

# **Insight into Learners' Perspectives on Watching Movies with L1 vs. L2**

## **Subtitles:**

### **Focusing on Language**

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#### **Abstract**

With the advance of technology, options of how one can watch movies become numerous. Besides that the sound and images could be adopted, the subtitles of either first language (L1) or second language (L2) are called for assisting comprehension and language acquisition. Previous studies have mostly carried out quantitative research and have been centered more on exploring whether the use of L1 or L2 subtitles fosters the learners' general comprehension of the movies than their learning process and actual gains of language. This study conducted a qualitative research to investigate the reactions and learning process of twenty lower-intermediate EFL learners while they were exposed to the L1 (Chinese) subtitled or L2 (English) subtitled movie. This study also intended to examine the learners' gains of language in terms of vocabulary learning, listening comprehension of the language presented in the movie, pronunciation and oral abilities. The learners' responses to the open-ended questions and their reports during the member check process reveal that, from the learners' perspectives, L2 subtitled movies are more beneficial. This study suggests that learners may improve their spelling, word recognition ability, pronunciation of new words and words they have already acquired, their understanding of spoken language, and intonation when they watch movies with the L2 subtitles.

**Key words:** Second language movies, Use of L1 subtitles, Use of L2 subtitles, Audio and visual learning process

#### **I. Introduction**

Various studies have found that listening comprehension can be fostered with the addition of images (Bowen, 1982; Guichon & McLornan, 2008; Hanley, Herron & Cole, 1995; Lonergan, 1984; Markham, Peter & McCarthy, 2001; Stempleski, 2003; Tomalin, 1986). Therefore, besides that movies are motivating media for they encompass various topics and for they are presented with both audio and visual stimuli (Lonergan, 1984; Stempleski,

2003), the merits of using videos for language learning are its images added to sound that help set the scene of events and its additional information, such as the paralinguistic features, provided as support to listening comprehension (Guichon & McLornan, 2008; Katchen, 1996a).

With the advance of technology, options of how one can watch movies become numerous. Not only can the sound and images be adopted, but the subtitles of various languages are also called for assisting comprehension so as to language learning (Markham, 1999). The question then becomes whether to use the viewers' first language or target language subtitles.

The use of movies seems to be limited to an extent or underused since numerous previous studies have been centered on exploring whether the use of the L1 or the L2 subtitles assist the learners' general listening comprehension of the movies (Baltova, 1999; Guichon & McLornan, 2008; Markham et al., 2001) rather than their actual gains of language. As noted by Katchen (1996b) and Stempleski (2003), most teachers regarded videos as the means for developing learners' abilities to comprehend spoken language that is listening comprehension when videos are indeed valuable sources of authentic language that can be appreciated for language learning.

Furthermore, these studies concerning the use of subtitles applied rather quantitative method in carrying out the research. They examined the end product rather than the process. There have been few studies using a more qualitative method to investigate the learners' interaction with the L1 and/or L2 subtitled movies and whether the L1 or L2 subtitles can enhance the learners' language ability. Even if there is, it seems that it is restricted to investigating merely the use of the learners' L1 subtitles (Katchen, 1996b).

Therefore, this study aimed at conducting a qualitative research to discover learners' reaction to and learning process of their exposure to the L1 subtitles and the L2 subtitles. This study also focused on the more bottom-up language acquisition and intended to examine the learners' gains of language through watching movies with either the L1 or the L2 subtitles. The results revealed from this study could be the pedagogical groundwork for not only teaching but also the design of CALL system (Guichon & McLornan, 2008).

With the research purposes of investigating a group of Chinese learners who were learning English as a foreign language and their learning process while they watched movies with their L1 subtitles or their L2 subtitles, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of watching movies with students' L1 subtitles - Chinese?

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of watching movies with students' L2 subtitles - English?

## **II. Literature Review**

Besides that students preferred the use of subtitles as a help option for listening comprehension (Grgurovic & Hegelheimer, 2007), considerable research has supported the use of subtitled movies that facilitate both first and second language comprehension (Vanderplank, 1991; Markham et al., 2001). The debate was then centered at whether to expose learners to their L1 subtitles or L2 subtitles while watching movies as a class activity or while designing the multimedia CALL system. Despite that practitioners believed that the L1 subtitles should be prohibited (Katchen, 1996b), empirical studies have suggested mixed results in terms of enhancing learners' listening comprehension.

Markham et al. (2001) found the use of the L1 subtitles more effective for gaining listening comprehension of the movie. The researchers studied 169 intermediate native English learners of Spanish. The learners wrote a summary in their L1 and completed an L1 multiple-choice test. The results indicated that the L1 subtitle group outperformed the other two groups.

In contrast to Markham et al.'s study, some research was prone to the use of the L2 subtitles. Baltova (1999) conducted an experiment with 93 lower-intermediate native French speakers learning English in order to examine the effects of the L1 or the L2 subtitled video. The learners' performances were operationally defined as their scores obtained in the comprehension questions and gap-fill test. The results showed that L2 subtitles were the most beneficial for the recall of L2 vocabulary and of content.

In addition, in Guichon and McLornan's study (2008), the researchers studied 40 intermediate native French speaking learners to examine the effectiveness of watching videos with the multimodality on L2 learners as a pilot study. This group of learners was divided into the four treatment groups where the learners watched the video respectively with the sound only, the sound and the images, the sound, the images and the L2 subtitles, and the sound, the images and the L1 subtitles. The learners watched a recording of the BBC news and completed a detailed written summary in English with their notes. The results revealed that L2 subtitling was more beneficial due to the L1

interference that the L1 subtitle group encountered.

Not only were the above studies centered on exploring the learners' performance over listening comprehension instead of actual language acquisition, but they also adopted dissimilar measurement tools and languages for testing, which might have been the causes of the mixed results. Some studies adopted production tests such as summary or recognition tests like multiple-choice questions as the means of measuring the learners' performances. Some used the learners' first language while the other required the use of the learners' target language. Moreover, these studies examined the learners from the different L1 backgrounds other than Chinese. Studies with a different context may yield dissimilar results as well.

Being different from these studies, Katchen (1996b) investigated a group of 14 advanced level students using a more qualitative method in order to examine the effects of the L1 subtitles over listening comprehension and language learning. The researcher had the students whose first language was Chinese summarize the movie and comment on the helpfulness or hindrance of the L1 subtitles. The results denoted that the use of the L1 subtitles was effective for learning new English vocabulary provided the learners had a good dictionary. The researcher also discovered that learning idioms, slang and culture-specific referents, and hearing functional words were more difficult with the assistance of the L1 subtitles.

Nevertheless, as it can be observed, this study only examined the use of the L1 subtitles. Without a comparison of the application of both L1 subtitles and L2 subtitles, it can not be decided that one is better than the other. In addition, the subjects studied in the above research were all intermediate to advanced level students. While lower-intermediate learners were indeed in need of a more motivating method for acquiring language, it was hence worth exploring whether these learners could learn language through watching movies with the L1 or the L2 subtitles. Therefore, this study intended to investigate a group of lower-intermediate level Chinese learners and their interaction with the L1 and the L2 subtitled movie. This study also sought to uncover whether the L1 subtitles and L2 subtitles were advantageous or disadvantageous to language learning.

### **III. Method**

#### ***Participants***

At the initial stage, forty-five non-English majors from a university in central Taiwan participated in this study. They took a GEPT elementary level

listening practice test in order for the researcher to know the participants' current listening proficiency. GEPT standing for General English Proficiency Test developed by LTTC (Language Training and Testing Center) is a nationwide used test for measuring a person's English proficiency. For this study, only the listening proficiency of the participants was assessed since watching movies essentially demanded the viewers' listening abilities. The listening proficiency test of the elementary level was consisted of 30 questions. The total score was 120 and the benchmark for passing the test was 80. After the proficiency test scores were obtained, 20 lower-intermediate students whose scores were ranged between 72 to 108 were selected. Apart from the participants' proficiency as one criterion for participant selection, the participants' background knowledge about the movie chosen for this study was also considered since background knowledge played a vital role in listening comprehension (Chang, 2006). These 20 participants selected had not watched the movie chosen for this study before; hence, they had at least similar background knowledge.

The participants were then grouped into Group 1 - the L1 subtitle group who watched the movie with the presence of the English soundtrack, the images and the Chinese subtitles, and Group 2 - the L2 subtitle group who watched the movie with the supply of the English soundtrack, the images and the English subtitles. The participants were evenly divided into the two treatment groups based on their listening proficiency scores. This was to ensure the two groups had similar proficiency. Table 1 illustrates the means and standard deviations of these two groups. The mean score for the L2 subtitle group was 94.4 compared with 96.4 for the L1 subtitle group. Table 2 also demonstrates the homogeneity in terms of listening proficiency revealed from independent *t*-test. No significant difference was observed (*sample size* = 20,  $t = -.386$ ,  $p = .704$ ).

Table 1

*Group means and standard deviations*

Group	Mean	N	SD
1 (L1 subtitles)	96.4000	10	12.13992
2 (L2 subtitles)	94.4000	10	11.02724

Table 2

*Independent t-test: Homogeneity of group*

<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
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Proficiency	-.386	18	.704
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**Materials**

The animated movie “Over the Hedge” produced by Dreamworks in 2006 was selected since the target audience of the animated movie is children and young adults. Thus, information presented was not too dense, and the language was more or less accessible to the participants. “Over the Hedge” presents a story about a raccoon who stole a bear’s food. The bear found it and warned the raccoon to return all his food in a week. While the raccoon was worried about how he could get so much food during such a short period of time, he met a group of animals. He used them to forage food from humans over the hedge.

For this study, the participants watched the movie extract, Chapter 1-3, which was about 15 minutes in length, in the pilot study. The first chapter did not include much language but prepared the viewers for the movie with the images. A week after the pilot study, they watched the extract of Chapter 9-10 which lasted for about 10 minutes.

Besides the movie extracts, two question sheets respectively designed for the L1 subtitle group and the L2 subtitle group were developed by the researcher. The question sheets for both groups required the participants to provide answers to four questions. These four questions required the participants to write down what they thought to be the advantages and disadvantages of watching movies with the Chinese subtitles for the L1 subtitle group and with the English subtitles for the L2 subtitle group in terms of vocabulary learning, listening comprehension of the language presented, pronunciation and oral abilities. The participants also had to give specific examples from the movie extracts they watched because this study intended to uncover the actual language gains from watching movies with the subtitles of the participants’ L1 or L2.

**Data Collection**

**Phase 1 - Pilot study**

The participants in the L1 subtitle group were first given their question sheets and previewed the questions. Then they watched the 15-minute extract of Chapter 1-3 with the English soundtrack, the images and the L1 subtitles in a classroom where audio and visual equipments were both supplied. The movie extract was stopped about every 2 minutes so that the participants could have sufficient time for writing down their answers to the questions. After the

L1 subtitle group had completed their answers, the same process was repeated for the L2 subtitle group. These two groups carried out the pilot study separately.

With the written comments gathered from the pilot study, the researcher found that most of the participants did not give specific examples. Therefore, Question 5 which drew the participants' attention to specific words or phrases presented in the film extract of Chapter 9-10 was added up to the question sheets. The participants were required to write down the meaning of the Chinese words/phrases and the English words/phrases presented in the movie that had been translated into Chinese on the question sheets. The participants also need to specify how they had written down the answers, in other words, what helped them write down the answers. There were three Chinese words/phrases and three English words/phrases on the question sheets for both groups. This was to avoid favoring one of the groups when using specifically one language.

### ***Phase 2 – Main Study***

Since both groups watched Chapters 4-8 after the pilot study, in the second phase, the L1 subtitle group and the L2 subtitle group watched Chapter 9 and 10 of the movie under their assigned condition. The same data collection procedure used in Phase 1 was repeated though the L2 subtitle group carried out this process first, and Question 5 was added on the question sheets.

### ***Phase 3 - Member check***

After Phase 2, the participants were asked to justify their comments to the researcher. This allowed the researcher to check whether the participants wrote as what they thought. This also provoked more in-depth data. The participants' reflections upon their responses were recorded and transcribed as main source of analysis. In addition, in order not to lose any valuable data revealed from the pilot study, and to avoid the potential split attention caused by Question 5, each participant's responses gathered in the pilot study were compared with their reflections in Phase 3, and any response that was different from the reflection was counted.

## **IV. Results and Discussion**

### **1. L1 Subtitle Group**

#### ***1. 1 Vocabulary Learning***

Table 3 and 4 demonstrate the positive responses and negative responses regarding vocabulary learning revealed from the L1 subtitle group who watched the film extracts with the Chinese subtitles. The most frequently reported positive responses were “I can learn more words from what I hear in English and what I read in Chinese” (3 responses), “I can learn the pronunciation of words with the Chinese translation” (2 responses) and “I can know the meaning of the unknown words” (2 responses). As for the drawbacks, the biggest concern seemed to be related to spelling since “I don’t know how a word is spelt even if I know how to say it” was the most commonly observed negative response (4 responses), followed by “I can’t spell the words” (2 responses) and “I rely too much on Chinese” (2 responses).

Table 3

*Positive responses from the L1 subtitle group*

n	Positive responses
3	➤ I can learn more words from what I hear in English and what I read in Chinese.
2	➤ I can learn the pronunciation of words with the Chinese translation.
2	➤ I can know the meaning of the unknown words.
1	➤ When I can hear clearly, I can learn new words.

Table 4

*Negative responses from the L1 subtitle group*

n	Negative responses
4	➤ I don’t know how a word is spelt even if I know how to say it.
2	➤ I can’t spell the words.
2	➤ I rely too much on Chinese.
1	➤ It is too fast.
1	➤ The translation may be incorrect.

The effects of watching movies with the L1 subtitles seemed to be limited in terms of vocabulary learning. Although the participants reported to have learned some new words with the assistance of the Chinese subtitles, the words seemed to be the simpler words, such as “cooler” and “family-size” that the participants might have already encountered or learned. Their vocabulary learning was more likely restricted to the pronunciation because they could not spell the “real” new words. Nevertheless, the question was about how accurate the participants’ pronunciation could be as some participants reported “possum” sounded like “m~”, “c~” or “k~”. Other participants also indicated that

“possum” was pronounced as “marcy”, “mousy”, “mousece”, “morsy” or “merfuse” as revealed from their responses to Question 5 on their question sheets.

### **1.2 Listening Comprehension of the Language Presented**

As for the L1 subtitle group, their responses to whether watching movies with the Chinese subtitles helped them in terms of listening comprehension of the language presented were as shown in Table 5 and 6. “The Chinese subtitles help me remember simple sentence, such as *Just take what you need*” was mentioned by two participants. The participants also seemed to benefit from the L1 subtitles as they could self-correct their misunderstanding; for instance, one participant learned “stand down” which meant “Don’t worry”, and “play dead” meant “pretend to be dead”. Nevertheless, this happened only when the participants could accurately recognize what they heard. On the other hand, the L1 subtitles also reminded the words and phrases the participants had acquired before they encountered them again in the movie. A participant gave examples like “What’s going on?” and “Check it out”.

Although there were observable advantages of watching movies with the L1 subtitles regarding listening comprehension of the language presented, the distraction of the L1 subtitles occurred since some participants reported to focus on them. Four participants mentioned to “keep reading the subtitles and can’t hear clearly” whilst three participants reported that “My focus is on Chinese, and I don’t actually listen to the speakers (unless the words I hear are familiar to me)”.

Table 5

*Positive responses from the L1 group*

n	Positive responses
2	➤ The Chinese subtitles help me remember simple sentence.
1	➤ I can know the sentences that do not mean as what I think.
1	➤ I can know the key words with the subtitles.
1	➤ I can understand some of the sentences but am not sure whether it’s correct.
1	➤ It can improve my listening.
1	➤ The subtitles help me check my understanding of the words spoken.

Table 6

*Negative responses from the L1 group*

n	Negative responses
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4	➤	I keep reading the subtitles and I can't hear clearly.
3	➤	My focus is on Chinese and I don't actually listen to the speakers (unless the words I hear are familiar to me).
1	➤	When it is too fast, I can only read the subtitles.
1	➤	It may not be the standard English.

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### 1.3 Pronunciation

There seemed to be more disadvantages regarding pronunciation than advantages for the L1 subtitle group. Table 7 and 8 show the positive responses and negative responses revealed from the L1 subtitle group. There were only three positive responses given but seven negative responses reported. Even if some participants reported to have learned the pronunciation of words, many of them found that "I don't know how the words are spelt so I am not sure about the pronunciation" (2 responses) or problems essentially related to whether the students could hear clearly and/or recognize the words they hear (5 responses). It seemed that without seeing the target words, it was quite difficult for lower intermediate learners to recognize what they exactly heard while there was the L1 distraction.

Table 7

*Positive responses from the L1 subtitle group*

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n	Positive responses
1	➤ I can learn the linking sounds and sound more spoken.
1	➤ I can know how to pronounce the key words.
1	➤ I can learn the pronunciation from what I hear (eg. so scary)

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Table 8

*Negative responses from the L1 subtitle group*

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n	Negative responses
2	➤ I don't know how the words are spelt so I am not sure about the pronunciation.
1	➤ It is too fast. I can't know the correct pronunciation (eg. "verminator")
1	➤ If I don't see the words, I don't know what the speakers are saying (eg. "possum" sounds like "mou~")

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1	➤	I can't hear the pronunciation clearly.
1	➤	The pronunciation I learn may not be correct.
1	➤	The speakers don't always speak clearly.

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### **1. 4 Oral Abilities**

The participants from the L1 subtitle group seemed to gain benefits over their oral ability from watching movies with the assistance of the Chinese subtitles. They reported to learn spoken language, such as “I don't know what you up to” though the grammar word “are” was neglected (3 responses) and to learn the intonation (2 responses) as shown in Table 9. No negative responses were given either although two participants found the L1 subtitles did not help improve their oral abilities.

Table 9

*Positive responses from the L1 subtitle group*

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n	Positive responses
3	➤ I can learn spoken English. (eg. I don't know what you're up to.)
2	➤ I can learn the intonation which is different from Chinese.
1	➤ I can learn different expressions.
1	➤ I learn the intonation.
1	➤ I can hear some spoken English. My English can be improved if I often watch movies

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However, the problem was still about whether the students could accurately recognize the words they heard. For instance, apart from the grammar words that were difficult for the participants to fully recognize, which was also found in Katchen's (1996b) study, a participant thought she heard “Your room off”, but this phrase was not presented. Another participant also reported to hear “naple” for “people”, but the speaker actually said “people”.

## **2. L2 subtitle group**

### **2.1 Vocabulary Learning**

Table 10 and 11 illustrate the positive responses and negative responses concerning the advantages and disadvantages of watching movies with the English subtitles in terms of vocabulary learning given by the L2 subtitle group. The most commonly reported positive response was “I can know how words

are spelt” (4 responses), followed by “I can know in which context the word I have learned is used” (2 responses) and “I can know what exactly they are saying” (2 responses).

The advantage of watching movies with the L2 – English subtitles regarding vocabulary learning seemed to be related to spelling, especially words the participants had acquired. One student found himself learned to spell the word “exactly” which was a word he had already learned before but could not spell. However, if the student did not write down the word immediately after the exposure, whether the student could still spell this word remained unknown.

Table 10

*Positive responses from the L2 subtitle group*

n	Positive responses
4	➤ I can know how words are spelt.
2	➤ I can know in which context the word I have learned is used.
2	➤ I can know what exactly they are saying/ I don't need to guess the words they use from what I hear.
1	➤ I can know how grammar is used.
1	➤ I can be exposed to new words.
1	➤ I can know more about the words with the context.
1	➤ I can learn spoken words or terms.

Table 11

*Negative responses from the L2 subtitle group*

n	Negative responses
3	➤ I don't understand the sentences even if I know every word in them.
2	➤ It doesn't matter as I don't understand the plot and meanings at all.
2	➤ I can't understand the content when there are words that I don't know.
1	➤ I don't know what the words mean.
1	➤ If I can't understand the new word from the context, it is helpless (eg. dirtbag).
1	➤ I can't concentrate on the movie.

The disadvantages seemed to be numerous. Although the participants reported to understand the meaning/usage of words from the context, deriving unknown word meaning from context was found to be unreliable, especially for lower level learners, as suggested by Kaivanpanah and Alavi (2008). For example, a participant reported to know words from the context but actually misunderstood the meaning. She thought “getting a way” was “used when giving someone a compliment or an approval”. Furthermore, some students also found difficult to understand the meanings of words or sentences even with the aid of images, the context and the English subtitles. They thought “dirtbag” was “burden”, “trash” or “traitor”, and they were uncertain about their understanding of this word. The answers to Question 5 also revealed similar phenomenon. Some participants thought “possum” was “ant bear” and/or interpreted “dirtbag” as “burden”, “trash” or “traitor”. Even if these participants all tried to compensate their missing knowledge by guessing from the context, which is generally regarded as a good learning strategy (Oxford, 1990), this process did not actually assist the participants to know the accurate meanings of the words. One possible factor causing this phenomenon might be that the images were not unequivocally presented with the words or phrases spoken by the characters in movies (Guichon & McLornan, 2008; Kaivanpanah & Alavi, 2008). These findings imply that guessing meaning from the context for lower intermediate learners is not only unreliable but also difficult. In addition, the images presented in movies are not always unequivocal which can lead to learners’ misunderstanding.

## ***2.2 Listening Comprehension of the Language Presented***

What the participants thought about the advantages and disadvantages regarding listening comprehension of the language presented of the L2 subtitled movie were presented in Table 12 and 13. The benefit of watching movie with the L2 subtitles seemed to be concerned with listening word recognition. “The English subtitles help me know every word spoken by the speakers” (3 responses) and “I can check whether what I heard is correct” (2 responses) were commonly reported as positive responses. With the English subtitles, the participants seemed to know or “see” every word spoken by the characters and the words they were unable to recognize. However, listening does not require the understanding of every single word. Instead of being advantageous, the English subtitles were more likely to distract the participants’ attention from listening (Guichon & McLornan, 2008), because some participants reported to read the subtitles more than to listen to the audio

language presented in the movie (2 responses). Yet the distraction may be less severe as found in the L1 subtitle group as L1 subtitles are easier to read. The L2 subtitle group could at least try to contrast what they heard with the L2 subtitles.

Table 12

*Positive responses from the L2 group*

n	Positive responses
3	➤ The English subtitles help me know every word spoken by the speakers.
2	➤ I can check whether what I heard is correct.
1	➤ With the subtitles, I can listen to the pronunciation and intonation.
1	➤ I learn how words are used.
1	➤ I can check the spelling of words I know.

Table 13

*Negative responses from the L2 group*

n	Negative responses
2	➤ In order to understand the movie, my focus is on the subtitles. What the speakers are saying is just like background music to me/ I don't listen to the speakers.
1	➤ I only know how the words are spelt but don't understand the meanings.
1	➤ It doesn't matter as I don't understand the meaning at all.
1	➤ For lower level students like me, I don't understand the movie.
1	➤ If I don't understand the subtitles, how can I understand what the speakers are saying?
	➤ I know some of the words but it doesn't help understanding.

### **2.3 Pronunciation**

Watching movies with the L2 subtitles seemed to provoke the greatest effects over pronunciation since, as illustrated in Table 14 and 15, although there were still three participants felt concerned about the meaning, seven participants reported that “With the subtitles, I can read the words and learn the pronunciation from what I hear”, and three participants wrote “I can correct my mispronunciation of the words I’ve learned”.

Table 14

*Positive responses from the L2 subtitle group*

n	Positive responses
7	➤ With the subtitles, I can read the words and learn the pronunciation from what I hear (eg. fella)
3	➤ I can correct my mispronunciation of the words I've learned. (eg. awesome)
1	➤ I can learn more spoken English (eg. wanna).
1	➤ I can learn the pronunciation of difficult words. (eg. threw)
1	➤ I can become more native like.
1	➤ I can know the exact words that are linked and learn to pronounce the linking sounds

Table 15

*Negative responses from the L2 subtitle group*

n	Negative responses
3	➤ I can know how the words are pronounced but still don't know the meaning.

With the English subtitles, the participants seemed to both know the pronunciation of new words and to correct their pronunciation of the words they had learned. With the English subtitles, the participants also seemed to learn phonics in a whole language approach (Freppon & Dahl, 1991). This is a way how native speakers acquire literacy. EFL learners may also benefit from this kind of exposure to languages. However, it was also noted that some participants mispronounced words during the member check. For example, a participant pronounced “possum” as /pusem/ while another participant said /ritel/ for “reptile”. The possible explanation of this finding was that, with one single exposure to the target language, the participants could not yet pronounce the words accurately (Stempleski, 2003). Besides, another possibility was that their attention was largely devoted to the L2 subtitles so that they read the words according to the text (what the words looked like) rather than the sound they heard.

## **2.4 Oral Abilities**

Regarding watching movies with the English subtitles for improving oral abilities, Table 16 illustrates the positive responses provided by the L2 subtitle group. The L2 subtitles seemed to be effective in terms of improving speaking ability as five participants reported that “I can learn Colloquial English/spoken English; two mentioned that “I can imitate the intonation of the speakers”; and two believed that “I can practice reading aloud the sentences with both the L2 subtitles and the speakers”.

Moreover, the participants had no negative comments on watching movies with the L2 subtitles for improving their oral abilities. In sum, with the assistance of the L2 subtitles, the participants reported to learn spoken language (eg. fella), intonation of the speakers, and even try to repeat after the speakers.

Table 16

*Positive responses from the L2 subtitle group*

n	Positive responses
5	➤ I can learn Colloquial English/spoken English.
2	➤ I can imitate the intonation of the speakers.
2	➤ I can practice reading aloud the sentences with both the subtitles and the speakers.
1	➤ I can correct my pronunciation from listening to the speakers.
1	➤ I can become more confident and not afraid of making mistakes.
1	➤ I can remember the sentences better with the English subtitles.
1	➤ I can learn how some simple spoken words/phrases are written.
	➤ I can become more fluent.

## V. Conclusion

Watching movies with either L1 or L2 subtitles seems to be both advantageous and disadvantageous, but for lower-intermediate learners, it might be that the L2 subtitles are more beneficial. The L1 subtitles may merely enable learners to improve their language proficiency in terms of vocabulary, listening comprehension of the language and oral abilities to a very limited extent. The responses revealed from this study suggest that learners can learn simple words from what they hear with the Chinese subtitles, remember simple sentences, monitor their listening comprehension, and acquire spoken language. However, these will occur only when the words and phrases are relatively easy or sufficiently familiar to the learners. Katchen (1996b) found that the use of the L1 subtitles was beneficial for the advanced learners, but the L1 subtitles might not be so useful for the lower-intermediate learners as their vocabulary size is far smaller.

On the contrary, learners may gain more language from watching movies with the L2 subtitles. This study suggests that learners may improve their spelling, word recognition ability, pronunciation of new words and words they have already learned, understanding of spoken language, and intonation.

However, the effects of the use of the L2 subtitled movie may be still

limited as this study also discovered that learners could not really accurately pronounce words with only one exposure to the L2 subtitled movie. Repeated exposure may provoke far more language learning as Chang and Read (2007) discovered that repeating the same input was the most effective. Some participants also suggested watching a movie repeatedly with the L1 subtitles first, followed by the L2 subtitles. The similar process was also recommended in Markham et al.'s (2001) paper where the researchers suggested watching the same movie three times with the L1 subtitles first, the L2 subtitles second, and no subtitles last. This sequence would allow learners to use their stronger native language reading skills first; followed by using their emerging but more or less weaker target-language reading skills. Finally, learners would be ready to rely totally on their much weaker target language listening skills.

It may be worth considering as well that whether to watch movies with the L2 subtitles or the L1 subtitles depends on the goals of teaching. For instance, if the teaching goal is to help students improve their pronunciation and spelling, watching movies with the L2 subtitles may be a choice.

Alternatively, combining watching movies subtitled with the target language with other teaching techniques may provoke the best benefits for lower-intermediate learners; for example, to supply the learners with some comprehension assistance, such as vocabulary pre-viewing and repeated exposure to the target language (Chang, 2005).

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壞處為何？請舉例。

**Appendix: Question 5 – L1 subtitle group**

5. 請寫出下列單字/句子的中文或英文 (請解釋你是如何寫出答案的)：

a. 負鼠

b. Can I poke him?

c. 爬蟲類

d. Can you take this remote?

e. 我是個爛人。

f. I return this stuff to the rightful owners.

**Appendix: Question 5 – L2 subtitle group**

5. 請寫出下列單字/句子的中文或英文 (請解釋你是如何寫出答案的)：

a. Possum

b. 我能戳他嗎？

c. reptile

d. 你能接過這個遙控器嗎？

e. I am a dirtbag.

f. 我把東西物歸原主。

## **Appendix: Sample Responses**

中文字幕組 Name: 郭子愷

1. 你覺得看電影輔以中文字幕對你的英文單字學習有什麼影響？好處為何？壞處為何？請舉例。

好處是知道英文單字，因為有中文字幕的翻譯

例如：負鼠，有一幕說 mom，中撞到一隻負鼠

但壞處是不會拼寫，只會念

例如：負鼠 我不會拼，只會念

2. 你覺得看電影輔以中文字幕對你的英文聽力理解有什麼影響？好處為何？壞處為何？請舉例。

好處是簡單的句子可以藉由中文字幕加深印象

例如：怎麼回事？ What's going on? ; 中看看 chick it out

壞處是念太快就來不及聽只得快看中文字幕才行

例如：當一堆動物講話，每當他們對話就只能看"中文字幕"了

3. 你覺得看電影輔以中文字幕對你的英文發音能力有什麼影響？好處為何？壞處為何？請舉例。

好處是知道一些連音，念起來更口語化

4. 你覺得看電影輔以中文字幕對你的英文口語能力有什麼影響？好處為何？壞處為何？請舉例。

好處是他們對話仔細聽，因為有中文字幕我以為會這樣講，可是仔細瞭解會發現他們有別的講法

例如："人類"他們說 nuple 我以為是 people

壞處 "東西沒了" it's gone : no stuff

## Appendix: Sample Responses

5. 請寫出下列單字/句子的中文或英文 (請解釋你是如何寫出答案的) :

a. 負鼠

(不會拼)

b. Can I poke him?

我能撥看看他嗎?

(常有隻負鼠裝死時, 有個小孩問這句)

c. 爬蟲類

(不會拼)

(那位除害專家講太快)

d. Can you take this remote?

你能移走<sup>this</sup>(負鼠)嗎?

e. 我是個爛人。

I am a dud

(看影片可是爛人不會拼 >||< )

f. I return this stuff to the rightful owners.

我把東西放回原物主

(看影片聽到的)

## Appendix: Sample Transcription

### Member Check – Transcript

#### **Student E from the L2 subtitle group**

E: 對於英文單字的學習啊～ 我覺得好壞處是各佔一半。因為用英文字幕雖然可以看到英文字幕，然後藉著邊學習是很好的，可是就不一定代表了解上面真正的意思。那像 way too deep 還有什麼 eat up 是什麼意思，我就不太了解。可能單字每個分開來看都可以了解它的意思，可是合在一起就是沒辦法了解。那我覺得就是... 可以像香港的電影... 就是中文的字幕下面還有一排小小的英文字幕。像中文字幕的電影可以英文字幕大一點，中文字幕小一點，然後邊看邊學。就是可以中英對照看，然後可以邊學，比較清晰，學習效果應該也會比較有用吧！那像有沒有英文字幕我覺得還滿重要的，我覺得就是要有中文字幕輔助，就像我剛剛講得那個方法。那像就聽力的話，就像 Can I poke it? 在裡面我就會專心的聽，可是我不了解它是什麼意思。我頂多跟著唸。所以我可能聽到，但是不了解，如果要了解裡面到底在講什麼，就要很專心的去聽它講什麼跟看它的畫面，那就會一直想，可能就會沒聽到它在講什麼。可能聲音就單純是聲音，就不是有什麼意義性。在發音能力方面，可能就是像 Yeah! We wanna show you something. Come on! Hurry! 就可以跟著唸，就可以學習它的真正發音，然後學習國外的口語化。像 wanna 在台灣是很少見，但我很多國外朋友對於講 wanna 都覺得是很正常的事。你要他們跟你講那是什麼意思，他們很像也講不出來。可是你真的必需看他們的電影，你才能真的了解，也可以避免我們講出台式英文，就是自己講自己對得那一種。壞處就是沒辦法理解，就是可能下次遇到差不多的單字，可能唸的出來，可是不知道它的意思就有點可惜。除非就是第一次就是看中文，第二次再看英文。在第四個口語能力方面，好像跟發音有點類似，所以在這邊我界定就是語氣方面，就像 putting down time 平常我們可能用唸的感覺唸，可是在電影裡面，他就好像很戲劇、很誇張的感覺。下次我們用到這個單字的時候，就可能很戲劇化的唸，可能就會比較有感覺吧！講久了也比較不會擔心講錯，也比較會大聲的講出來。這是我覺得看英文可以對口語的實質幫助。

E: 像第五題要寫出單字的英文或中文，裡面很多我都不會寫，唯一確定的是“我能戳它嗎？”就是“Can I poke it?” 就是剛剛我有看到，可是看到的時候，我不知道他是什麼意思，我很專心的在看英文字幕，後來我是大概瞄到劇情我才想到原來剛剛的劇情就是有戳牠一下，我就是根據這個寫的，就是猜出來的。然後其他像第五個“i'm dirtbag”我一直有看到，可是不知道他是什麼意思，就只知道“我是什麼什麼”，所以只有寫這樣子。

## Appendix: SPSS Reports

### Report

#### Proficiency

Group	平均數	個數	標準差
1.00	94.4000	10	11.02724
2.00	96.4000	10	12.13992
總和	95.4000	20	11.33416

### Report

#### 獨立樣本檢定

		變異數相等的 Levene 檢定		平均數相等的 t 檢定						
		F 檢定	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (two-tailed)	平均差 異	標準誤 差異	差異的 95% 信賴區間	
									下界	上界
Proficiency	假設變異 數相等	.079	.782	-.386	18	.704	-2.00000	5.18631	-12.8960 3	8.89603
	不假設變 異數相等			-.386	17.83 6	.704	-2.00000	5.18631	-12.9032 0	8.90320