Tertiary Students' Perspectives on the Use of English Songs and Podcasts on Spotify in Improving Listening Skills

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Abstract

The use of multimedia tools has proven beneficial for teaching basic English language skills in our present day. Several studies have demonstrated the result of using one of the media platforms, such as Spotify, where English songs and podcasts can help students learn and develop their listening skills. Despite its efficacy, few researchers have investigated students' attitudes to listening skills using English songs or podcasts on Spotify. The study examines students' perceptions of enhancing their listening skills through Spotify songs and podcasts. Over the academic year 2023/2024, this research was carried out at the Department of English Language Education, UIN Jakarta, with the participation of 10 first-year students. Qualitative description methods have been used in this survey, with data collected from questionnaires and presented by descriptive statistical analyses. The results show that most first-year English Education Department students think that English songs on Spotify are much more effective or beneficial than podcasts for enhancing listening comprehension.

Keywords: *English songs, Podcasts, Spotify, Students Perspective*

Introduction

Listening comprehension can be a challenge for English language learners, especially when listening to music, radio, or native speakers. This is particularly true in Indonesia, where English is a foreign language and students may feel pressure to understand every word. Limited vocabulary and poor classroom conditions can also contribute to the difficulty. Students need more motivation to improve their listening skills. Looking at the rapid development of technology today, most students of the current generation have utilized these developments well. According to Nemati (2013), language acquisition and assistance with multimedia tools positively impact students, especially in lowering stress and anxiety. Moreover, these educational tools have a positive impact on students by offering a fun platform for content delivery while enhancing communicative competence. In terms of listening skills, music platforms recommend songs for us. Shi et al. (2017) state that we can also choose actions such as pause, listen, download, collect, etc. These platforms may add new words, aspects, or

ideas to your vocabulary. It helps students establish connections between music and other subjects while encouraging them to listen in new ways (Kerchner, 2013).

Spotify and other music platforms offer EFL learners an engaging tool to improve listening comprehension. Listening to songs with English lyrics, podcasts, and videos can be helpful in learning the language. Investigating the impact of music streaming on cognitive development can provide valuable insights for language learners and educators. According to Sze (2006), podcasts process significant potential for learners to improve their listening and speaking skills. These days, acquiring proficiency in English involves more than traditional textbooks; it extends to digital platforms such as social media. Individuals can improve their listening skills through podcasts and English songs on these platforms. This is in line with Br Simamora and Oktaviani's (2020) opinion, which indicates that numerous resources are available to assist in learning English, especially when refining listening skills, such as songs, films, and videos. Technology as a sophisticated tool is proven to help students and teachers create practical language learning activities and different learning styles (Alam et al., 2023).

Rivas (cited in Hidrovo, 2021) states that some listening skills are perceptual skills, which include intonation, pronunciation, and some nonverbal cues; analysis skills, which are based on how a person gets the main idea or message conveyed by the speaker; and synthesis skills where a person makes connections between what they perceive and the concepts they understand. Listening serves as a mode of communication arising from students connecting the acquired knowledge with what they hear, as highlighted by Lewier and Nendissa (2020). In the context of learning the English language, listening is an initial stage preceding the acquisition of the other three fundamental skills. However, listening skills are still considered difficult, especially by EFL learners in Indonesia, because they require focus and concentration of the listener, which is in line with the opinion (Sawir, 2005).

Kodrle and Savchenko (2021) state that educational media functions to clarify messages or information imparted in the teaching and learning process to achieve specific learning objectives. Various media are employed in the learning process, categorized into offline options like videos and online alternatives such as Spotify that would be discussed. Spotify's website declares that the app is available on various devices and can quickly transfer Spotify Connect to other devices. Therefore, Spotify is an easy platform to use anytime and anywhere because it can be accessed anytime. Moreover, students nowadays have their gadgets. The impact on students' interest in listening and knowing the world with the same song as the song they heard was also derived from listening learning that utilizes the Spotify app in the research done by Andriani et al. (2018). Moreover, the involvement of the Spotify app can enhance students' ability and understanding in improving their listening skills by providing access to streaming music, podcasts, and digital videos, regardless of time or location.

Many researchers have proven that songs are an effective medium in teaching listening. Yuliarini (2022) suggests using songs in listening classes to increase student interest can be applied during the learning process. Research conducted by Alam et al. (2023) regarding the use of songs on the Spotify application shows that in increasing their interest in listening classes, students often use songs as learning media because it can train students' skills. They can also enjoy learning activities, quickly understand the material's content, and do not feel bored quickly. The podcast media also shows positive results for students because, in its application, it brings students closer to the target language, which affects student attitudes and motivation, as shown in the

research by Bustari et al. (2017). Salsabila et al. (2021) conducted quantitative and qualitative data research on one of the English podcast channels on the Spotify application. The study demonstrated the success of a particular podcast channel in enhancing students' listening skills, particularly in asking questions and providing instructions. Nevertheless, what matters most is the teacher's skill in choosing materials and employing the Spotify app to align with students' learning objectives for the success of podcasting.

Numerous studies examining the utilization of songs or podcasts demonstrate a positive influence on students' proficiency in the English language, including Rahajeng et al. (2022) stating that English songs are helpful to help students improve their listening skills and motivate them to learn to listen because they can listen to any music they want. Furthermore, Mah et al. (2023) found a significant improvement in students' listening skills after using podcasts on Spotify. Based on these two studies' findings, listening comprehension can be enhanced by using Spotify as a creative learning tool and a source of entertainment. The researcher plans to use English songs and podcasts on Spotify to investigate students' perceptions of their listening skills concerning this explanation.

This study focuses mainly on students' opinions about using English songs or podcasts on the Spotify app to enhance their listening abilities. Investigating the specific impact of music streaming on EFL learners' cognitive development can provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and language learners, ultimately improving the effectiveness of language acquisition strategies in the technological world. Students who enjoy listening to music will find it interesting to listen to songs, especially in English, to help them learn the language. Teachers can revolutionize language learning by understanding how Spotify can improve listening skills and cognitive development in an EFL context. Because the brain is not under pressure, it readily accepts this learning process. To ascertain the purpose, the study was guided by two research questions: 1) What are students' perspectives on using English podcasts or songs on Spotify to improve their listening skills? 2) From the students' perspective, which is more effective in improving listening skills through English songs or podcasts?

Method

This study utilized a descriptive research design and qualitative method, which is suitable for systematically depicting the perceptions and attitudes of students in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta of using English songs and podcasts on the Spotify app to improve their listening skills. The sample population consisted of ten first-semester students who were selected based on their affinity for listening to music or podcasts on Spotify, and their close alignment with the research topic to ensure accurate data collection. Data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires via Google Forms, which contained 15 statements using a four-level Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The questionnaire was designed to assess the perceived usefulness and effectiveness of using songs and podcasts on Spotify, as well as the students' statements about Spotify and their perspectives on choosing English songs or podcasts as a more effective medium for improving their listening skills. The data analysis technique employed was descriptive qualitative analysis, involving the selection, presentation, and conclusion of the data.

Results

The study results presented in this section were obtained through questionnaires that consist of 15 questions, divided into three aspects in the questionnaire.

The perceived usefulness when using English songs on Spotify

Table 1. The perceived usefulness when using English songs on Spotify

No.	Statement	SDA	DA	A	SA	Total
1.	I think English songs on Spotify have significantly improved my listening skills.	1	0	5	4	10
2.	I think English songs on Spotify are effective for practicing Listening skills.	1	1	3	5	10
3.	I feel that English songs on Spotify can motivate me to improve my listening skills.	1	1	3	5	10
4.	English songs on Spotify can make me happy to practice Listening skills and be interested in Listening courses.	1	1	3	5	10
5.	I find the English songs on Spotify easy to use in Listening courses.	0	2	5	3	10
6.	I think English songs on Spotify can be recommended to others to improve their listening skills.	1	1	4	4	10

Based on Table 1 of the survey consisted of six questions that captured the perceived benefits of using songs on Spotify, especially those in English. The outcomes are described as follows:

1. 4 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 5 out of 10 voted agree, and the remaining 1 out of 10 students strongly disagree that English songs on Spotify have significantly improved their listening skill.
2. 5 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 3 out of 10 voted agree, 1 out of 10 disagree and strongly disagree that English songs on Spotify are effective for practicing listening skills.
3. 5 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 3 out of 10 voted agree, 1 out of 10 disagree and strongly disagree that English songs on Spotify can motivate them to improve their listening skills.
4. 5 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 3 out of 10 voted agree, 1 out of 10 disagree and strongly disagree that English songs on Spotify can make them happy to practice listening skills and be interested in listening courses.
5. 3 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 5 out of 10 voted agree, and 2 out of 10 disagree that English songs on Spotify easy to use in listening courses.

6. 4 out of 10 students voted strongly agree and agree, 1 out of 10 disagree and strongly disagree that English songs on Spotify can be recommended to others to improve their listening skills.

The perceived usefulness when using English podcasts on Spotify

Table 2. The perceived usefulness when using English podcasts on Spotify

No.	Statement	SDA	DA	A	SA	Total
1.	I think English podcasts on Spotify have significantly improved my listening skills.	1	2	5	2	10
2.	I think English podcasts on Spotify are effective for practicing Listening skills.	1	2	5	2	10
3.	I feel that English podcasts on Spotify can motivate me to improve my listening skills.	1	3	5	1	10
4.	English podcasts on Spotify can make me happy to practice Listening skills and be interested in Listening courses.	1	2	6	1	10
5.	I find the English podcasts on Spotify easy to use in Listening courses.	0	2	5	3	10
6.	I think English podcasts on Spotify can be recommended to others to improve their listening skills.	1	2	4	3	10

Based on Table 2 in the second aspect, the six questions we presented can reflect the usefulness that participants feel when listening to podcasts through Spotify. The outcomes are described as follows:

1. 2 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 5 out of 10 voted agree, 2 out of 10 disagree, and the remaining 1 out of 10 students strongly disagree that English podcasts on Spotify have significantly improved their listening skill.
2. 2 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 5 out of 10 voted agree, 2 out of 10 disagree, and the remaining 1 out of 10 students strongly disagree that English podcasts on Spotify are effective for practicing listening skills.
3. 1 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 5 out of 10 voted agree, 3 out of 10 disagree, and 1 out of 10 strongly disagree that English podcasts on Spotify can motivate them to improve their listening skills.
4. 1 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 6 out of 10 voted agree, 2 out of 10 disagree, and 1 out of 10 strongly disagree that English podcasts on Spotify can make them happy to practice listening skills and be interested in listening courses.
5. 3 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 5 out of 10 voted agree, and 2 out of 10 disagree that English podcasts on Spotify easy to use in listening courses.

6. 3 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 4 out of 10 students voted agree, 2 out of 10 disagree, and 1 out of 10 strongly disagree that English podcasts on Spotify can be recommended to others to improve their listening skills.

Student Statement

Table 3. Student Statement

No.	Statement	SDA	DA	A	SA	Total
1.	I agree that Spotify is an effective and efficient medium for learning Listening Skills.	1	0	5	4	10
2.	I think using Spotify can improve my listening skills.	1	0	6	3	10
3.	I think using English songs are more effective than English podcasts in improving my listening skills.	1	2	3	4	10

Based on Table 3, the questionnaire's final section consists of three questions reflecting the students' statements about Spotify. The results are described as follows:
1. 4 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 5 out of 10 voted agree, and the remaining 1 out of 10 students strongly disagree that Spotify is an effective and efficient medium for learning listening skills.
2. 3 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 6 out of 10 voted agree, and the remaining 1 out of 10 students strongly disagree that using Spotify can improve their listening skills.
3. 4 out of 10 students voted strongly agree, 3 out of 10 voted agree, 2 out of 10 disagree, and 1 out of 10 strongly disagree that using English songs are more effective than English podcasts in improving their listening skills.

Discussion

Improving the four basic skills for EFL learners is important. For example, English Language Education students must indirectly practice mastering at least the four basic skills. Similarly, this study focuses on students' perceptions of improving listening skills. Improved listening skills can help students have a good understanding of language, effective teaching, and overall good communication. Research by Sanchez et al. (2020) underlines the importance of nurturing listening skills, not only for academic success but also for holistic student development. Educators have the ability to provide better support for their students' overall growth and success. This research shows that both English songs and podcasts on Spotify are considered as media that students can utilize to improve listening skills, and both features are suitable as media that support Listening course learning in the classroom.

Participants in this study have applied applications or media that are considered effective for training their listening skills. Mobile apps can motivate students to establish their personal learning space, offering benefits to learners (Metruk et al., 2018). In line with that, in this digital era, there have been many media

and applications that are useful in helping students improve language skills such as listening skills. Regarding this, Andriani et al. (2018) found that listening learning that utilizes the Spotify application has an impact on students' interest in listening activities and knowing the world that has the same song as the song they are listening to. If students can apply the Spotify application to improve their listening skills, this will greatly help them when taking listening courses in the classroom, as stated by Hidayat et al. (2022), using educational apps not only familiarizes students with the digital setting but also motivates them to customize their learning surroundings. This is supported by the answers provided in the preceding section of the questionnaire, both English songs and podcasts on the Spotify application are applications that have helped them improve listening skills.

Employing English songs on platforms like Spotify is seen as a tool to enhance student's listening skills. This is backed by the current educational landscape, which is closely intertwined with digital advancements. Based on the results of this research, students confirmed that English songs are effective in sharpening their listening skills. Therefore, one of the advantages of using songs in the listening class is that it can be a learning medium used for classroom practice (Lestary, 2019). In addition, the utilization of songs in the listening class leads to a rise in engagement. Students become more involved and demonstrate proficiency in listening tasks. Due to these advantages, incorporating songs can serve as a motivational tool for students in acquiring the target language (Basri, 2019), this is reflected in the results of questionnaire responses that show that students feel motivated to improve listening skills through songs on Spotify. According to Afriyuninda and Oktaviani (2021), songs serve as a tool to enhance listening skills, given their widespread availability for ear-training purposes. Similarly, Ali (2020) asserts that incorporating songs into education can make the learning experience enjoyable for students, especially in the context of listening. The use of songs in the classroom offers several advantages, such as introducing diverse activities, fostering informal classroom situations, and alleviating anxiety by creating a positive and joyful atmosphere for students. Our study also shows that the use of songs makes students feel happy because it can help them practice their listening skills.

In addition, other features on Spotify such as English podcasts are also considered as media that can improve students' listening skills. According to Waddingham et al. (2020), podcasts are a series of audio files available to the public, in the form of podcasts that anyone can download and listen to whenever they want through computers, laptops, and smartphones. Questionnaire responses show that most students agree that podcasts help improve listening skills significantly. This is in line with Anggraini's (2021) statement that podcasts can be an alternative for teaching listening skills that can make students practice on their own so that students can automatically improve their listening skills which have a big impact on English language learning. Regarding the effect of motivation, Spotify podcast media has an effect on students' interest and listening skills (Putri, 2023). In the 21st century, podcasts are also recognized as a dependable application, customizable and easily accessible medium that motivates students to practice improving their listening skills.

In Indonesia, Spotify has become an unusual but effective way of learning. As Amalia (2022) found in her study, Spotify has a more effective and innovative impact than traditional methods. The platform has a comprehensive range of content, which educators in Indonesia use to complement classroom teaching and introduce students to a range of topics outside the syllabus. Spotify can be a useful learning tool for

students, it not only increases their knowledge but also boosts their interest in subjects like English. Research by Alfa (2020) and Tanjung (2021) shows that Spotify can improve English skills and motivate students to learn in the classroom. In Western nations, educators and students recognize the potential of Spotify's music streaming service in fostering language learning and cultural assimilation. A recent study by Smith et al. (2020) revealed that students who used Spotify to study language showed better proficiency and retention than those who relied on traditional teaching methods. The enjoyable and interactive features of the Spotify platform help users learn language and cultural aspects effortlessly, thus creating a lively and dynamic learning surrounding.

Effective teaching and learning processes hinge not just on the skills of educators and students but also on the choice of appropriate educational resources (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021). In the process of learning-teaching, the term media is already very familiar in this modern era. Regarding the questionnaire results, students approved that the media available to enhance their listening capabilities are both podcasts and English songs on Spotify. This aligns with Sze's (2006) assertion that podcasts hold significant potential for enhancing learners' listening and speaking abilities. Furthermore, Puspitarini and Hanif (2019) proposed that the improvement of listening skills can be achieved by listening to English songs, as they function as captivating tools for enhancing this proficiency. Building on two studies highlighting the beneficial effects of both English songs and Podcasts on listening skills, our research seeks to identify the more effective choice between Podcasts and English Songs for enhancing students' listening abilities. Analysis of questionnaire responses reveals a predominant belief among students that English songs are more efficacious in enhancing their listening skills compared to podcasts. According to Brown (2006), engaging in activities such as acquiring vocabulary, reading lyrics, and exploring a variety of songs can increase students' exposure to popular music, thereby boosting their confidence in their capacity to comprehend and grasp the world around them.

This research provides new information as a foundation for further research that explores the reasons behind the effectiveness of using English songs, which are higher than podcasts, within the Spotify application for improving students' listening skills. Understanding the comparison of English songs and podcasts in the learning context that impacts learning outcomes can also be researched by conducting a series of experiments that compare the effectiveness of learning based on English song media with podcast media. Conduct treatment on groups of students who use both media and evaluate the results to produce concrete values that can be measured to prove the answer to our research from the student's perspective.

Conclusion

Positive results have been observed when students improve their listening skills by utilizing applications like Spotify. Although the Spotify app was primarily created for more general uses, it has also been shown to be beneficial for teaching, particularly for EFL students who need to practice their listening skills. It has long been recognized that teaching EFL students to listen can still present several difficulties, particularly when it comes to comprehending the topic of the discussion. On the other hand, students can effectively practice their listening skills by using the Spotify app to listen to English dialogues. In this research, the focus is on the viewpoints of EFL students regarding the efficiency of English songs and podcasts from the Spotify app to enhance

their listening skills. The affirmation of this effectiveness is based on the findings from a survey conducted among first-year English language students. After analyzing the questionnaires, it is proven that most of students believe that using songs and podcasts through the Spotify app is an effective way to enhance their listening skills. The availability of English songs and podcasts on Spotify also makes students feel comfortable and interested in enhancing their listening skills. Therefore, they agree to recommend this application to others who want to practice improving their listening skills. In addition, they believe that Spotify motivated them to practice listening and consider the application as one of the learning tools that are easy to use and can be accessed anytime, anywhere, especially when listening to English.

The research emphasizes how important it is for teachers to think about adding interest and various multimedia platforms into their classes. Recognizing Spotify's effectiveness in encouraging listening skills allows teachers to modify their methods to align more closely with their students' interests, enhancing the language learning experience. This might involve developing educational materials that utilize English songs from Spotify or creating exercises that use the website's podcast functionality. In conclusion, this research has revealed that the majority of first-year students in the English Education Department believe that English songs on Spotify are much more helpful than podcasts for enhancing listening comprehension. The future research could be investigating the factors influencing students' preferences for specific artists, music genres, or the themes of podcasts on Spotify to enhance their listening skills. Several future research could also contribute to identifying particular factors such as gender, cultural background, age, etc. These factors could be beneficial for educators in designing a learning direction that suits students' preferences.

Acknowledgment

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