

Effects of Captioned Film Clips on Incidental Learning of Lexical Collocations and Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategy Use Among Saudi EFL Learners

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Abstract—Exposure to collocations in real-life film dialogues could enhance language acquisition and engagement among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). This study investigates the effectiveness of captioned film clips in Saudi female EFL students' incidental learning of three categories of lexical collocations. It also examines cognitive and metacognitive strategy use by successful learners of lexical collocations. Furthermore, it explores students' perceptions of using films as a learning tool for English vocabulary. The sample comprised 88 Saudi female EFL university students. The participants were divided into a control group ($n = 43$) and an experimental group ($n = 45$). A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data was collected through a pretest and posttest on three categories of lexical collocations and a questionnaire about cognitive and metacognitive learning strategy use. The qualitative data was collected from semi-structured interviews with five participants. The results showed that the intervention significantly improved the students' incidental learning of lexical collocations. Moreover, it revealed that successful learners of lexical collocations employed various cognitive and metacognitive strategies, with a notable emphasis on metacognitive strategies. Additionally, qualitative analysis revealed that students perceived films as practical tools for improving vocabulary, as they provide authentic language exposure and motivation for learning. The study suggests incorporating captioned film clips into EFL collocation instruction to enhance EFL learners' collocational competence. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of strategic awareness in achieving collocation mastery and raising EFL students' understanding of effective learning strategies to improve collocation learning outcomes, particularly for less successful learners.

Index Terms—collocations, EFL teaching, film-based instruction, language-learning strategies, incidental vocabulary learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary learning is crucial for language acquisition, whether for a second or a foreign language (Morra & Camba, 2009). In learning English, sufficient vocabulary knowledge is fundamental for effective communication (Widdowson, 1989). Researchers have recently focused on teaching multi-word units, especially collocations (Choi, 2017), which account for as much as 70% of everyday language use (Hill, 2000). Collocations are combinations of words that frequently and naturally occur side by side (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005). They are categorized into two types: grammatical and lexical. Grammatical collocations combine a controlling word (verb, noun, adjective) with a grammatical word (e.g., preposition), such as "make up" or "concern about". Lexical collocations, in contrast, consist of content words like nouns, verbs, and adjectives, such as "make a mistake" and "traffic accident" (Benson et al., 1997). These combinations are crucial for grasping a language and producing coherent and fluent speech (Benson et al., 1997). Thus, a lack of familiarity with these patterns can lead to communication barriers and misunderstandings (Wray & Perkins, 2000), and the fluency of non-native speakers often relies on their grasp of formulaic language (Aghbar, 1990).

Collocation proficiency is essential for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) to achieve native-like fluency (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993). Mastering multi-word sequences enhances communicative competence and allows fluent, idiomatic language use (Henriksen, 2013). The acquisition of collocational competence in second-language (L2) and EFL learners is influenced by various factors, including language-learning strategies (LLSs; Tabak & Takač, 2023). A LLS, which aids in understanding, retaining, and recalling information (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), enhances proficiency, boosts confidence, and improves retention (Oxford, 1990). The varying degrees of success among learners has led to interest in exploring the behavior of good language learners, which revealed effective strategies that can be applied by less successful learners for improved outcomes (Chamot, 2008). Studies on the use of LLSs in vocabulary acquisition have indicated that good language learners, who are also considered successful language learners, use diverse cognitive and metacognitive strategies, while less successful ones tend to rely on basic cognitive approaches (Alasmari, 2019; Alsharif, 2022; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011).

Equally important for effective LLS use is the perceptions of EFL students regarding integrating educational audio-visual resources, especially films, into language-teaching practices. According to Lynne (2001; as cited in Amalia, 2017), students' interest is a significant determinant of the effectiveness of English-language instruction. Previous research has shown that watching films improves vocabulary acquisition and significantly boosts students' engagement and motivation in the learning process. Notable studies conducted by Kabooha (2016), Albiladi et al. (2018), Sari and Aminatun (2021), and Maulida and Warni (2024) further support the idea that incorporating films into language learning can lead to enhanced vocabulary-learning outcomes.

In Saudi Arabia, university students majoring in English are expected to be proficient and sound natural in their language use. However, many struggle with producing accurate collocations. For example, they might say "create pain" instead of "inflict pain", "powerful tea" instead of "strong tea", or "beauty disappears" instead of "beauty fades". These errors indicate a deficiency in collocational competence (El-Dakhs, 2015). The difficulty with collocations arises from limited resources and insufficient exposure to the English language (Alsakran, 2011; Al-Nasser, 2015). For instance, native speakers naturally absorb language chunks from their environment (Altuwairesh, 2016), while EFL learners find this challenging due to their restricted exposure to authentic English (Nesselhauf, 2003). Another contributing factor is individual learning methods; students often employ ineffective strategies for learning collocations, which hinders their development of English lexical collocations (Noor & Adubaib, 2011).

Audio-visual resources can significantly enhance EFL learning, especially since authentic language exposure is vital (Alsakran, 2011; Al-Nasser, 2015). Captioned film clips, in particular, provide a rich combination of L2 text, images, and sounds, offering clear input that reinforces verbal messages and links individual words, leading to an engaging learning experience (Gorjian, 2014; Vanderplank, 1990; Choi, 2017). These resources can also aid incidental learning in which learners focus on understanding communication rather than intentionally learning new terms (Ellis & He, 1999). This approach can help address the time constraints that EFL instructors often face when providing explicit instruction on all L2 collocations. Previous studies have indicated that captioned films are effective for incidental collocation learning (Güler & Buyukkarci, 2020; Teng, 2022). However, there is limited research on their effects on Saudi female EFL learners at the university level or on how successful and less successful learners use cognitive and metacognitive strategies for collocation acquisition. Understanding the role of these strategies is essential for improving vocabulary acquisition and for helping educators enhance their teaching methods by guiding less successful learners in employing effective learning strategies.

This research aims to fill a significant gap in the literature by conducting an experimental study into the impact of captioned film clips on Saudi female EFL learners' incidental learning of lexical collocations and students' perceptions of films as a learning tool for English vocabulary. It also examines reported experiences of successful and less successful learners using cognitive and metacognitive strategies in lexical collocation learning. The study has valuable pedagogical implications for EFL instructors and practitioners, particularly concerning collocation instruction, LLSs, and film-based language teaching. The findings could enhance collocation instruction methodologies and empower EFL learners to adopt more effective learning strategies in their collocation learning. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1) Does watching captioned film clips significantly increase incidental vocabulary learning of lexical collocations for Saudi female EFL learners?
- (2) Is there a significant difference between how successful and less successful Saudi female EFL learners use cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies to learn lexical collocations?
- (3) How do Saudi female EFL learners perceive films as a learning tool for English vocabulary?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Lexical Collocations

According to Benson et al. (1997), lexical collocations involve content words, including nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, such as "pay attention" (which includes a verb and a noun). They differ from grammatical collocations in that they do not contain function words (e.g., prepositions or infinitives). Benson et al. (1997) further identify six subtypes of lexical collocations: verb + noun or adverb, noun + verb or noun, adverb + adjective, and adjective + noun. This research focuses specifically on three subtypes of lexical collocations: noun + verb, verb + noun, and adjective + noun, as illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1
SUBTYPES AND EXAMPLES OF LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS RECOGNIZED IN THE STUDY (JAFF, 2013)

Description or structure	Examples
Noun + Verb noun + verb that describes the activity performed by someone designated by this noun (Jaff, 2013)	<i>bombs explode, bees sting</i>
Verb + Noun verb (indicating an action or creation) + noun/pronoun/prepositional phrase	<i>come to an agreement, launch a missile</i>
Adjective + Noun adjective + noun, or noun used in an attributive way + noun (Jaff, 2013)	<i>strong tea, a crushing defeat, house arrest, land reform</i>

Channel (1981) argues that vocabulary instruction should include collocations. The author asserts that collocations provide important contexts and opportunities for connecting words, which can benefit vocabulary acquisition. However, the literature indicates that errors in lexical collocations can lead to more severe communication difficulties than grammatical errors do (Bahardoust & Moeini, 2012). Additionally, L2 learners tend to make more mistakes with collocations than with grammar (Mahmoud, 2005). Moreover, research has shown that learners make more errors in lexical collocations than in grammatical collocations (Anwar & Khan, 2012; Mahmoud, 2005). Anwar and Khan (2012) found that EFL students produced significantly more errors in lexical collocations than in grammatical ones (52.68% vs. 11.61%, respectively). Similarly, Mahmoud (2005) reports that, in the English of Arab university students, 53.33% of lexical combinations were incorrect, while only 10.71% of grammatical combinations were erroneous.

B. Language-Learning Strategies

The concept of LLSs is diverse and widely debated in L2 and EFL research. Rose (2012) notes that Oxford's (1990) classification is the most commonly used and divides LLSs into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies involve manipulating language through memory, cognitive, and compensation techniques, while indirect strategies facilitate learning via metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Memory strategies involve creating mental associations, using imagery and sound, performing actions, and thoroughly reviewing information. Cognitive strategies, which are crucial for language acquisition, include techniques such as summarizing and deductive reasoning. According to Oxford (1990), these strategies consist of four main components: practicing communication, sending and receiving messages, analyzing and reasoning, and organizing both input and output. Compensation strategies help learners make intelligent guesses and overcome challenges in writing and speaking. Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, operate either independently or alongside cognitive processes, enabling learners to manage their learning effectively. These strategies include evaluating, organizing, planning, and setting learning goals. Both memory and cognitive strategies are essential for successful language learning (Oxford, 1990). Affective strategies aim to reduce anxiety, enhance motivation, and regulate emotions, while social strategies encourage more interaction with the target language. Both L2 and EFL learners use these strategies to learn new words and phrases (Nation, 2001; Catalán, 2003). Oxford also categorizes vocabulary-learning strategies into direct methods such as dictionaries and lists and indirect methods emphasizing planning, regulating, and evaluating vocabulary learning. Moreover, Gu and Johnson (1996) identified two essential dimensions of vocabulary acquisition strategies: metacognitive regulation and cognitive strategies.

(a). Language-Learning Strategy Use and Successful Language Learning

Oxford and Crookall (1989) found that successful language learners effectively combine cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Rees-Miller (1993) argues that such learners employ cognitive strategies such as seeking clarification, verifying information, and making inferences, along with metacognitive strategies that involve organizing their learning and prioritizing approaches (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Oxford, 1990). Research has indicated that successful learners use a greater variety of LLSs that are more appropriate for specific tasks than less successful learners (Ramirez, 1986; Stern, 1983). A study by Gerami and Baighlou (2011) revealed that successful Iranian EFL students frequently used metacognitive strategies, while unsuccessful students tended to rely on basic cognitive techniques.

(b). Cognitive and Metacognitive Learning Strategy Use and Successful Vocabulary Learning

Even when it is assumed that frequently employing a combination of strategies in language learning has a more significant impact on language learning than using a single strategy, Graham (1997, pp. 42–43) argues that the differences between cognitive and metacognitive strategies in vocabulary acquisition are significant in that they assist in identifying the strategies that are most critical in determining the success of learning. Graham (1997) emphasizes that these strategies differ significantly in their roles: Cognitive strategies focus on execution (e.g., practice and review), while metacognitive strategies support understanding and regulation of learning. Moreover, Anderson (2003) claims that metacognitive strategies are particularly vital, as learners who manage their learning effectively tend to progress quickly. For instance, Alasmari (2019) conducted a case study to examine how a successful language learner in Saudi Arabia acquires vocabulary. The study found that the successful learner uses two main strategies: metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies. The findings suggest that these vocabulary-acquisition techniques could benefit low-level students in improving their vocabulary learning. Moreover, Alsharif (2022) investigated the vocabulary-learning techniques used by Saudi female EFL learners and their impact on vocabulary acquisition. Data from an online survey revealed that metacognitive learning techniques were the most commonly used. The study suggested that enhancing metacognitive strategies could improve vocabulary knowledge. Although previous findings regarding the strategies employed by successful and less successful learners in vocabulary acquisition have been informative, little research has investigated the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies by successful and less successful learners in collocation acquisition (Oxford, 1990; Graham, 1997).

C. Films in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Vocabulary Instruction

Research on collocation instruction indicates that EFL learners can acquire vocabulary through explicit teaching or incidental learning, which occurs through repeated exposure (Mackin, 1978). Incidental learning, in which learners focus on understanding communication rather than intentionally learning new terms, is significant for vocabulary acquisition

(Ellis & He, 1999). Recent technological advancements have led to exploration of incidental vocabulary acquisition using tools such as 3D simulations and interactive games (Huang & Yang, 2012). Few studies, however, have examined incidental collocation learning through films (Güler & Buyukkarci, 2020; Teng, 2022). Güler and Buyukkarci (2020) investigated the effects of different input modes, such as captioned vs. non-captioned, on incidental collocation learning. They divided students into two groups: One group watched films with captions, and the other watched without. After six weeks, both groups were tested on their content comprehension. While the experimental group scored higher, the difference was not significant. Interviews showed that students in the experimental group held positive attitudes toward captioned films.

Additionally, Teng (2022) explored the effects of captioning modes (full captioning, keyword captioning, and no captioning) and other instructional methods, such as advanced organizers, on students' incidental learning of collocations. Advanced organizers were a teaching method in the study that was used to help learners integrate prior knowledge and organize their thoughts and ideas to improve comprehension of input. The results showed that full captioning improved performance in incidental learning of collocations compared to keyword captioning or the absence of captioning. Moreover, the use of the advanced organizer technique also improved outcomes. Despite previous studies suggesting the benefits of captioned films for incidental learning of vocabulary, including collocations, research is needed into their effects on EFL students' incidental learning of lexical collocations and the individual factors influencing the acquisition of collocational competence such as the use of LLSs.

D. EFL Students' Perceptions of Using Films to Learn Vocabulary

The literature indicates that students' perceptions of incorporating films into EFL language teaching are generally positive. For instance, Albiladi et al. (2018) found that they perceived films as authentic resources for enhancing their proficiency in all language skills, specifically vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Sari and Aminatun (2021) found that students had favorable views on using English films to improve vocabulary development. Moreover, Maulida and Warni (2024) reported that exposure to diverse language inputs improved vocabulary, accent, and pronunciation. In addition, Kabooha (2016) conducted a study in Saudi Arabia that revealed that both students and teachers held positive attitudes toward using films in their classes to enhance language skills. The study suggested that carefully selected film materials can improve the language-learning process and increase students' motivation to learn the target language.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. The quantitative data was collected through a test assessing three types of lexical collocations and a questionnaire regarding participants' cognitive and metacognitive strategy use. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data of the participants' perceptions of using films as a tool for learning English vocabulary.

B. Participants

The study employed a convenience sampling method to select participants. The researcher was assigned to instruct four distinct classes of university students in the first semester of the academic year 2024–2025. These classes were therefore chosen as the study's sample group. The sample comprised 88 Saudi female EFL university students in the English language and Literature Department at a Saudi university. They were divided into a control group ($n = 43$) and an experimental group ($n = 45$). The ages of the participants varied, ranging from 18 to 24 years, representing a typical age group for university students in this context.

C. Instruments

(a). Test

The objective of the test was to assess the students' mastery of three categories of lexical collocations: Noun + Verb (N.V), Verb + Noun (V.N), and Adjective + Noun (Adj.N). The test was used as both a pretest and a posttest and was adopted from the Cengage website. This website provides customized course materials tailored to higher education institutions and specific needs. The test items effectively target the three categories being investigated. In the first part, participants were required to match nouns with verbs to create appropriate N.V. collocations (20 items). The second part prompted them to match verbs with nouns to form suitable V.N. collocations (20 items). Lastly, participants were provided with a list of adjectives and asked to construct complete sentences that pair each adjective with a noun to create an appropriate Adj.N. collocation (10 items). Participants were instructed to use each word only once in each section of the test.

(b). Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

The study adopted the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0, developed by Oxford in 1990. The SILL questionnaire helps assess how people use LLSs and how these strategies relate to factors such as age, gender, proficiency, learning style, and culture. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* was used. The SILL has 50 items across six categories: (a) Memory Strategies (9 items), (b) Cognitive Strategies (14 items), (c)

Compensation Strategies (6 items), (d) Metacognitive Strategies (9 items), (e) Affective Strategies (6 items), and (f) Social Strategies (6 items). The study focused on the 23 items related to metacognitive and cognitive strategies to identify what learning strategies successful and less successful language learners employ to learn lexical collocations.

(c). *Semi-Structured Interviews*

The study employed semi-structured interviews to gather data about the students' experiences of using films as a learning tool for English vocabulary. Five participants were randomly selected from the experimental group and interviewed for approximately 25 minutes each. They were encouraged to provide in-depth responses. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

(d). *Instrument Validity and Reliability*

The collocation test used in this study was peer-reviewed and validated by three professors of applied linguistics from the English Language and Literature Department at a university in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the internal consistency reliability of both instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a satisfactory value ($\alpha > 0.70$). The reliability tests for the lexical collocation instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.899 for the pretest and 0.907 for the posttest, based on 50 items. Additionally, the reliability tests for the LLS questionnaire indicated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.889 for the pretest and 0.867 for the posttest, based on 23 items. These values suggest that the items within each test are well-correlated and consistently measure the same underlying construct, indicating a high level of reliability (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
RELIABILITY STATISTICS FOR THE STUDY INSTRUMENTS

Instrument		Items	Cronbach's alpha
Collocation test	Pretest	50	.899
	Posttest	50	.907
Language learning strategies questionnaire	Pretest	23	.889
	Posttest	23	.867

The interview questions were crafted based on insights gained from previous studies conducted by Sari and Aminatun (2021), Albiladi et al. (2018), and Maulida and Warni (2024) to explore EFL students' perceptions of using films for vocabulary acquisition. Three applied linguistics professors from the English Language and Literature Department of a Saudi university reviewed and evaluated them to ensure the questions effectively addressed the third research question. Their feedback and comments enabled the researcher to implement the necessary revisions.

D. *Procedure and Intervention*

The study was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2024–2025. The eighty-eight participants took the pretest focusing on three collocation categories. The participants were divided into control and experimental groups. The experimental group was instructed to watch four captioned clips from popular films, including *Top Gun*, *First Reformed*, *Johnny English*, and *Emma*, among others. These clips were sourced from various YouTube channels that share excerpts from English-language films. Each clip was approximately one to two minutes long and featured collocations, including ones relevant to the study. The students were advised to watch the clips multiple times over four weeks to ensure rich exposure to the targeted collocations. The control group did not receive any intervention. After the intervention, participants' gains in collocation knowledge were assessed through the posttest. Additionally, the experimental group completed the SILL questionnaire about their cognitive and metacognitive strategies in learning lexical collocations based on their respective learning experiences. One week later, five participants from the experimental group were randomly selected and invited to participate in semi-structured interviews.

E. *Data Analysis*

The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. The study employed various statistical tests for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the means and standard deviations of learners' performance on the lexical collocation test, as well as their perceptions of cognitive and metacognitive strategy use. To compare the scores of the experimental and control groups prior to the intervention, an independent sample *t*-test was conducted. Additionally, independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine performance differences between successful and less successful learners on the lexical collocation test, specifically focusing on their use of cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies. To assess the impact of the intervention on the experimental group's performance in regard to lexical collocations, a paired sample *t*-test was performed to compare scores before and after the intervention.

The qualitative data was collected from interviews and then transcribed, categorized, and analyzed using thematic analysis to explore students' perceptions of using films to learn English vocabulary. Five semi-structured interview transcripts were examined for emerging themes. Each answer related to perceptions was labeled and identified, allowing for automatic organization of the data into categories. Finally, the data within each category was interpreted.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Impact of Captioned Film Clips on Lexical Collocation Learning

The descriptive statistics on the impact of clips of captioned films on lexical collocation learning reveal that before the intervention the experimental and control groups exhibited similar performances across all measured variables (see Table 3). In the N.V category, the experimental group had a mean score of 13.39 ($SD = 5.11$), while the control group had a comparable mean of 14.25 ($SD = 4.99$). For the V.N category, the experimental group's score was 7.97 ($SD = 3.22$), closely aligned with the control group's score of 8.11 ($SD = 3.23$). In the Adj.N category, the experimental group had a mean score of 6.33 ($SD = 2.85$), compared to 6.39 ($SD = 2.89$) for the control group. The total scores also reflected this similarity, with the experimental group scoring 28.24 ($SD = 9.25$) and the control group scoring 28.76 ($SD = 9.10$). Additionally, the results of the independent t -tests further support these findings, revealing no statistically significant differences between the two groups across all categories (see Table 4), which allows for the implementation of the intervention. The t -test results indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the categories N.V ($t = -0.299, p = .766$), V.N ($t = -0.201, p = .841$), or Adj.N ($t = -0.101, p = .920$) or the total scores ($t = -0.267, p = .790$), as all p -values exceeded .05.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR THE COLLOCATION TEST BEFORE THE INTERVENTION

Sub-category	Group	n	M	SD
N.V	Experimental	45	13.39	5.11
	Control	43	14.25	4.99
V.N	Experimental	45	7.97	3.22
	Control	43	8.11	3.23
Adj.N	Experimental	45	6.33	2.85
	Control	43	6.39	2.89
Total	Experimental	45	28.24	9.25
	Control	43	28.76	9.10

TABLE 4
INDEPENDENT T -TEST OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR THE COLLOCATION TEST BEFORE THE INTERVENTION

Sub-category	Group	n	Levene's test for equality of variances		t -test			
			f	Sig	t	Sig (two-sided)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
N.V	Experimental	45	.101	.751	-.299	.766	-.322	1.078
	Control	43						
V.N	Experimental	45	.000	.999	-.201	.841	-.138	0.688
	Control	43						
Adj.N	Experimental	45	.031	.860	-.101	.920	-.062	0.612
	Control	43						
Total	Experimental	45	.030	.864	-.267	.790	-.523	1.95
	Control	43						

Following the intervention, descriptive statistics and paired sample t -test results for the experimental group indicated significant improvements in the collocation test. As shown in Table 5, the mean score for the N.V sub-category increased from 13.93 ($SD = 5.11$) in the pretest to 18.22 ($SD = 2.09$) in the posttest, reflecting a substantial improvement. Similarly, in the V.N sub-category, the mean score rose from 7.97 ($SD = 3.22$) to 14.02 ($SD = 4.85$), demonstrating notable progress. The Adj.N sub-category also exhibited improvement, with mean scores increasing from 6.33 ($SD = 2.85$) to 8.75 ($SD = 2.19$). Overall, the total score for the experimental group improved significantly from a mean of 28.24 ($SD = 9.25$) in the pretest to 41.00 ($SD = 7.37$).

TABLE 5
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS ON THE LEXICAL COLLOCATION TEST

Sub-category	Condition	n	M	SD
N.V	Pretest	45	13.93	5.11
	Posttest	45	18.22	2.09
V.N	Pretest	45	7.97	3.22
	Posttest	45	14.02	4.85
Adj.N	Pretest	45	6.33	2.85
	Posttest	45	8.75	2.19
Total	Pretest	45	28.24	9.25
	Posttest	45	41.00	7.37

Additionally, the paired sample t -test results further validate these findings, revealing significant differences across all sub-categories with p -values indicating strong statistical differences ($p < .001$) (see Table 6). The results for the sub-categories are as follows: N.V ($t = -6.162, p < .001$), V.N ($t = -6.154, p < .001$), Adj.N ($t = -5.657, p < .001$), and total ($t = -6.902, p < .001$). These findings indicate strong statistical significance and suggest that the intervention effectively enhanced participants' performance in the collocation test across all assessed categories. In line with previous studies,

such as those by Güler and Buyukkarci (2020) and Teng (2022), this research demonstrates that watching captioned films has a positive effect on students' collocation acquisition.

TABLE 6
PAIRED SAMPLE *T*-TEST OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE LEXICAL COLLOCATION TEST BEFORE AND AFTER THE INTERVENTION

Sub-category	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std error Mean	95% confidence interval of the difference		Significance			
				Lower	Upper	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	One-sided	Two-sided
Pre-posttest N.V	-4.28	4.66	.696	-5.691	-2.886	-6.162	44	<.001	<.001
Pre-posttest V.N	-6.04	6.58	.982	-8.023	-4.065	-6.154	44	<.001	<.001
Pre-posttest Adj.N	-2.42	2.87	.428	-3.285	-1.559	-5.657	44	<.001	<.001
Pre-posttest total	-12.75	12.39	1.84	-16.480	-9.031	-6.902	44	<.001	<.001

B. Use of Language-Learning Strategies in Collocation Learning

The study investigated the disparities between successful and less successful learners in the use of LLSs. These differences were examined using descriptive statistics and an independent samples *t*-test. The descriptive statistics reveal significant differences in strategy use between the two groups (see Table 7). For cognitive strategies, successful learners had a mean score of 3.95 (*SD* = 0.499), compared to 3.88 (*SD* = 0.561) for less successful learners. This higher mean score for successful learners suggests that they engage in cognitive strategies that promote a deep understanding and mastery of collocations. As they encounter new collocations, they effectively integrate them into their language use. Additionally, these learners use various language-manipulation techniques to enhance their retention of collocations, making their learning more impactful. For example, they practice new collocations by repeatedly saying or writing them. They also use different resources for learning collocations, such as dictionaries and films. Furthermore, they take notes of collocations and underline them when they come across them during reading.

Concerning metacognitive strategies, successful learners achieve higher performance than less successful learners, with a mean score of 3.99 (*SD* = 0.641) compared to 3.35 (*SD* = 0.749). This significant difference indicates that successful learners use metacognitive strategies during the process of acquiring collocations. They identify gaps in their collocation knowledge by focusing on strategizing and assessing their learning. For example, they seek ways to enhance their understanding of collocations, for instance by watching films, and pay close attention to how native speakers use them. Additionally, they set clear goals and develop a plan for their collocation learning. Overall strategy use further emphasizes these findings, with successful learners achieving a mean score of 3.97 (*SD* = 0.519) compared to 3.61 (*SD* = 0.529) for less successful learners. These findings lead to the conclusion that successful learners have a greater awareness of their learning processes, allowing them to self-regulate, plan, and evaluate their learning.

TABLE 7
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF LANGUAGE-LEARNING STRATEGY USE FOR SUCCESSFUL AND LESS SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS

Language-learning strategies	Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. error mean
Cognitive	Successful	24	3.95	0.499	0.101
	Less successful	21	3.88	0.561	0.122
Metacognitive	Successful	24	3.99	0.641	0.130
	Less successful	21	3.35	0.749	0.163
Total	Successful	24	3.97	0.519	0.106
	Less successful	21	3.61	0.529	0.115

Furthermore, the results of the independent samples *t*-test indicate significant statistical differences between successful and less successful learners (see Table 8). For cognitive strategies, the test reveals a *p*-value of .627, which exceeds the threshold for statistical significance, indicating no statistically significant difference between the two groups. The mean difference of 0.077 and the confidence interval ranging from -2.416 to 0.396 support this finding. In contrast, a significant difference was found in metacognitive strategies, with a *p*-value of .004. The mean difference of 0.636 and a confidence interval from 0.218 to 1.054 indicate that successful learners are significantly more likely to employ metacognitive strategies than less successful learners. Furthermore, the total strategy use shows a significant difference with a *p*-value of .028, suggesting that successful learners effectively use a wide range of strategies.

This analysis highlights significant differences in the use of LLSs between successful and less successful learners, particularly regarding metacognitive strategies. Successful learners not only engage more effectively with cognitive strategies, but also demonstrate advanced metacognitive awareness. These findings strongly reinforce previous research such as Alasmari's (2019) study that reported that successful learners employ a diverse range of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in their vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, this study supports the findings of Alsharif (2022), who suggests that metacognitive strategy use enhances vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, the findings validate Graham's (1997) and Anderson's (2003) critical observations that metacognitive strategies are essential for enhancing learning outcomes. In the current study, the successful learners reported employing more metacognitive strategies and demonstrated awareness of their learning process by effectively planning, regulating, and evaluating their understanding of lexical collocations, which resulted in significantly positive learning outcomes.

TABLE 8
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST OF LANGUAGE-LEARNING STRATEGY USE FOR SUCCESSFUL AND LESS SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS

Sub-category	F	Sig	95% confidence interval of the difference		Mean difference	Std. error difference	Significance			
			Lower	Upper			t	df	One-sided	Two-sided
Cognitive	.172	.680	-2.416	.396	.077	.158	0.489	43	.314	.627
Metacognitive	.452	.505	.218	1.054	.636	.207	3.070	43	.002	.004
Total	.052	.821	.041	.672	.356	.156	2.278	43	.014	.028

C. EFL Students' Perceptions of Using Films to Learn English Vocabulary

The findings presented in this section are supported by the data collected from excerpts of the student interviews. Table 9 outlines the frequencies and rankings of EFL students' perceptions regarding the use of films to learn English vocabulary. From the analysis, three main themes emerged: (1) audio-visual resources such as films as effective tools for improving vocabulary knowledge, (2) films as a source of authentic everyday language, and (3) films as a motivating tool for vocabulary learning.

The data indicates that the students view audio-visual resources such as films as valuable tools for enhancing vocabulary. This opinion was reported by five students, accounting for 35.71% of the responses. One student (P3) stated, "Films help you understand common phrases." Another student (P2) said, "My vocabulary has improved very much; at first, I used simple words, but now I use stronger and formal words." One student (P5) shared her experience of how films helped with her incidental vocabulary learning over the years:

I have been watching films and shows over the past six years. At first, I didn't know that it would be useful, but when I chose my major and started studying, I realized that I knew a lot of vocabulary without studying. It shocked me that my brain was preserving the whole time by itself without me realizing that.

This result aligns well with previous studies' findings, such as those of Albiladi et al. (2018) and Maulida and Warni (2024), which revealed that EFL students regarded films as an effective tool for language learning, especially for vocabulary acquisition.

Furthermore, students generally held positive attitudes toward using clips of captioned films for vocabulary learning, viewing them as a motivating tool for mastering English. This was reported by four students, representing 28.57% of the perceptions. One student (P4) noted that "clips of films were clear and understandable for me. I didn't have any difficulties." Another student (P3) remarked, "I feel bored with traditional learning methods, so that is why I prefer to learn English through films." This finding aligns with previous studies, such as those by Kabooa (2016), Albiladi et al. (2018), Sari and Aminatun (2021), and Maulida and Warni (2024), which all reported that EFL students had positive attitudes toward using films for vocabulary learning. Lastly, the EFL students in this study viewed films as a valuable resource for authentic and everyday language, as reported by five students, representing 35.71% of the perceptions. One student (P5) said, "The films really helped me understand how native speakers speak. Now I watch films without subtitles and I can understand them." This finding supports Vanderplank's (1990) idea that films provide visual cues, such as facial expressions and body language, which can assist language learners in understanding the meaning of words in context. Another student (P1) noted that films can help learners keep pace with the constant and rapid changes in the English language: "They help us keep up with the language, because language always changes." This finding supports previous research by Albiladi et al. (2018), which indicated that EFL students view films as an authentic resource for language learning.

TABLE 9
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING FILMS TO LEARN ENGLISH VOCABULARY

Perception	n	%	Rank
Audio-visual resources such as films as effective tools for improving vocabulary knowledge	5	35.71%	1
Films as a source of authentic language and everyday language	5	35.71%	1
Films as a motivating tool for vocabulary learning	4	28.57%	2
Total	14	100	

D. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for EFL classrooms. When used effectively, captioned film clips can be a valuable resource for collocation instruction, as watching them and hearing collocated words in meaningful contexts in film dialogues can incidentally improve the collocational knowledge of the EFL learner. It is therefore recommended that instructors incorporate them into their teaching of collocations to help students acquire collocations through exposure to authentic language input. These clips are concise and practical for use in EFL classrooms, as their brief nature allows students to grasp the content without confusion. This also enables instructors to use the remaining class time for practicing what the students have learned. However, the success of this approach depends on the instructor's ability to integrate the clips into their teaching effectively and on ensuring that the clips are pedagogically appropriate.

Moreover, developing an adequate collocational competence is a dynamic process that involves various factors and a range of skills. Students' approaches to learning often differ based on individual preferences and needs. The study suggests integrating captioned film clips into collocation instruction, with an emphasis on raising EFL students' awareness of the significance of using LLSs in learning English collocations. In the EFL classroom, instructors can demonstrate effective strategies, specifically metacognitive strategies, reinforce them, and provide opportunities to practice these strategies and encourage less successful learners to assess their progress consistently. This insight will empower educators to effectively guide their students through the complexities of collocation learning, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes for all. Furthermore, the study indicates that students view films as a valuable tool for acquiring collocations and improving vocabulary learning. They are seen as both enjoyable and educational. These findings could encourage educational institutions and stakeholders to improve media and film-based resources, promote the creation of film clips for EFL classrooms, and increase teachers' awareness of the significance of captioned film clips in developing language skills.

V. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of captioned film clips on the incidental learning of lexical collocations among Saudi female EFL university students. It found that these clips, featuring authentic dialogues, enhance collocation acquisition and boost student engagement and enjoyment in EFL settings. Moreover, students viewed films as valuable for vocabulary enhancement, providing real-world exposure to language use. They reported that the engaging nature of films increases their motivation to learn, making the process more enjoyable. Furthermore, cognitive and metacognitive LLSs were identified as important for successful collocation learning, with a particular emphasis on metacognitive strategies. Successful learners not only memorized and practiced collocations, but also monitored their understanding and adjusted their learning processes to optimize acquisition.

Several avenues for further research emerged from the study's findings and implications. While this research focused exclusively on female university learners, other studies could include male students and investigate gender differences in the effect of the intervention on their collocation learning. Moreover, the study focused on three categories of lexical collocations, indicating a need for further research to examine additional categories. The researcher also suggests comparing the effects of different modes of inputs, such as captioned vs. non-captioned film clips, on collocation acquisition and exploring LLS use. Additionally, the study focused on only two types of LLS essential for vocabulary acquisition: cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Future research could include other types of LLS, such as vocabulary-learning strategies. Moreover, the study focused exclusively on the perspectives of EFL learners regarding the use of films for acquiring English vocabulary. Future research could incorporate EFL instructors' perspectives on using these clips as instructional tools and identify the difficulties in implementing them in EFL classrooms.

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