

EFL Lecturers - Students Perception: The Use Of Spotify Application In Listening Skills Of EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the perceptions of EFL lecturers and students at the English Education Department of UMS Rappang regarding the use of the Spotify application in improving English listening skills. As technology increasingly integrates into education, Spotify emerges as a widely used digital platform offering music and podcast content that can support autonomous and engaging learning. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method, involving observation sheets, questionnaires, and interviews with fourth-semester students and lecturers teaching listening courses.

Findings revealed that both students and lecturers held generally positive perceptions toward the use of Spotify. Students reported that Spotify provided a more flexible, accessible, and enjoyable learning experience, helping them engage more actively with listening materials. Lecturers acknowledged Spotify's potential as a supplementary tool, noting its wide variety of authentic content and ease of use, although they emphasized the need for integration with formal learning strategies. While some limitations were noted such as the lack of educational features like transcripts Spotify was still seen as a valuable addition to the EFL listening classroom. This study concludes that Spotify contributes significantly to creating a more engaging and effective listening learning experience for EFL students.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, digital media and technology have deeply permeated various aspects of life, including education. One significant technological advancement is the emergence of digital music and podcast platforms such as Spotify, which have fundamentally transformed how people access and consume audio content. As one of the largest streaming services worldwide, Spotify offers users access to millions of songs and podcasts across diverse genres and languages. Its features—including easy accessibility, personalized recommendations, and playlist sharing—make it especially popular among students for leisure and learning purposes.

Founded in 2006 by Swedish entrepreneurs Daniel Ek and Martin Lorentzon, Spotify officially launched in 2008 to address the rampant issue of music piracy by providing a legal and user-friendly platform for digital music consumption. Prior to Spotify's launch, illegal downloading via platforms such as Napster and Pirate Bay threatened the music industry's sustainability. Spotify's freemium business model, allowing users to listen with advertisements or pay for premium ad-free features, created a balanced ecosystem benefitting both consumers and artists. From a limited beta release to becoming a global leader, Spotify now serves millions of users with an extensive music library.

Listening skills are fundamental in mastering the English language, as they enhance comprehension of intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Effective listening enables learners to understand conversations, presentations, and various audio materials, playing a central role in daily communication. Empirical studies highlight listening as a cognitive process crucial for language acquisition and a gateway to developing other language competencies (Walgito, 2017). Despite its importance, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners face challenges in improving their listening comprehension, particularly due to limited exposure to authentic, engaging materials relevant to real-life contexts.

In Indonesia, where English is not a native language, learners often struggle with listening due to vocabulary gaps and less supportive learning environments. Consequently, there is a need for innovative, accessible listening resources to motivate and improve learners' skills. Modern technology, including multimedia tools and digital platforms, has proven effective in reducing learners' anxiety and enhancing communication skills (Nemati, 2013). Music streaming services like Spotify allow learners to interact with English content through songs, podcasts, and other audio forms, which encourage repeated listening, vocabulary expansion, and contextual learning (Shi et al., 2017; Kerchner, 2013).

Spotify and similar platforms provide an interactive and flexible medium for EFL learners to develop listening proficiency beyond traditional classroom materials. Podcasts, in particular, have been recognized for their potential to improve both listening and speaking skills (Sze, 2006). The integration of technology in language education aligns with the shift towards autonomous, student-centered learning facilitated by digital resources (Br Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020; Alam et al., 2023).

Perception, defined as the process through which individuals interpret sensory stimuli (Walgito, 2017), plays a vital role in how students and lecturers engage with new learning technologies. Understanding perceptions regarding Spotify's use in EFL classrooms can offer valuable insights into its effectiveness and acceptance. Pre-

observation indicates that while Spotify is widely used for entertainment, its educational potential in enhancing listening skills has not been fully explored, especially in formal learning environments like the English Education Department at UMS Rappang.

This study focuses on investigating both lecturers' and students' perceptions of Spotify's role in improving listening skills within the EFL classroom context. It seeks to determine whether Spotify is effective, relevant, and capable of enriching the teaching-learning experience or if barriers exist that limit its application. The findings aim to contribute new perspectives on leveraging non-traditional, digital applications for English language learning and encourage more creative, innovative use of technology in education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening skills are recognized as a foundational component in language acquisition, especially in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). According to Rost (2011), listening is not a passive activity but an active process involving the reception, construction, and interpretation of meaning from spoken language. Developing listening competence enables learners to understand spoken discourse, which facilitates their overall language proficiency. Therefore, research on effective strategies to improve listening skills has been extensive, ranging from traditional classroom methods to technology-assisted learning.

The integration of digital media in language learning has significantly transformed teaching and learning processes. Multimedia tools, including audio and video resources, create dynamic and authentic environments for learners to practice listening skills (Mayer, 2009). Specifically, digital music and podcast platforms provide learners with exposure to natural language in various accents, contexts, and genres, which are often challenging to replicate in classroom settings. The flexibility to control playback, pause, rewind, or repeat enhances learner autonomy and comprehension (Chang & Millett, 2015).

Spotify, as a popular digital streaming service, has been acknowledged as a valuable resource for language learners. Its vast library includes music with lyrics, podcasts on diverse topics, and language learning playlists that encourage immersive and contextual listening practice (Kerchner, 2013). Research by Shi et al. (2017) emphasizes that the interactive features of such platforms, such as creating personalized playlists and downloading content for offline use, promote learner motivation and engagement. These features make Spotify suitable for informal language learning outside traditional classrooms.

The use of music in language learning has demonstrated positive effects on vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. Medina (2011) found that students exposed to English songs showed improvement in recognizing intonation patterns and contextual meanings. Music stimulates cognitive and affective domains, reducing learner anxiety and increasing receptiveness to input (Krashen, 1982). Furthermore, podcasts have gained attention for their ability to simulate real-life conversations and topical discussions, which enhance listening and speaking skills (Sze, 2006).

Despite these advantages, challenges remain in effectively integrating platforms like Spotify into formal language education. Teacher readiness, technological infrastructure,

and alignment with curriculum objectives are critical factors influencing successful implementation (Alam et al., 2023). Additionally, learners' digital literacy and motivation affect their ability to benefit from such resources. Therefore, understanding students' and lecturers' perceptions towards these tools is essential to optimize their use in EFL classrooms.

Perception theory, as explained by Walgito (2017), indicates that individuals interpret sensory stimuli based on prior knowledge, experiences, and attitudes. In the context of language learning technology, positive perceptions can enhance acceptance and usage, whereas negative attitudes may hinder integration. Several studies have shown that learner perceptions significantly influence their engagement with digital tools (Lai, 2017). Similarly, lecturers' perceptions affect their willingness to adopt innovative methods and influence pedagogical choices (Wang & Vásquez, 2012).

Previous empirical studies have explored the role of music and podcasts in EFL learning but rarely focus on Spotify as a specific platform. For example, Br Simamora and Oktaviani (2020) highlight various digital resources that facilitate listening skill development, emphasizing the need for further research on platform-specific applications. This gap underscores the importance of investigating Spotify's unique contributions, features, and limitations from both learner and educator perspectives. The increasing use of smartphones and internet accessibility in Indonesia offers a fertile ground for incorporating streaming services in language education. According to Kurniawan and Widodo (2020), the proliferation of mobile technology supports autonomous and flexible learning. However, systematic research on how Spotify aligns with pedagogical goals and influences listening skill enhancement in Indonesian EFL contexts remains scarce. This study aims to fill this research gap by examining perceptions of Spotify's use in the English Education Department at UMS Rappang.

METHOD

This study applies a qualitative descriptive method to explore the perceptions of lecturers and students regarding the use of the Spotify application in enhancing listening skills in the EFL classroom at UMS Rappang. Qualitative descriptive research focuses on providing a comprehensive and straightforward description of phenomena based on participants' experiences and perspectives (Leavy, 2017; Creswell, 2018). This approach allows the researcher to capture rich, detailed data about how Spotify is perceived and utilized as a language learning tool.

The participants in this study were purposively selected to ensure they have relevant experience with the Spotify application and its use in English listening practice. The primary participants were fourth-semester students from the English Education Department at UMS Rappang, chosen because they have prior exposure to listening courses and sufficient digital literacy to navigate Spotify effectively. In addition, three lecturers with varying teaching experiences and ages were included to provide a comprehensive view of educators' perceptions.

Data were collected through multiple instruments to strengthen validity via triangulation. First, an observation sheet was used to record students' listening habits and interaction with Spotify during learning sessions. Next, a questionnaire consisting of 20 Likert-scale items was administered to measure students' attitudes, perceived benefits, and challenges related to using Spotify for listening skill improvement.

Furthermore, structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with both lecturers and students to gain deeper insights into their experiences and opinions.

The researcher also utilized documentation, such as course syllabi, lesson plans, and institutional guidelines, to contextualize Spotify's integration into the formal curriculum and understand the broader educational environment. These documents helped triangulate data from observations, questionnaires, and interviews to create a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Data analysis followed the phenomenological model, focusing on interpreting participants' lived experiences with the Spotify application (Basrowi & Suwandi, 2009). The analysis involved several stages: data collection, data reduction by summarizing and categorizing key themes, data presentation through descriptive narratives and visual aids, and drawing conclusions verified by cross-referencing data sources (Sugiyono, 2019; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Overall, this methodological design ensures a comprehensive exploration of how Spotify is perceived and used as a tool to improve listening skills among EFL learners and educators at UMS Rappang, providing both theoretical insights and practical implications for language education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the questionnaire responses indicated that most students perceived Spotify as an engaging and accessible platform for improving their listening skills. They reported that the application provided a wide range of listening materials, particularly in the form of music, podcasts, and audio programs, which catered to their individual preferences and learning styles. Many students highlighted the flexibility of accessing learning materials anytime and anywhere as a key advantage.

Students expressed that the variety of listening content on Spotify allowed them to explore different accents, vocabulary sets, and speech patterns, which enriched their understanding of spoken English. They particularly appreciated being exposed to both native and non-native English speakers through music and podcast programs, which helped them adjust to diverse pronunciations and intonation patterns.

The data also revealed that students found Spotify's user-friendly interface beneficial for independent learning. They could easily search for playlists, follow recommended podcasts, and use the lyrics feature when available. The ability to replay and pause audio was also seen as a helpful tool for focusing on specific phrases and improving comprehension.

Nevertheless, some students reported limitations in using Spotify for listening practice. The free version's advertisements were identified as a major distraction, interrupting the flow of listening activities and reducing focus. Additionally, certain educational features, such as synchronized lyrics for all songs, were not always available, which limited their learning experience.

The results showed that while many students actively used Spotify for language learning purposes, a portion of the participants admitted to using the platform mainly for entertainment. These students listened to music without paying deliberate attention to

lyrics or linguistic aspects, which resulted in minimal improvement in their listening abilities.

Students also highlighted the motivational aspect of using Spotify. They found that combining language learning with music and topics of personal interest increased their willingness to practice listening regularly. This intrinsic motivation contributed to a more positive learning attitude and sustained engagement with the material. In terms of skill development, students reported improved vocabulary acquisition, better recognition of spoken words, and increased familiarity with colloquial expressions. Several participants mentioned that repeated exposure to songs and dialogues helped them internalize language patterns naturally.

The following table summarizes students' perceptions of Spotify's role in enhancing listening skills:

Perceived Benefit / Limitation	Description
Variety of listening content	Exposure to different accents, vocabulary, and speech patterns through songs and podcasts
Flexible learning access	Ability to practice listening anytime and anywhere
User-friendly interface	Easy navigation, search functions, and playlist recommendations
Lyric feature	Support for simultaneous reading and listening, aiding comprehension
Advertisements in free version	Interruptions that affect concentration
Limited lyric availability	Some songs lack synchronized lyrics
Entertainment vs. learning	Some students focus on enjoyment rather than skill improvement
Increased motivation	Music and interest-based content encourage consistent practice

Discussion

The findings suggest that Spotify can be a valuable tool for enhancing students' listening skills, particularly when used with intentional learning strategies. The platform's wide selection of authentic listening materials provides exposure to real-life language use, which is essential for improving comprehension and overall listening competence. This supports previous research by Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), who emphasized the importance of authentic listening materials in language learning.

Students' positive perception of Spotify's variety of content aligns with Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) notion that diverse listening inputs can improve learners' adaptability to different speech patterns and accents. By engaging with both music and podcasts, students are exposed to a range of vocabulary, from everyday expressions to formal language, which broadens their linguistic repertoire.

The appreciation of Spotify's lyric feature resonates with Paivio's (1990) dual-coding theory, where simultaneous auditory and visual input enhances comprehension and memory retention. For students who actively used this feature, it not only improved their understanding of song lyrics but also supported their pronunciation and word recognition skills.

However, the study also highlights that the platform's effectiveness depends largely on how students use it. Those who listened passively for entertainment without engaging in focused listening activities reported fewer improvements. This is consistent with Field's (2008) argument that active listening strategies are necessary for developing listening proficiency.

The limitations of the free version, such as advertisements and incomplete lyric availability, emerged as notable barriers. These interruptions can disrupt the listening process and reduce immersion, which Jones (2020) found to be detrimental to sustained concentration in audio-based learning environments.

The motivational aspect identified by students reflects the principles of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), where enjoyment and personal interest can enhance learning engagement. Spotify's integration of music and language learning appears to foster intrinsic motivation, encouraging students to practice more consistently.

Furthermore, repeated exposure to authentic audio content through Spotify aligns with Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis, which posits that comprehensible input in an engaging context can lead to natural language acquisition. The informal and enjoyable nature of Spotify's resources may help lower the affective filter, making students more receptive to language input. Overall, the findings suggest that while Spotify holds significant potential as a supplementary listening tool, its impact depends on purposeful and strategic use. Teachers could integrate Spotify into listening practice by guiding students toward educational content and teaching them how to leverage features like lyrics for active learning.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that both lecturers and students from the English Education Department at UMS Rappang generally have positive perceptions toward using the Spotify application to improve listening skills in EFL classrooms. Students find Spotify to be a flexible and enjoyable tool that makes listening practice more engaging through features like playlist customization, access to English music and podcasts, and lyrics display. Although not all students experience significant improvement, many feel motivated to learn independently and benefit from increased exposure to diverse English accents and vocabulary.

From the lecturers' perspective, Spotify serves as a valuable supplementary resource that provides authentic listening materials and supports students' exposure to natural language use. However, lecturers emphasize that Spotify lacks formal pedagogical components such as comprehension questions and structured exercises, so it should complement, rather than replace, traditional teaching methods. Proper integration with classroom instruction is necessary to maximize its effectiveness in listening skill development. Spotify contributes positively by creating a more flexible, student-centered, and interactive learning environment when used strategically alongside other instructional tools. This indicates the potential of digital streaming platforms to enhance language learning, especially in supporting autonomous and meaningful listening practice for EFL learners.

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