as an audiovisual feature and has focused on their contribution to listening comprehension, vocabulary learning, or general language development. Comparatively less attention has been given to English subtitle viewing as a structured classroom task in which subtitles are deliberately integrated into a sequence of pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities. This distinction is important because the pedagogical value of subtitles may depend not only on whether written text is available but also on how learners are guided to use that support during listening. In addition, relatively limited empirical evidence has examined learning outcomes and students' perceptions within the same structured instructional intervention, particularly among university-level EFL learners in Indonesia. Recent studies have confirmed the usefulness of subtitles under different conditions, including caption type, speech rate, and learner proficiency (Almusharraf et al., 2024), but these studies do not specifically address the implementation of English subtitle viewing as a structured classroom task in an Indonesian university listening course. Therefore, a context-specific investigation is needed to examine both changes in listening performance and students' perceptions when English subtitles are systematically embedded within classroom listening activities.

Against this background, the present study examines the implementation of structured English subtitle viewing tasks in a university EFL listening course. Rather than treating subtitles merely as supplementary audiovisual support, the study positions English subtitles within a sequence of classroom listening activities designed to guide students before, during, and after exposure to audiovisual input. The study examines two related dimensions: changes in students' listening comprehension from pretest to posttest and students' perceptions of the instructional experience. This focus distinguishes the present study from research that primarily investigates subtitle exposure as a treatment condition or examines learning

outcomes without considering students' perceptions. The study therefore seeks to contribute context-specific empirical evidence on how structured subtitle-assisted listening activities can be implemented in Indonesian higher education. Given the pre-experimental design, the study interprets the results as changes observed following the intervention rather than definitive evidence of causal effectiveness. This study addressed the following research questions: To what extent did students' listening comprehension scores change following the implementation of structured English subtitle viewing tasks? What were students' perceptions of the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks in university EFL listening instruction?

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental approach using a one-group pretest-posttest design. The design was selected to examine changes in students' listening comprehension before and after the implementation of structured English subtitle viewing tasks within a natural classroom setting. The study was conducted from November 2025 to May 2026 in the English Education Department at a private university in Indonesia. Because the study did not include a control group, the design does not permit definitive attribution of observed changes solely to the instructional treatment. Accordingly, the statistical results are interpreted as evidence of changes following the intervention rather than as conclusive evidence of causal effectiveness.

The participants of this study were 24 third-semester undergraduate students enrolled in a Critical Listening course during the 2025/2026 academic year. This class was an intact group that had been naturally formed through the institution's academic scheduling, and a total sampling technique was employed, allowing all students in the class to participate in the study. The selection of this class was based on the consideration that these students had previously completed a foundational Listening course in the first semester; however, their listening performance in this prerequisite course remained relatively low. This condition motivated the researcher to conduct the study within this specific group, as it represented a naturally occurring instructional context in which the problem under investigation was clearly evident. The class consisted of 3 male and 21 female students, aged 18-20 approximately years. The students' proficiency level was classified as B1–B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), determined based on their final scores in the first-semester Listening course.

Two instruments were employed to collect the data. The first was a listening comprehension test administered as both a pretest and a post-test. The test consisted of 25 multiple-choice items developed from TOEFL listening materials at the B1-B2 proficiency level. Equivalent forms were used for the pretest and post-test to maintain comparable levels of difficulty while minimizing potential testing effects. The instrument was reviewed through expert judgment conducted by a lecturer with expertise in listening instruction, and its reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha. The second instrument was a student perception questionnaire employing a four-point Likert scale to explore students' responses to the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks. The questionnaire measured five aspects of the learning experience: instructional effectiveness, learning motivation, perceived improvement in listening skills, classroom engagement, and students' attitudes toward subtitle-assisted learning.

The research procedure was carried out in three sequential stages. At the beginning of the study, all participants completed the pretest to determine their initial listening comprehension. Following the pretest, students participated in listening instruction using English-language videos accompanied by English subtitles as the primary instructional treatment. During these learning activities, students completed listening tasks related to the video content in order to reinforce comprehension and encourage them to associate spoken language with its written form. After the treatment had been completed, the participants took the posttest to measure changes in their listening performance and subsequently completed the perception questionnaire to evaluate their learning experience with subtitle-assisted instruction.

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize students' pretest and post-test performance as well as their responses to the perception questionnaire. Prior to conducting the paired-sample t-test, the normality of the difference scores between the pretest and post-test was examined using the Shapiro-Wilk test, and the results indicated that the difference scores were normally distributed ($W = 0.936$, $p = 0.132$), thus satisfying the assumption required for the paired-sample t-test. A paired-sample t-test was then performed to determine whether the English subtitle viewing tasks produced a statistically significant improvement in listening comprehension, and Cohen's d was calculated to determine the magnitude of the treatment's effect. In addition, N-gain analysis was employed to further examine the magnitude of students' learning improvement following the instructional treatment. The normalized gain (N-gain) score was calculated using Hake's (1998) formula, and the resulting scores were categorized into three levels: high ($g \geq 0.70$), moderate ($0.30 \leq g < 0.70$), and low ($g < 0.30$). Responses to the perception questionnaire were analyzed using mean scores to describe students' overall perceptions of the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks. It should be noted that this study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design without a control group; therefore, the observed improvement in listening comprehension cannot be solely attributed to the instructional treatment, as other factors such as maturation or testing effects may have contributed to the results. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as indicating a positive change associated with the treatment rather than establishing a definitive causal effect.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings obtained from the quantitative analyses and discusses their significance in relation to previous studies and relevant theoretical perspectives. The findings are organized into two main parts corresponding to the research objectives. The first examines the effect of English subtitle viewing tasks on students' listening comprehension, while the second presents students' perceptions of the implementation of subtitle-assisted learning. The discussion further synthesizes these findings to explain their pedagogical implications and contribution to English language teaching.

Findings

Changes in Students' Listening Comprehension Following English Subtitle Viewing Tasks

To address the first research objective, this section examines the effect of English subtitle viewing tasks on students' listening comprehension by comparing students'

performance before and after the instructional intervention. Three statistical analyses were conducted to examine changes students' listening comprehension following the instructional intervention. First, descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview of students' performance in the pretest and posttest. Second, a paired-samples *t*-test was performed to determine whether the observed difference between the two assessments was statistically significant. Finally, a normalized gain (N-Gain) analysis was employed to examine the magnitude of students' learning improvement. Collectively, these analyses provide complementary evidence regarding the magnitude and statistical significance of the observed changes in students' listening comprehension.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Paired-Samples t-Test Results

Assessment	N	Mean	Mean Difference	*t*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	24	77.54			
Post-test	24	84.29	**6.75**	**12.597**	**0.000**

An initial comparison of the descriptive statistics reveals a clear improvement in students' listening comprehension following the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks. As presented in Table 1, the mean pretest score of 77.54 increased to 84.29 on the posttest, representing an average gain of 6.75 points. This pattern indicates that students demonstrated stronger listening performance after participating in the subtitle-assisted learning activities than they had prior to the instructional treatment. The increase in the mean score provides an initial indication that students were able to perform more successfully on the listening assessment administered at the end of the intervention.

Although descriptive statistics illustrate the direction of change, they do not indicate whether the observed improvement is statistically meaningful. Therefore, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare students' pretest and posttest scores. The analysis yielded a t value of 12.597 with a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the accepted significance level of 0.05. These findings demonstrate that the difference between students' pretest and posttest scores was statistically significant. The statistical analysis therefore supports the conclusion that students' listening comprehension improved following the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks.

While the paired-samples t-test confirms that a significant difference existed between the two assessments, statistical significance alone does not indicate the extent of students' learning improvement. Consequently, a normalized gain (N-Gain) analysis was performed to evaluate the magnitude of learning gains achieved by individual participants throughout the instructional intervention.

Table 2. Results of the Normalized Gain (N-Gain) Analysis

Indicator	Result
Mean N-Gain	0.308
Gain Category	Moderate
Moderate Improvement	10 students (41.67%)
Low Improvement	14 students (58.33%)
High Improvement	0 students (0.00%)
Highest N-Gain	0.688 (Student E-18)
Lowest N-Gain	0.091 (Student E-12)

The results of the N-Gain analysis indicate that the overall mean gain score was 0.308, the observed learning gain within the moderate category. This finding indicates a moderate level of learning improvement following the instructional intervention. However, the distribution of the gain scores demonstrates that the degree of improvement varied among individuals. Of the 24 students included in the study, 10 students (41.67%) achieved a moderate level of improvement, whereas 14 students (58.33%) were classified in the low improvement category. None of the participants reached the high N-Gain category.

Individual N-Gain scores also showed noticeable variation. The highest gain score recorded in the study was 0.688, obtained by Student E-18, while the lowest was 0.091, recorded by Student E-12. Despite these differences in the magnitude of learning gains, the overall pattern of results indicates that students consistently demonstrated better listening performance after completing the subtitle-assisted learning activities than they had before the intervention. These findings indicate that all participants showed some degree of improvement in their posttest performance, although the magnitude of improvement varied across students.

Taken together, the descriptive statistics, inferential analysis, and N-Gain results provide consistent evidence regarding the first research objective of the study. The descriptive analysis demonstrates an increase in students' listening scores following the instructional treatment, the paired-samples t-test confirms that the observed improvement was statistically significant, and the N-Gain analysis indicates that the overall level of learning improvement was moderate. Rather than relying on a single statistical indicator, these complementary analyses provide a more comprehensive picture of students' learning outcomes. The descriptive statistics illustrate the direction of change, the inferential analysis establishes the statistical significance of that change, and the N-Gain analysis evaluates its magnitude. Collectively, these findings indicate that English subtitle viewing tasks contributed positively to students' listening comprehension and provide the empirical basis for the discussion presented in the following section.

Students' Perceptions of English Subtitle Viewing Tasks

To address the second research objective, students' perceptions toward the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks were examined using a structured questionnaire administered after the instructional intervention. The questionnaire measured five dimensions of students' learning experiences, including instructional effectiveness, learning motivation and interest, listening skill development, classroom engagement, and attitudes toward subtitle-assisted learning media. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize students' responses and to provide an overall profile of their perceptions of the instructional intervention. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Perceptions of English Subtitle Viewing Tasks Across Five Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Instructional Effectiveness	3.85	0.32	Very Positive
Learning Motivation and Interest	3.78	0.36	Very Positive
Listening Skill Development	3.91	0.28	Very Positive
Classroom Engagement	3.68	0.41	Positive
Attitudes toward Subtitle-Assisted Learning Media	3.87	0.30	Very Positive
Overall Mean	**3.82**	–	**Very Positive**

Overall, the questionnaire results revealed a consistently positive pattern across all five measured dimensions. Four dimensions were classified within the very positive category, while classroom engagement remained in the positive category. The overall mean score of 3.82 further indicates that students responded favourably to the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks throughout the instructional process. These findings suggest that the integration of subtitle-assisted learning was well accepted by the participants and generated positive responses across different aspects of their classroom experience.

Among the five dimensions, listening skill development received the highest evaluation, with a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 0.28), placing it within the very positive category. This finding indicates that students perceived English subtitle viewing tasks as particularly beneficial for supporting the development of their listening ability. Compared with the other measured aspects, this dimension received the strongest level of agreement, suggesting that students consistently viewed subtitle-assisted learning as a meaningful component of their listening instruction. The high mean score also reflects a shared perception among participants that the instructional activities contributed positively to their listening development throughout the intervention.

A similarly favorable response was observed in students' attitudes toward subtitle-assisted learning media, which achieved the second-highest mean score of 3.87 (SD = 0.30). This result indicates that students held positive attitudes toward the use of English subtitles as part of classroom instruction. The consistently high ratings suggest that participants considered subtitle-assisted media to be an appropriate instructional resource for listening activities and viewed its integration positively within the learning environment. The findings also demonstrate that students generally accepted the use of multimedia-supported instruction during the implementation of the treatment.

The dimension of instructional effectiveness also received a very positive evaluation, with a mean score of 3.85 (SD = 0.32). Students' responses indicate that the instructional procedures implemented throughout the intervention were perceived positively. Likewise, learning motivation and interest obtained a mean score of 3.78 (SD = 0.36), remaining within the very positive category. Although this dimension recorded a slightly lower score than the previous three aspects, the findings nevertheless indicate that students maintained favorable perceptions of the learning activities and responded positively to the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks during listening instruction.

Among all measured dimensions, classroom engagement recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.68, SD = 0.41). Nevertheless, this score still falls within the positive category, indicating that students generally perceived themselves as actively engaged during the learning activities. Although the level of agreement was comparatively lower than that of the other dimensions, the findings suggest that students remained positively involved throughout the instructional process. Importantly, none of the measured dimensions fell into the neutral or negative categories, indicating that students consistently expressed favorable perceptions toward the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks across all aspects evaluated in the questionnaire.

Taken together, the descriptive findings successfully address the second research objective by providing an overall profile of students' perceptions toward the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks. The consistently positive responses observed across the five measured dimensions indicate that students viewed the instructional intervention favorably

from multiple perspectives. While the highest evaluations were associated with listening skill development and attitudes toward subtitle-assisted learning media, positive responses were also evident in instructional effectiveness, learning motivation, and classroom engagement. These findings complement the improvement observed in students' listening comprehension and provide an important descriptive foundation for the discussion presented in the following section.

DISCUSSION

English Subtitle Viewing Tasks and Changes in Listening Comprehension

The findings show a positive change in students' listening comprehension following the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks. Students' mean scores increased from the pretest to the posttest, and the paired-samples t-test indicated that this difference was statistically significant. The moderate N-Gain further suggests that the improvement represented a moderate level of learning gain. However, because the study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design without a control group, the observed improvement cannot be attributed solely to the subtitle viewing tasks. The results are therefore interpreted as evidence of improvement following the instructional intervention rather than as definitive evidence of causal effectiveness.

The observed improvement can be interpreted through complementary perspectives from multimedia learning and second language acquisition. Processing spoken language together with synchronized written text may help learners establish connections between auditory and visual information, thereby supporting comprehension during real-time listening (Mayer, 2002). Similarly, subtitles may increase the comprehensibility of authentic spoken input by helping learners connect pronunciation, vocabulary, and meaning. This interpretation is consistent with the principle of comprehensible input, which suggests that learners benefit when language input is supported in ways that make it more understandable (Krashen, 1985). In this sense, subtitles can be viewed as temporary linguistic support that may assist learners in processing spoken input while maintaining attention to meaning. Nevertheless, these theoretical perspectives explain a plausible mechanism underlying the observed improvement rather than establish that the subtitle viewing tasks caused the improvement.

The observed improvement is broadly consistent with previous research on captioned and subtitled audiovisual input. Garza, (1991) reported that captions could strengthen the relationship between spoken and written language, while Danan (2004) highlighted the potential of captioning and subtitling to support vocabulary recognition and comprehension. Similarly, the meta-analysis by Perez et al., (2013) found generally positive effects of captioned videos on L2 listening and vocabulary learning, although the magnitude of these effects varied according to learner proficiency, instructional design, and assessment characteristics. More recent studies have likewise shown that the benefits of captions may depend on conditions such as speech rate and learner proficiency (Almusharraf et al., 2024; Winke et al., 2010). The present findings are therefore consistent with the broader literature, but they also extend this discussion by examining English subtitles as part of structured classroom listening activities rather than simply as an audiovisual feature. In the Indonesian higher education context, the findings also correspond with Firdausi (2024), who reported improvement in university students' listening comprehension following the use of English-

subtitled videos. However, unlike studies employing comparative designs, the present study cannot determine whether the observed improvement was attributable specifically to the subtitle viewing tasks.

Although the pretest-posttest difference was statistically significant, the moderate N-Gain indicates that the observed improvement was not uniformly large across participants. Listening comprehension involves the simultaneous processing of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical structures, discourse organization, and contextual meaning (Rost, 2024; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Students' progress may therefore be influenced by factors beyond the instructional materials, including prior proficiency, listening strategies, vocabulary knowledge, and exposure to authentic English. The moderate N-Gain is consequently better interpreted as an indication of the extent of improvement observed in this group rather than as a direct measure of instructional effectiveness. This interpretation is also consistent with previous research suggesting that subtitles are most useful when integrated into purposeful learning activities that encourage learners to use written support strategically rather than depend on it throughout the listening process (Vanderplank, 2016; Winke et al., 2010).

Another relevant finding is the consistency between the observed improvement in listening scores and students' generally positive perceptions of the learning experience. The questionnaire results showed positive responses across all five measured dimensions, with listening skill development receiving the highest mean score (M = 3.91), followed by attitudes toward subtitle-assisted learning media (M = 3.87), instructional effectiveness (M = 3.85), learning motivation and interest (M = 3.78), and classroom engagement (M = 3.68). These results suggest that students viewed the subtitle-assisted activities favorably and perceived them as supportive of their listening development. However, the questionnaire did not directly measure constructs such as listening anxiety or self-confidence. Therefore, claims about reduced anxiety or increased confidence should not be treated as direct findings of the present study. The positive responses concerning motivation, interest, and classroom engagement may indicate favorable learning experiences, but further research using instruments specifically designed to measure confidence or anxiety would be needed to substantiate such interpretations.

Students' Perceptions of English Subtitle Viewing Tasks

The questionnaire results indicate that students generally responded positively to the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks. The overall mean score of 3.82 shows that students evaluated the learning experience favorably across the five measured dimensions. The highest mean was found for listening skill development (M = 3.91), followed by attitudes toward subtitle-assisted learning media (M = 3.87), instructional effectiveness (M = 3.85), learning motivation and interest (M = 3.78), and classroom engagement (M = 3.68). These results indicate that students perceived the instructional activities as useful for their listening development and responded positively to the use of English subtitles as part of the learning process. Importantly, these perception data should be interpreted as students' reported experiences rather than as independent evidence of the effectiveness of the intervention.

The favorable responses may be related to the linguistic support provided by English subtitles during listening activities. Authentic spoken English can require learners to process pronunciation, vocabulary, and meaning simultaneously, and written support may provide an additional channel through which learners can connect spoken forms with their meanings

(Danan, 2004; Perez et al., 2013). In the present study, the relatively high ratings for listening skill development and attitudes toward subtitle-assisted learning media are consistent with this interpretation. However, because the questionnaire did not directly measure perceived cognitive difficulty, the extent to which subtitles reduced students' processing difficulties cannot be determined from the present data. The findings can therefore be interpreted more cautiously as indicating that students perceived the subtitle-supported activities positively in relation to their listening learning experience.

Students also reported positive perceptions of learning motivation and interest and classroom engagement, with mean scores of 3.78 and 3.68, respectively. These results suggest that students generally found the subtitle viewing activities motivating and perceived themselves as positively engaged in the learning process. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that captioned audiovisual materials can make authentic language input more accessible to EFL learners (Mitterer & McQueen, 2009; Vanderplank, 2016). However, the present study does not establish why students reported these positive perceptions, nor does it demonstrate that subtitles directly increased motivation or engagement. Such interpretations should therefore be understood as possible explanations rather than causal conclusions. Future studies could examine these dimensions using more specific measures and qualitative data to identify the factors that shape students' engagement with subtitle-assisted listening activities.

Although classroom engagement received the lowest mean among the five dimensions (M = 3.68), it remained within the positive category. This finding suggests that students generally perceived themselves as engaged during the learning activities, although their responses were somewhat less favorable than those related to listening skill development and attitudes toward the learning media. This difference is important because engagement may depend on factors beyond the availability of subtitles, including task design, opportunities for interaction, and classroom participation. Previous research has similarly emphasized that captioning is most productive when integrated into purposeful listening activities rather than used merely as passive viewing support (Vanderplank, 2016; Winke et al., 2010). Thus, the present findings suggest that subtitles may form one component of an engaging listening environment, but they should not be considered sufficient on their own to guarantee active classroom participation.

Taken together, the findings provide two complementary perspectives on the instructional experience. The listening test results show a statistically significant improvement from pretest to posttest, with a moderate level of normalized gain, while the questionnaire results indicate generally positive student perceptions across the five measured dimensions. These findings support the potential value of integrating English subtitles into structured university EFL listening activities. Nevertheless, because the study did not employ a control group and did not directly measure constructs such as anxiety or confidence, the results should be interpreted as evidence of observed learning improvement and favorable learner perceptions rather than as definitive evidence of causal effectiveness.

In relation to the research gap identified in the Introduction, the present study adds a classroom-oriented perspective to the existing literature on subtitle-assisted listening. Previous research has largely examined captions or subtitles as features of audiovisual input and has focused on their effects on listening comprehension, vocabulary learning, or language processing (Perez et al., 2013; Winke et al., 2010). The present study instead considers English

subtitle viewing as part of a structured sequence of listening activities and examines both changes in listening performance and students' perceptions of the learning experience. This focus is particularly relevant in the Indonesian higher education context, where opportunities to interact with authentic spoken English may be limited. The findings therefore extend previous work by illustrating how subtitle-supported audiovisual input can be incorporated into classroom listening instruction. At the same time, the pre-experimental design limits the extent to which the study can establish whether the observed improvement was specifically produced by the instructional approach.

Pedagogical Implications for EFL Listening Instruction

More broadly, the present study demonstrates that technology-enhanced listening instruction can be implemented using accessible digital resources while maintaining clear pedagogical goals. In contexts where opportunities to encounter authentic English outside the classroom remain limited, English subtitle viewing tasks provide a practical alternative for increasing exposure to natural spoken language. However, the effectiveness of this approach depends on thoughtful instructional design that promotes active learning, meaningful interaction, and sustained engagement with authentic English rather than on the technology itself (Rost, 2024). The positive perceptions observed in the present study are also consistent with recent evidence from Indonesian higher education. Kasriyati et al., (2026) found that students' perceptions of accessible technology-supported language learning were strongly associated with learning motivation. Together, these findings suggest that the pedagogical value of digital technologies may depend not only on their technical features but also on how learners perceive their usefulness and integration into meaningful learning activities.

CONCLUSION

This study examined changes in students' listening comprehension following the implementation of English subtitle viewing tasks and explored students' perceptions of the instructional approach in a university EFL context. The findings showed a statistically significant improvement in students' listening comprehension from pretest to posttest, accompanied by a moderate level of normalized gain. The questionnaire results also indicated generally positive perceptions across the five measured dimensions, including instructional effectiveness, learning motivation and interest, listening skill development, classroom engagement, and attitudes toward subtitle-assisted learning media. Taken together, these findings indicate that students demonstrated improved listening performance and reported favorable learning experiences following the implementation of the subtitle-assisted activities. However, these results should be interpreted as observed improvement and positive learner perceptions rather than as definitive evidence of a causal effect or effectiveness of the instructional approach.

The study contributes empirical and pedagogical evidence from the Indonesian higher education context by examining listening performance and students' reported learning experiences within a single instructional intervention. The findings provide empirical evidence that English subtitle viewing tasks can be incorporated into structured university EFL listening instruction and can be associated with positive changes in students' listening performance and favorable perceptions of the learning experience. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that the value of subtitles lies not simply in their presence but in their purposeful integration into well-designed listening activities. Thus, subtitle-assisted learning may serve

as a useful instructional resource when combined with appropriate listening tasks and clear pedagogical objectives.

Despite these contributions, the findings should be interpreted within the scope and limitations of the study. The research employed a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design involving undergraduate students from a single institutional context and did not include a control group. Consequently, the observed improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to the English subtitle viewing tasks, and the findings may have limited generalizability beyond the participating group and institutional context. Future studies should employ comparative experimental or quasi-experimental designs with control or comparison groups, involve larger and more diverse participant populations, and examine the longer-term development of listening comprehension across different educational settings and proficiency levels. Further research could also use qualitative methods or more specific instruments to investigate learners' experiences and psychological factors, such as confidence or anxiety, that were not directly measured in the present study. Such research would provide stronger evidence regarding the instructional value of subtitle-assisted listening and help clarify the conditions under which subtitle-supported activities may be most beneficial for EFL learners.

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