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The Effect of Same-Language Subtitling on Comprehension and Motivation in Remedial University ESL Contexts

Mariam Karaki
English Department, University of Sciences and Arts in Lebanon (USAL), Lebanon, *m.karaki@usal.edu.lb*

Moustapha Fortunato
University of Sciences and Arts in Lebanon, Lebanon & Research Unit "Religion, Culture et Société", Institut Catholique de Paris, France, *m.fortonanto@usal.edu.lb*

This study investigated the effect of Same-Language Subtitling (SLS) on comprehension and motivation among remedial learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) in a university context. It addresses the limited research on the use of SLS in remedial ESL contexts in higher education, which remains underexplored. A quantitative quasi-experimental design was employed using control and experimental groups over a six-week instructional period. The sample consisted of 60 remedial ESL students. Participants were exposed to instructional videos with and without same-language subtitles. Data were collected through pre- and post-comprehension tests and a motivation questionnaire based on the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation. An Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to examine post-intervention comprehension differences while controlling for pretest scores, and paired-samples t-tests were used to analyze changes in motivation. The findings indicated that learners exposed to SLS achieved significantly higher comprehension scores than those who viewed videos without subtitles. In addition, significant increases were observed in perceived success, usefulness, and interest among learners in the experimental group, while motivational changes in the control group were limited. The results suggest that SLS supports both cognitive and motivational dimensions of learning by providing accessible and multimodal input. The study highlights the pedagogical value of integrating same-language subtitling into remedial ESL instruction to enhance comprehension and learner motivation.

Keywords: same-language subtitling, ESL education, learner motivation, comprehension, multimedia learning

INTRODUCTION

The increasing integration of English as a medium of instruction in higher education has intensified the need for effective pedagogical strategies that support learners with

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limited language proficiency. In linguistically diverse educational contexts, university students are frequently required to engage with academic content in English despite persistent challenges in comprehension and confidence (Bacha & Bahous, 2011; Orr & Annous, 2018). These challenges are particularly pronounced among remedial English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, for whom difficulties in understanding spoken academic input can negatively affect engagement, academic performance, and motivation (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). Although exposure to English is widespread through media and digital platforms, such exposure alone does not guarantee language proficiency or meaningful comprehension (Esseili, 2017; Bacus & Alda, 2023). Consequently, educators continue to seek instructional approaches that can simultaneously enhance comprehension and sustain learner motivation. In this context, technology-enhanced learning tools (especially video-based materials) have gained increasing attention due to their potential to provide multimodal input that supports comprehension and learner engagement (Batel, 2014; Perdani, 2022).

The growing use of video-based materials in language education has encouraged researchers to explore specific features that may enhance their instructional effectiveness. Among these features, Same-Language Subtitling (SLS) (the presentation of written text in the same language as the audio) has emerged as a promising pedagogical tool. Research suggests that SLS provides learners with simultaneous access to spoken and written input, which can facilitate comprehension by supporting the processing of unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation, and meaning (Danan, 2004; Ebrahimi, 2016). From a cognitive perspective, this dual presentation aligns with Dual Coding Theory, which posits that learning is enhanced when information is processed through both verbal and visual channels (Clark & Paivio, 1991; Wong & Samudra, 2021). Empirical studies have consistently reported that learners exposed to same-language subtitles demonstrate improved comprehension and vocabulary acquisition compared to learners who view videos without subtitles (Etemadi, 2012; Hayati & Mohmedi, 2011; Latifi et al., 2011). However, much of this research has been conducted in general ESL or EFL contexts and focuses primarily on comprehension outcomes. Limited attention has been given to remedial learners in higher education contexts.

In response to this gap, the present study examined the effect of Same-Language Subtitling (SLS) on both comprehension and motivation among remedial ESL learners in a university setting. Using a quantitative quasi-experimental design, the study compared learners' comprehension outcomes and motivational perceptions when exposed to instructional videos with and without same-language subtitles. Motivation was examined through three domains (perceived success, usefulness, and interest) based on the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (Jones, 2009; Jones et al., 2023). In addition, the study explored the extent to which alignment between SLS-supported video content and remedial ESL curriculum objectives contributed to learners' comprehension and motivation. By integrating cognitive and motivational perspectives, this research aimed to provide empirical evidence on the pedagogical value of SLS in higher education remedial contexts. In doing so, the study extends prior research by examining both comprehension and motivation simultaneously within a remedial ESL population in a university setting, thereby addressing gaps in both scope and context

identified in previous studies. The findings are expected to inform instructional practices and curriculum design by highlighting how multimodal learning tools can support both academic understanding and learner engagement in ESL classrooms.

Context and Review of Literature

English has increasingly assumed a central role in higher education worldwide, functioning not only as a subject of study but also as a primary medium of instruction. This global spread of English has transformed it into a key academic and professional skill, required for access to knowledge, participation in international discourse, and future employability (Rao, 2019; Crystal, 2017). In multilingual educational contexts, learners are often exposed to English extensively through media, technology, and academic environments. However, such exposure does not necessarily translate into effective language proficiency or comprehension, particularly for learners who lack a strong linguistic foundation (Esseili, 2017; Bacus & Alda, 2023). As students transition from secondary to higher education, deficiencies in academic English frequently become more apparent, resulting in the widespread use of remedial English courses aimed at addressing gaps in comprehension and language skills (Orr, 2011). These courses play a critical role in supporting learners who struggle to process spoken academic input, follow lectures, and engage meaningfully with course content delivered in English. Despite their importance, remedial contexts remain underexplored in empirical research, particularly in relation to instructional innovations that target both cognitive and motivational dimensions of learning.

In response to these challenges, the integration of technology into educational practices has increasingly reshaped the teaching and learning process, particularly in language education. Educational institutions worldwide have invested in digital tools and multimedia resources to provide learners with diverse and flexible learning opportunities (Riasati et al., 2012; Dhivya et al., 2023). In ESL contexts, technology has been shown to play a crucial role in enhancing instructional methods and supporting learners' engagement with the target language. Multimedia tools, such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive applications, offer learners exposure to authentic language use and contextualized input, which can facilitate comprehension and retention (LeLoup & Ponterio, 2012). Research has also indicated that language instructors are among the most frequent users of technology in the classroom, as multimedia resources allow for the presentation of content in more engaging and accessible formats (Riasati et al., 2012). Collectively, these findings suggest that multimedia-enhanced instruction not only diversifies input but also creates conditions that support deeper processing and sustained learner engagement. These developments highlight the growing reliance on multimedia-based instruction as a means of addressing diverse learner needs and supporting language acquisition in higher education settings.

Among multimedia tools, video-based learning has received considerable attention in language education due to its capacity to combine visual and auditory input in meaningful ways. Videos allow learners to observe authentic language use, including pronunciation, intonation, gestures, and contextual cues, which are often absent from traditional text-based materials (Batel, 2014). Several studies have demonstrated that

the use of video in ESL classrooms enhances learners' comprehension and engagement by presenting information in a dynamic and contextualized format (Mohammadian et al., 2018). Compared to written texts, video materials have been found to capture learners' attention more effectively and promote better understanding of content, particularly among learners with limited language proficiency (Khalidiyah, 2015). In higher education settings, video-based instruction has also been shown to support motivation by making learning experiences more interactive and relatable to students' real-life experiences (Giannakos, 2013). Yet, these studies often assume that exposure alone is sufficient, overlooking the need for carefully selected and pedagogically supported video materials that can scaffold comprehension for lower-proficiency learners. In this respect, the effectiveness of video-based learning depends not only on the presence of audiovisual input, but also on features such as speech rate, clarity, and duration. Overall, this highlights the need for additional instructional supports to further facilitate comprehension and engagement for ESL learners.

One instructional feature that has gained increasing attention in this regard is Same-Language Subtitling (SLS), which refers to the practice of displaying written captions in the same language as the spoken audio in audiovisual materials. Initially developed as an accessibility tool to support individuals with hearing impairments, SLS was first implemented on television programs to increase media access and literacy (Kothari et al., 2004). One of the earliest large-scale applications of SLS took place in India, where subtitles were added to song-based television programs, allowing viewers to read lyrics while listening to the music. This initiative demonstrated significant improvements in reading skills and language awareness, highlighting the potential of SLS beyond accessibility purposes (Kothari, 2008). Over time, researchers began to recognize the pedagogical value of SLS as a language learning tool, particularly in second and foreign language contexts. By providing learners with synchronized spoken and written input, SLS offers continuous exposure to accurate phonological and orthographic representations of language, creating opportunities for enhanced comprehension and language development (Danan, 2004; Selim, 2011). This multimodal alignment is consistent with Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1991), which suggests that information processed through both verbal and visual channels leads to stronger cognitive representation and recall.

A substantial body of research has examined the impact of Same-Language Subtitling on learners' comprehension in second and foreign language contexts. While most studies (e.g., Etemadi, 2012; Hayati & Mohmedi, 2011; Latifi et al., 2011) report positive effects of SLS on comprehension, these findings are often derived from controlled instructional settings with limited attention to how such effects operate within authentic or remedial academic contexts. Studies consistently suggest that subtitles in the same language as the audio support comprehension by allowing learners to process spoken input while simultaneously confirming meaning through written text (Danan, 2004). This dual exposure facilitates the decoding of unfamiliar vocabulary, improves recognition of word boundaries, and supports the development of listening comprehension skills (Ebrahimi, 2016). Empirical evidence indicates that learners who view videos with same-language subtitles outperform those who view unsubtitled videos on comprehension assessments. For example, Etemadi (2012) found that learners

exposed to bimodal subtitling demonstrated significantly higher comprehension and vocabulary recognition than learners without subtitle support. Similar findings were reported by Hayati and Mohmedi (2011) and Latifi et al. (2011), whose studies revealed that subtitle-supported viewing led to improved listening comprehension and overall understanding of video content, a pattern that continues to be supported in more recent research (Qazi et al., 2023). These findings suggest that SLS reduces cognitive barriers associated with processing spoken language, thereby enabling learners to focus more effectively on meaning construction.

However, some studies have raised concerns regarding the potential drawbacks of subtitle use. For instance, excessive reliance on subtitles may lead to reduced attention to auditory input, potentially limiting the development of listening skills (Li et al., 2022; Metruk, 2018). In addition, the simultaneous processing of audio and text may increase cognitive load for lower-proficiency learners, which could interfere with comprehension in certain contexts (Li et al., 2022).

Despite the consistency of these findings, most studies focus on general language development outcomes within controlled instructional settings, with limited attention to how SLS functions in authentic academic environments. More recent research continues to confirm the effectiveness of subtitle-supported learning, yet it remains centered on isolated language skills rather than the comprehension of academic content in EMI contexts (Haider & Al-Salman, 2022), where learners must process language and content simultaneously.

At the same time, research on listening comprehension highlights the effectiveness of instructional interventions such as strategy-based and metacognitive approaches in improving learners' performance. For example, explicit listening strategy instruction (Fathi, 2019) and metacognitive training (Thitipraserth & Manosuthikit, 2025) have been shown to significantly enhance comprehension outcomes across different proficiency levels. These approaches, however, primarily rely on cognitive regulation and test-oriented practices, without incorporating multimodal or technology-enhanced input. As a result, they may not fully address the demands of processing authentic audiovisual materials in higher education, particularly in EMI settings where learners must integrate linguistic understanding with academic content.

Beyond comprehension, motivation plays a crucial role in successful second language acquisition, influencing learners' engagement, persistence, and willingness to invest effort in learning tasks (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002). The MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (Jones, 2009, 2019) conceptualizes motivation through five components: eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring. In alignment with the focus of the present study, only three dimensions of the model were employed: Success, Usefulness, and Interest. These dimensions are theoretically most directly associated with learners' engagement with instructional content and their perceived ability to understand and benefit from it, which are central aspects of motivation within the MUSIC model framework (Jones, 2009, 2019). In contrast, the dimensions of eMpowerment and Caring relate more to autonomy support and teacher–student relationships, which fall beyond the scope of the present intervention. Research has

suggested that Same-Language Subtitling can positively affect learners' motivation by reducing anxiety and increasing confidence in their ability to understand spoken language. When subtitles are present, learners receive immediate confirmation of their auditory comprehension, which can foster a sense of success and reduce frustration during learning activities (Estaji & Nakhavali, 2011). Activities that integrate familiar elements such as text, audio, and visuals have been shown to make learners feel more comfortable and engaged, thereby enhancing motivation (Jung, 2021; Shelestova et al., 2021). Empirical studies further support this relationship, reporting positive learner attitudes toward the use of same-language subtitles in language learning contexts. For instance, Boudjadjab (2021) found that learners exposed to SLS reported higher levels of motivation, enjoyment, and perceived usefulness of learning materials. Similarly, Gottlieb (2016) emphasized that subtitles enhance visual engagement and enjoyment, which are key contributors to sustained motivation.

Collectively, these findings indicate that SLS supports both cognitive processing and motivational outcomes by increasing learners' interest, perceived usefulness, and confidence in learning a second language. However, prior research has often examined these dimensions separately, with limited integration within a single empirical framework. In addition, research remains limited in exploring how these effects operate in remedial university contexts, particularly when learners engage with academic content across different disciplines. This study addresses these gaps by examining the combined effects of Same-Language Subtitling on both comprehension and motivation within a remedial university ESL context, providing an integrated perspective largely absent in prior research.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, quasi-experimental research design to examine the impact of Same Language Subtitling (SLS) on English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' comprehension and motivation. The design involved a pretest–posttest control group structure, allowing for comparison between learners exposed to instructional videos with SLS and those exposed to the same videos without subtitles. This design was selected as it enables the examination of cause-and-effect relationships while accommodating the natural classroom setting in which random assignment at the individual level is not feasible.

Participants and Setting

The participants were undergraduate students enrolled in remedial English courses at a private university in Lebanon. Their ages ranged from 18 to 22 years, with most falling within the typical undergraduate age range. The sample included both male and female students, with a higher proportion of females. Participants represented a range of academic majors, including business, education, nursing, and computing-related fields, reflecting the heterogeneous nature of remedial English classes.

These courses are designed for students who do not meet the required English proficiency level upon university entry. A total of 70 students initially participated in the study; however, after excluding those with irregular attendance, withdrawals, or

incomplete data, the final sample consisted of 60 students. The participants were divided into two intact classes, one serving as the experimental group and the other as the control group. Students were assigned to sections based on institutional placement test results (scores ranging from 31 to 50) rather than academic discipline, age, or gender.

Research Instruments

This quantitative study employed two primary research instruments: pre- and post-comprehension tests and a motivation questionnaire. These instruments were selected to generate numerical data that would allow for a systematic examination of the effect of Same Language Subtitling (SLS) on learners' comprehension and motivation.

Comprehension Tests (Pretest and Posttest)

Learners' comprehension was measured using pre- and posttests taken from Academic English UK TED Talk lesson materials (Academic English UK, n.d.). These quizzes were used without modification to preserve their original structure and level of difficulty, ensuring consistency and standardization across testing conditions, thereby enhancing content validity. They consisted of short quizzes aligned with the content of the selected TED Talk videos and were designed to assess learners' understanding of key ideas, details, and inferred meaning. The pretest was administered prior to exposure to the intervention to establish baseline comprehension levels, while the posttest was administered after the intervention to measure any changes in comprehension outcomes.

The tests were administered during regular class time under similar conditions for both the control and experimental groups. Students were informed that the tests were not graded for course assessment purposes and were used solely for research. This approach was adopted to reduce test anxiety and encourage authentic performance. The alignment between test content and video materials, as well as consistency in administration conditions, contributed to the validity and reliability of the comprehension measures.

Motivation Questionnaire

Students' motivation toward learning English was measured using a questionnaire based on the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (Jones, 2009, 2019). In alignment with the focus of the present study, only three dimensions of the model were employed: Success, Usefulness, and Interest.

The Success dimension measured students' beliefs about their ability to succeed in the course, the Usefulness dimension assessed perceptions of the relevance and value of learning English, and the Interest dimension examined students' engagement and enjoyment in English learning activities. The dimensions of eMpowerment and Caring were not included, as they fall beyond the scope of the present intervention.

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Agree (5)* to *Strongly Disagree (1)*. The same questionnaire was administered before and after the intervention to examine changes in motivation over time. The MUSIC Model inventory has been widely validated in higher

education and ESL contexts, demonstrating strong psychometric properties across diverse cultural settings (Jones et al., 2023).

Procedure

Both groups completed a comprehension pretest and a motivation questionnaire prior to the intervention. Over a period of six weeks, students watched the same short TED Talk videos during regular class sessions. The instructional videos were selected based on specific pedagogical criteria to ensure appropriateness for remedial learners. First, all videos ranged between 3 to 5 minutes in length to maintain attention and reduce cognitive load. Second, the difficulty level was determined based on linguistic features, including the use of American English and a moderate speech rate. Speech rate was estimated using words per minute (WPM), with selected videos averaging approximately 130 words per minute, which is slightly slower than typical conversational speech, thereby facilitating comprehension for lower-proficiency learners. Third, videos were chosen based on their relevance and educational value, ensuring alignment with university-level topics. For example, the TED Talk *"Keep Your Goals to Yourself"* (3 minutes and 45 seconds) was included due to its accessible language and relevance to students' experiences.

The experimental group viewed videos with same-language subtitles, while the control group viewed the videos without subtitles. All videos were presented once per session under controlled classroom conditions, and subtitle presentation remained consistent across all sessions in terms of format and timing. After each viewing, students completed in-class comprehension quizzes based on the video content as part of their regular coursework. These post-viewing activities were identical for both groups and served to assess immediate comprehension. No additional pre-viewing instructional scaffolding was provided, allowing the study to isolate the effect of subtitle use on learners' comprehension and motivation.

At the end of the intervention period, both groups completed a posttest comprehension assessment and the post-motivation questionnaire. All data were collected under similar classroom conditions to minimize the influence of extraneous variables. To strengthen internal validity, both the experimental and control groups were taught by the same instructor using identical instructional materials, procedures, and assessment conditions. This approach minimized potential confounding variables related to teaching style, instructional delivery, and classroom management. The only systematic difference between the two groups was the presence or absence of same-language subtitles during video viewing, allowing for a more accurate attribution of any observed differences in outcomes to the intervention itself.

As the study employed intact classes, random assignment at the individual level was not feasible. While this is a common constraint in educational research, it may introduce potential group-level differences. To mitigate this limitation, both groups were selected from the same course level, were comparable in terms of placement criteria, and were exposed to equivalent instructional conditions. Baseline comparability was supported by the similarity of pretest comprehension scores between the control group (M = 5.93, SD = 1.08) and the experimental group (M = 5.77, SD = 1.36). In addition, pretest scores

were statistically controlled in the ANCOVA, which further helped account for any initial differences between groups. However, as intact classes were used, the possibility of pre-existing group differences cannot be entirely ruled out.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. An Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to examine differences in posttest comprehension scores between the experimental and control groups while controlling for pretest scores. Changes in motivation were analyzed using paired-samples *t*-tests to compare pre- and post-questionnaire results within each group. Reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

As separate *t*-tests were conducted for each motivation subdomain, the potential for increased Type I error is acknowledged. However, given the limited number of comparisons and the exploratory nature of the analysis, no correction for multiple testing was applied.

FINDINGS

Comprehension Results

This section presents the findings related to learners' comprehension performance in both the control and experimental groups. Prior to analysis, data from students who withdrew from the course, demonstrated irregular attendance, or were identified as having special educational needs were excluded to ensure data consistency. Exclusions were applied consistently across both groups prior to statistical analysis. The final sample consisted of 60 students, equally distributed between the control group (without subtitles) and the experimental group (with Same Language Subtitles).

Descriptive statistics for the pretest and posttest comprehension scores are presented in Table 1. As shown in the table, both groups demonstrated increases in mean scores from pretest to posttest. The magnitude of improvement, however, was greater for the experimental group than for the control group. These results are descriptive and do not indicate statistical significance.

Table 1
Comparison of mean and standard deviation for comprehension pretest and posttest scores in control and experimental groups

Group	Test	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	Pretest	30	4	8	5.93	1.081
Control	Posttest	30	5	8	6.77	0.971
Experimental	Pretest	30	3	8	5.77	1.357
Experimental	Posttest	30	4	9	7.30	1.022

Preliminary screening indicated that assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of regression slopes, and homogeneity of variances were met, supporting the use of ANCOVA for data analysis.

To determine whether differences in posttest comprehension scores were statistically significant after controlling for pretest performance, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. These results address Research Question 1, which examined differences in comprehension performance between learners exposed to Same Language Subtitles and those who were not.

Table 2
ANCOVA results for posttest comprehension scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4.418	2	2.209	2.189	.121	.071
Intercept	112.720	1	112.720	111.710	.000	.662
Pretest (Covariate)	.151	1	.151	.150	.700	.003
Group	4.358	1	4.358	4.319	.042	.070
Error	57.515	57	1.009			
Corrected Total	61.933	59				

As shown in Table 2, the effect of group (control vs. experimental) on posttest comprehension scores was statistically significant, $F(1, 57) = 4.319$, $p = .042$, after controlling for pretest scores. This result indicates a statistically significant difference in posttest comprehension performance between learners who were exposed to videos with Same Language Subtitles and those who watched videos without subtitles.

The pretest covariate was not statistically significant ($p = .700$), suggesting that initial differences in comprehension did not significantly contribute to posttest outcomes.

The partial eta squared value associated with the group variable was .070, corresponding to a medium effect size. This indicates that a moderate proportion of variance in posttest comprehension scores was associated with group membership.

Motivation Results

This section presents the findings related to learners' motivation toward learning English in both the control and experimental groups. Motivation was measured using a questionnaire based on selected dimensions of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation, specifically success, usefulness, and interest. The questionnaire was administered to both groups before and after the intervention. These findings address Research Question 2, which examined changes in learners' motivation following exposure to Same Language Subtitles.

Reliability of the Motivation Questionnaire

Internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. For the control group, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the pretest ranged from .73 to .91 across the three domains, indicating acceptable to excellent internal consistency. Posttest reliability coefficients for the control group ranged from .73 to .87.

For the experimental group, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .70 to .94 for the pretest and from .83 to .90 for the posttest, indicating acceptable to excellent internal consistency across all motivation domains.

Motivation Results for the Control Group

Descriptive statistics for the control group's pre- and post-questionnaire scores are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Pretest and posttest mean scores for motivation domains – control group

Motivation Domain	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Difference
Success	2.93	2.73	−0.20
Usefulness	3.93	4.33	+0.40
Interest	3.21	3.01	−0.20

Paired-samples *t*-tests indicated a statistically significant decrease in success ($p = .031$) and interest ($p = .003$), as well as a statistically significant increase in usefulness ($p = .001$).

Motivation Results for the Experimental Group

Descriptive statistics for the experimental group's pre- and post-questionnaire scores are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Pretest and posttest mean scores for motivation domains – experimental group

Motivation Domain	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Difference
Success	2.80	3.40	+0.60
Usefulness	3.50	4.23	+0.73
Interest	3.43	4.07	+0.64

Paired-samples *t*-tests revealed statistically significant increases across all three motivation domains ($p < .05$), indicating higher posttest motivation scores for learners exposed to videos with Same Language Subtitles.

Comparison Between Control and Experimental Groups

When comparing changes in motivation scores across groups, the control group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in usefulness only, alongside decreases in success and interest. In contrast, the experimental group demonstrated statistically significant increases across all three motivation domains.

These results indicate different patterns of motivational change between learners exposed to Same Language Subtitles and those who were not, as reflected in pre- and post-intervention questionnaire scores.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of Same Language Subtitling (SLS) on comprehension and motivation among ESL remedial learners in a Lebanese university context. The findings indicate that learners exposed to videos with Same Language Subtitles achieved significantly higher comprehension scores than those who viewed the same videos without subtitles. In addition, exposure to SLS was associated with statistically significant improvements in learners' motivation across the domains of

perceived success, usefulness, and interest, whereas learners in the control group demonstrated mixed motivational outcomes. Taken together, these results suggest that the integration of SLS into instructional videos may offer measurable benefits for both cognitive and motivational dimensions of language learning, particularly for learners enrolled in remedial English courses.

Building on this overview, the following sections interpret the comprehension and motivation findings in relation to relevant theoretical frameworks and prior research, while situating the outcomes within the Lebanese higher education context.

Comprehension, Dual Coding, and Cognitive Load

The significant improvement in comprehension observed among learners exposed to Same Language Subtitling can be interpreted through the complementary lenses of Dual Coding Theory and Cognitive Load Theory. According to Dual Coding Theory, learning is enhanced when information is presented simultaneously through verbal and visual channels, allowing learners to construct parallel cognitive representations that support understanding and recall (Clark & Paivio, 1991; Paivio, 1991). In the present study, learners in the experimental group received linguistic input both aurally and visually through subtitles that mirrored the spoken content. This dual presentation may have facilitated deeper processing of the language input, contributing to higher posttest comprehension scores even after controlling for pretest performance.

In parallel, Cognitive Load Theory offers further insight into these comprehension gains. From this perspective, instructional supports that reduce unnecessary processing demands on working memory promote more effective learning (Kirschner, 2002). For remedial learners, who often struggle to process continuous spoken input in a second language, Same Language Subtitling may function as a scaffold that clarifies meaning in real time without requiring excessive inferencing or mental translation. By distributing information across auditory and visual channels, SLS may reduce extraneous cognitive load, allowing learners to allocate cognitive resources more efficiently and increasing the likelihood that information is successfully encoded into long-term memory.

This interpretation is consistent with instructional research indicating that structured multimodal support can enhance comprehension, particularly when instructional materials are aligned with learners' proficiency levels and learning needs (Brković et al., 2021). The medium effect size identified in the ANCOVA analysis further supports the conclusion that SLS appears to contribute meaningfully to comprehension outcomes rather than producing only marginal gains. Rather than simply reflecting improved test performance, these findings suggest that Same Language Subtitling may be associated with more efficient processing of spoken input, enabling learners to focus on meaning construction rather than on decoding individual words.

While these findings underscore the cognitive benefits of SLS, comprehension alone does not fully explain learners' engagement with language learning tasks. Motivation, especially among remedial learners, plays a central role in sustaining effort and

participation. Accordingly, the next section addresses the motivational outcomes observed in the study.

Motivation, Self-Efficacy, and the MUSIC Model

The motivation findings further illuminate the pedagogical value of Same Language Subtitling in ESL contexts. Learners exposed to SLS demonstrated statistically significant increases across all measured motivation domains (success, usefulness, and interest) whereas learners in the control group showed declines in perceived success and interest over the same period. Interestingly, while perceived success and interest decreased in the control group, perceived usefulness showed a slight increase, reflecting a contrasting motivational pattern. One possible explanation is that usefulness represents a relatively stable judgment about the value of learning English for academic and future professional purposes, whereas success and interest are more sensitive to learners' immediate classroom experiences. In this study, students in the control group may have continued to perceive English as important, yet the absence of subtitle support may have made the learning tasks feel more effortful and less manageable. As a result, repeated difficulty in following the video content may have weakened learners' confidence in their ability to succeed and reduced the extent to which they found the activities engaging or enjoyable. This pattern is consistent with motivational perspectives suggesting that perceived competence and situational interest are closely shaped by the quality of learners' ongoing task experience, while judgments of usefulness may remain relatively stable even when immediate performance is challenging. These patterns can be interpreted through Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the role of self-efficacy and outcome expectations in shaping learners' motivation and persistence (Bandura, 1997). As learners in the experimental group were better able to comprehend video content with the support of subtitles, repeated experiences of successful task completion may have strengthened their beliefs in their own capabilities, thereby enhancing perceived success.

These motivational trends are also consistent with the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation, particularly the components of success, usefulness, and interest (Jones, 2009). The observed increase in perceived usefulness suggests that learners viewed the instructional materials as more relevant and applicable when comprehension barriers were reduced. Similarly, gains in interest may reflect heightened engagement resulting from clearer access to meaning and reduced frustration during listening tasks. Comparable findings have been reported in technology-enhanced EFL learning environments, where instructional supports were shown to sustain learners' motivation and improve performance over time (Suharno et al., 2023). Collectively, these findings indicate that SLS appears to support cognitive processing and may foster motivational conditions essential for sustained engagement in language learning, particularly for students enrolled in remedial courses. To further contextualize these results, it is important to examine how they align with and extend prior research on Same Language Subtitling in second language learning.

Comparison with Prior SLS Studies

The findings of the present study align with a growing body of research highlighting the positive role of Same Language Subtitling in second language learning. Previous studies have consistently reported improvements in learners' comprehension when subtitles are provided in the same language as the audio input. For example, Danan (2004) emphasized that captioning supports comprehension by enabling learners to visually reinforce what they hear, while Hayati and Mohmedi (2011) and Etemadi (2012) found that learners exposed to subtitled videos outperformed those without subtitles on comprehension measures. Similarly, Chai and Erlam (2008) reported enhanced recall and understanding among learners exposed to same-language captions, suggesting that subtitles facilitate more efficient processing of linguistic input.

The present study extends this research by demonstrating the effectiveness of SLS within a remedial ESL context in higher education, a population that has received comparatively limited attention in prior studies. While much of the existing literature focuses on general EFL or ESL populations, the current findings suggest that SLS may be particularly beneficial for learners who experience persistent difficulties in language comprehension. Moreover, the motivational gains observed in this study complement earlier work indicating that subtitles can enhance learner engagement and positive attitudes toward language learning (Hafferssas, 2021). By documenting concurrent improvements in both comprehension and motivation, this study supports the view of SLS as a multifaceted instructional support rather than a purely comprehension-focused tool. Beyond alignment with prior research, the relevance of these findings becomes even more pronounced when examined within the Lebanese educational context.

Lebanese and Remedial Learner Context

The findings of this study are especially meaningful within the Lebanese higher education context, where English functions as a primary medium of instruction across many disciplines and academic success is closely tied to language proficiency (Bacha & Bahous, 2011; Orr & Annous, 2018). Remedial ESL learners in this context often face cumulative challenges related to prior educational gaps, limited academic exposure to English, and pressure to perform in content courses delivered in a second language. Within such conditions, instructional supports that directly address comprehension barriers are particularly valuable.

The observed gains in comprehension and motivation among learners exposed to Same Language Subtitling suggest that SLS may serve as an accessible and contextually appropriate support for students who are required to operate academically in English despite uneven language preparation. By facilitating clearer access to spoken input without altering curricular content, SLS aligns well with the instructional realities of Lebanese universities and offers a practical means of supporting language development within existing course structures.

While these findings offer important insights, they should be interpreted with appropriate caution. In particular, although the findings of this study support the positive role of Same Language Subtitling in enhancing comprehension and motivation,

it is important to consider that these effects may be influenced by additional factors inherent to the instructional context. For example, the presence of subtitles may have increased learners' attention and facilitated more focused engagement with the video content, which could have contributed to the observed outcomes. Rather than diminishing the value of SLS, this suggests that its effectiveness may operate through multiple complementary mechanisms, including both linguistic support and enhanced learner engagement. Furthermore, although the findings align with prior research, the effectiveness of subtitles may vary depending on learner proficiency, task complexity, and instructional design. Therefore, the benefits observed in this study should be understood as contextually grounded, highlighting the importance of aligning SLS use with learners' needs and instructional conditions.

LIMITATIONS

Methodologically, this study contributes to the literature by employing a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest design with a control group and by examining both comprehension and motivation within a single investigation. The use of ANCOVA to control for baseline comprehension strengthened internal validity, while the inclusion of validated instruments and reliability analyses enhanced measurement rigor. Assessing multiple motivational domains alongside comprehension also allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of learners' responses to Same Language Subtitling, particularly within a remedial higher education context.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted within a single institutional setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings beyond similar educational contexts. Second, although the sample size was sufficient for the planned statistical analyses and yielded a statistically significant group effect with a medium effect size, larger and more diverse samples would allow for stronger generalization and the examination of smaller effects. In addition, the intervention spanned a relatively short duration; therefore, the findings reflect short-term outcomes rather than long-term language development. Finally, motivation was assessed through self-reported questionnaire data, which may be influenced by learners' perceptions at the time of completion. Future research could address these limitations by adopting longitudinal designs, expanding samples across multiple institutions, and incorporating qualitative methods to explore learners' experiences with Same Language Subtitling in greater depth.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of Same Language Subtitling (SLS) on comprehension and motivation among ESL remedial learners in a Lebanese university context. Using a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest design with control and experimental groups, the findings indicate that learners exposed to instructional videos with Same Language Subtitles achieved significantly higher comprehension scores than those who viewed the same videos without subtitles. These results remained statistically significant after controlling for pretest performance, suggesting that SLS may be associated with improved comprehension outcomes.

In addition to cognitive gains, the study revealed notable motivational benefits associated with SLS. Learners in the experimental group showed statistically significant increases in perceived success, usefulness, and interest, whereas learners in the control group experienced declines in perceived success and interest over the same instructional period. These findings suggest that SLS may support learners' understanding of spoken input and may positively influence motivational factors that are critical for sustained engagement in language learning, particularly among remedial students.

The results of this study align with established theoretical frameworks, including Dual Coding Theory, Cognitive Load Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory. By providing simultaneous auditory and visual linguistic input, Same Language Subtitling appears to facilitate more efficient processing of spoken English while reducing comprehension-related frustration. This, in turn, may enhance learners' self-efficacy and perceived value of the learning task, contributing to higher motivation levels. While these findings are consistent with prior research, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from a remedial ESL population in higher education, a context that has received limited attention in previous SLS research.

From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the potential of Same Language Subtitling as a low-cost, easily implementable instructional support in ESL classrooms. For institutions that rely heavily on English as a medium of instruction, particularly in contexts where students enter university with varying levels of language proficiency, integrating SLS into video-based instruction may offer an effective means of supporting both comprehension and motivation without altering curricular content.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations that should be acknowledged. In particular, the use of intact classes without random assignment limits the ability to draw strong causal conclusions, while the study's implementation within a single institutional context may restrict the generalizability of the findings across different educational settings. Additionally, the research was conducted over a relatively short duration, which may limit the applicability of the findings to long-term language development. Finally, motivation was assessed through self-reported questionnaire data, which may be influenced by learners' perceptions at the time of completion. Future research is encouraged to examine the sustained effects of SLS over extended periods, explore its impact across diverse educational contexts, and incorporate qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences.

From a practical instructional perspective, Same Language Subtitling can be integrated into classroom practice through structured lesson design. For example, instructors may incorporate pre-viewing activities to introduce key vocabulary, followed by guided video viewing with subtitles to support real-time comprehension. During viewing, learners can focus on aligning spoken and written input, while post-viewing activities such as comprehension questions, peer discussion, and short reflections can reinforce understanding. In addition, the level of subtitle support may be gradually adjusted based on learners' proficiency to encourage more independent listening over time. Such structured integration allows SLS to function as an intentional component of instructional design rather than a passive support tool.

In conclusion, the study provides empirical evidence that Same Language Subtitling appears to be a promising pedagogical tool for enhancing comprehension and motivation among ESL remedial learners. By addressing both cognitive and motivational dimensions of language learning, SLS holds potential as an supportive instructional strategy in higher education settings where learners face persistent challenges in English language acquisition.

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