

Investigating the Effectiveness of Korean Dramas with English Subtitles on the English Language Competence of Students



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ABSTRACT: This research focused on students' English language competence in watching Korean dramas with English subtitles. It investigated the advantages and disadvantages of watching Korean dramas with English subtitles and students' English language learning in terms of language proficiency, reading speed in English, English communication skills, and English reading comprehension. This study used qualitative research utilizing a narrative approach to analyze the English language competence of the Senior high school students of Negros Occidental National High School who were enrolled for the Academic year 2022-2023. The participants of the study were chosen using purposeful sampling. Meanwhile, the data were thematically analyzed using the recursive textual analysis guided by the three C's of Lichtman. The findings indicated that the student's English language learning in watching Korean dramas with English subtitles has both advantages and disadvantages, such as subtitles flashing up too quickly and occasionally pausing the Korean drama being watched. Moreover, the results also show that students' language competence in watching Korean dramas with English subtitles have influenced their learning of new English vocabulary words, speed reading, comprehension, and English language proficiency.

KEYWORDS: Korean dramas, English subtitles, English language competence, vocabulary, reading comprehension, English language learning,

INTRODUCTION

Media scholars, fan studies researchers, and cultural studies researchers place a lot of significance on the growing global appeal of Korean dramas. It is a widespread phenomenon that people worldwide are fond of watching Korean dramas, and they want to know its popularity and influence on people's lives (Park and Lee 2019). As a result of recent developments in the entertainment field, Korean drama fans from all over the world may now experience Korean cultures and traditions through their gadgets (Safira & Badaruddin, 2021). With the widespread acceptance of Korean dramas, it is assumed that there are contributing factors to why many people are watching them. Everyone watches Korean dramas, which gives them mixed emotions as they experience watching TV series globally.

According to Islamia and Rosmaidar, (2019), the use of subtitles is effective in understanding the whole movies as well as learning the language. Watching movies with subtitles improves learners' vocabulary mastery. With the aid of subtitles, students can decipher the meaning of the words they see in the movies. Additionally, subtitles aid in the development of pupils' speaking, listening, and pronunciation abilities.

Likely, Korean dramas have recently gained popularity in the Philippines and worldwide, especially among young people. Semilla (2017), emphasized that the term "Korean Dramas" refers to South Korean-produced Korean Teledramas. It is an episodic genre in which particular episodes are used to present storylines. Since it is a Korean drama and not all viewers can understand Korean, the web pages use English subtitles to make the series available to a broader audience and help understand the characters' dialogues and lines to grasp the story. In the same way, the students in one of the Senior High Schools in Negros Occidental are beset with most, if not all, of the aforementioned concerning Korean drama even though it affects their everyday lives, but continue to watch and enjoy the TV series. Also, given that it is entertaining, watching Korean drama with English subtitles opted them to learn the English language and simultaneously appreciate the story. Moreover, going through thorough research about Korean dramas with English subtitles, there are only a few studies conducted regarding it and most of them are specifically related to one particular language skill or linguistic improvement. Therefore, this study was motivated by the interest of determining whether watching Korean dramas with English subtitles improves students' acquisition of the language, particularly in terms of language competency, reading speed, communication abilities, and reading comprehension.

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RESEARCH METHOD USED

This study used a qualitative research utilizing a narrative approach. A qualitative virtual conversational interview strategy was done to give the best results for a study seeking the effectiveness of Korean dramas with English subtitles on the English language competence of students. In this study, the data were thematically analyzed using recursive textual analysis, which was led by the C's of Lichtman. The three C's analysis seeks to progress from coding original data to category identification to the identifying of significant concepts or themes. The analysis of a qualitative study consists of a narrative report with a contextual description. This is underpinned by means of direct quotations from participants taken from interview transcripts (Lichtman, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE TEXT

1. Advantages and Disadvantages of watching Korean dramas with English subtitles

As the Korean wave spread globally, many people are fond of watching Korean dramas that can influence their lives. Korean dramas play a pivotal part in the holistic aspect of the people, and they were drawn in by the film's topic, plot, characters, and even soundtrack, all of which had the potential to influence their behavior and way of life. Movies are a part of visual literacy, and movies provide a visual context aid that enhances student comprehension and helps them learn (Guctu, R. 2017). Most of the participants in this study were able to identify the advantages and disadvantages of watching Korean dramas with English subtitles. To ensure a better understanding of the movie, they occasionally paused the Korean dramas being watched and the subtitles flashing too quickly hindered them from understanding the plot of the story.

The participants shared their learnings and identified the advantages and disadvantages of watching Korean dramas with English subtitles.

Thematic Insights

1.1 Subtitles flash up too quickly

All participants stated that their difficulties in watching Korean dramas focus on the speed of the subtitles. Some participants mentioned that it affected their perception and understanding of the exact message of the actors during the scene. One of the participants mentioned that Korean terms are shorter than English terms, which also affects the speed of the subtitles that pop up on the screen. The majority of the participants believe that multitasking is essential for them to be able to capture the message of the story that they watch.

The findings aligned with those of Szarkowska, A, and Bogucka, L (2019), discovered that the speed of film speech had an impact on audience comprehension; faster dialogue and more text condensing in the subtitles produced lower rates than slower ones. In addition, Kruger, J.L., et.al, (2022), mentioned that comprehension declined as speed increased. Eye movement records also showed that faster subtitles resulted in a more preliminary reading of the subtitles. In addition, Jensema, C. (1998), claimed that regular viewers were at ease with faster captions. Except for graduate students, who appeared to maybe favor somewhat faster captions, neither age nor sex nor education were associated to captioning speed preference.

1.2 Occasionally pausing the Korean dramas being watched

The seven participants agreed that pausing the Korean dramas they are viewing to read the subtitles aids their ability to understand the words and translation. They all stated that pausing the video to occasionally read the subtitles aided them in understanding the plot of the Korean dramas they were watching. The seven participants said that pausing the movie to focus on the subtitle strengthened their comprehension of the story's main points. Additionally, participants claimed that delaying the video to read the subtitles helped them improve their reading comprehension.

The result of this study was consistent with those of Harmer (2007), who states that watching movies with subtitles can help students understand phrases, attitudes, and characters speaking in English because we can pause the video while watching and follow the subtitles. Putri Y.A. (2018), also claims that the benefit of utilizing subtitles while viewing movies to learn English is that students will get a taste of face-to-face conversation. The objective is for students to understand the story by observing scenarios, such as body language or emotion. The advantages of watching movies with English subtitles include the following: a.) improving reading; b.) expanding vocabulary; c.) gaining understanding with listening awareness; and d.) becoming more motivated to learn English.

Moreover, though seeing media in its original form might be motivating, most people who try watching movies or television shows with subtitles may find it takes too much time to pick up new vocabulary. They have to pause the film, look up the definition of any new or challenging words they come across, and then resume watching (Fujii, K., & Rekimoto, J. 2019).

Eidetic Insights

Students pause a Korean drama to understand the subtitles.

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2. English language learning of the students watching Korean dramas with English subtitles

The English language is important in the learning process of students. It influences their learning about vocabulary and improves their reading skills and communication skills. The use of subtitled movies influences students in their English language learning. Most participants in this study were able to identify the advantages and disadvantages of watching Korean dramas with English subtitles and were grateful because more than the participant's experience, their experience influence their English language learning through watching Korean dramas with English subtitles. The students' experiences improve English language learning by watching Korean dramas with English subtitles.

Thematic Insights

2.1 Learning new English vocabulary words

Nine out of ten participants agreed that they discovered new English words while watching Korean dramas. They stated that watching Korean dramas enables them to understand the movie with the help of English translation. Most of the participants are fans of Korean dramas, which makes them more knowledgeable in understanding every word that appears on the screen. They also develop different skills while watching it; most importantly, they can understand new words with their profound meaning.

This finding is in accordance with Katemba (2018), which states the importance of vocabulary through watching English-subtitled movies. Watching English movies that can improve new English vocabulary has been found to be an effective way for researchers to enhance new vocabulary from other research. According to Putra and Putu (2014), movies or media are practical tools for learning new vocabulary. Without a doubt, subtitled movies may be an effective instructional tool for students to learn and expand their vocabulary. The study by Weyers (1998), "improving vocabulary using English movie mention that there is no question that video technology, particularly subtitled movies, can be an effective teaching tool for encouraging students to learn and acquire new words. More frequent viewings of movies with subtitles could help students improve their reading, listening, and speaking skills. Therefore, watching movies with English subtitles can improve the vocabulary of students

2.2 Speed reading for fast grasping of English subtitles

The majority of participants stated that speed reading for fast grasping of English subtitles could improve their reading skills. Even though the subtitles are quick, they can fully grasp the story, proving that watching Korean dramas with English subtitles enhances their reading speed effectively.

Szarkowska & Olivia Gerber-Moron (2018), found that the comprehension scores, scene recognition results, and self-reports on the reading experience all show that viewers could follow along even with highly high subtitle speeds. They had ample time to follow the action onscreen and read the subtitles. Moreover, according to Krejtz, I. et al. (2016), exposure to printed text and reading subtitles may improve language proficiency. Watching subtitled videos with realistic conversational settings helps viewers expand their vocabulary, sharpen their word recognition abilities, and increase their reading skills.

2.3 Acquisition of English vocabulary words for effective communication

Seven out of ten participants agreed that watchings Korean Dramas with English Subtitles helped them improve their English communication skills.

Seven out of ten participants said that their English communication skills improved after viewing Korean dramas with English subtitles. They claimed that subtitles improved their comprehension of English vocabulary, deepened their awareness of enhancing their public speaking, mainly if they were in the humanities and social sciences strand, and helped them

Most participants responded that English Subtitles help them understand what they are watching, especially Korean movies, so without the English subtitle, they won't understand the movie they are watching. The participants confirmed that English subtitles improve their reading comprehension and their knowledge to understand subtitles, and by watching Korean dramas, they can comprehend the words used in subtitles.

Ebrahimi & Bazaee (2016), found that students who watch subtitled movies to learn a foreign language had improved reading and listening comprehension, word comprehension, decoding skills, motivation, and vocabulary development. Additionally, subtitles can improve learners' comprehension of English context-dependent expressions and aid in learning new words and idioms. Learners who watch English-language movies and listen to the original dialogue can be encouraged to study English outside of the classroom by using subtitles. Finally, it enables students to follow the plot and events or to improve comprehension.

3. Understanding of English subtitles

Six of the ten participants said that Watching Korean Dramas with English subtitles affected their Reading Comprehension in English.

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Eidetic Insights: Watching Korean dramas with English subtitles enable students to acquire English language skills.

Final Eidetic Insights: Students carefully read Korean dramas with English subtitles with an aim to enhance, if not develop, English language skills.

CONCLUSION

Students' experiences with Korean dramas with English subtitles contain positive and negative aspects. The advantages are visible in that occasionally pausing the Korean drama can strengthen their comprehension, improve their reading skills, expand their vocabulary, gain understanding with listening awareness, and become more motivated to learn English. Students may face difficulties with the speed of the subtitles as it flashes up too quickly, which affects their perception and understanding of the story's message. They believe that multitasking is essential for them to capture the story's message that they watch and eternalize the true meaning of that specific scene.

Students discovered new English vocabulary words while watching Korean dramas, which enabled them to understand the movie with the help of English subtitles. By watching Korean dramas, they could learn about specific and profound words that enhanced their capacity to learn while watching. Speed reading for fast grasping of English improves their reading skills and enhances their reading speed effectively. Viewing Korean dramas with English subtitles boosts their English communication skills, deepens their awareness of enhancing their public speaking, and helps them effectively communicate in English. Students confirmed that it advances their reading comprehension, widens their knowledge of English subtitles, and influences their language literacy.

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