THE IMPACT OF SPOTIFY ON IMPROVING STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILLS: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstrak

Spotify adalah salah satu platform streaming audio digital paling populer di dunia, menawarkan jutaan lagu dan podcast yang mudah diakses dan fleksibel. Dengan memanfaatkan potensi ini, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki dampak penggunaan aplikasi Spotify terhadap kemampuan mendengarkan bahasa Inggris siswa, serta mengidentifikasi manfaat dan tantangan utama implementasinya. Penelitian ini mengadopsi desain tinjauan literatur sistematis (Systematic Literature Review) dengan menganalisis studi empiris yang diterbitkan dalam konteks pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Temuan tinjauan menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan Spotify secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman mendengarkan (seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh peningkatan substansial dalam skor tes) dan dianggap oleh siswa sebagai media yang memotivasi yang secara efektif mengurangi kecemasan belajar. Namun, tantangan yang diidentifikasi meliputi koneksi internet yang tidak stabil dan kecepatan bicara yang terlalu cepat dalam materi audio. Disimpulkan bahwa Spotify adalah alat digital yang sangat efektif untuk mengembangkan kemampuan mendengarkan karena menjembatani kebiasaan digital siswa dengan kebutuhan akademis. Implikasinya adalah pendidik harus mengintegrasikan platform ini sebagai sumber masukan bahasa otentik sambil merancang strategi pendukung untuk mengatasi kendala teknis dan memilih konten audio yang sesuai.

Kata kunci: Kemampuan mendengarkan, Spotify, Siswa

Abstract

Spotify is one of the world's most popular digital audio streaming platforms, offering millions of songs and podcasts that are easily accessible and flexible. Building on this potential, his study aims to investigate the impact of using the Spotify application on students' English listening skills, as well as identify the main benefits and challenges of its implementation. This research adopts a systematic literature review design (Systematic Literature Review) by analyzing empirical studies published within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The review findings show that using Spotify significantly improves listening comprehension (as indicated by a substantial rise in test scores) and is perceived by students as a motivating medium that effectively reduces learning anxiety. However, the identified challenges include unstable internet connections and overly fast speech rates in the audio material. It is concluded that Spotify is a highly effective digital tool for developing listening skills as it bridges students' digital habits with academic needs. The implication is that educators should integrate this platform as a source of authentic language input while designing supportive strategies to overcome technical constraints and select appropriate audio content.

Keywords: Listening skills, Spotify, Students

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, technology has radically transformed the way we communicate, interact, and learn. English, recognized as the most widely spoken language globally, inherently requires an adaptive and effective teaching approach to accommodate these changes. The development of digital technology has provided various advantages and serves as an appealing and effective tool for educators in their teaching endeavors. The integration of technology in learning, especially English, is no longer an option but a necessity to prepare students for global challenges (Meisa, 2024a)

Despite its importance, mastering the English language skills often faces significant challenges, particularly in listening comprehension. Listening skills are one of the main foundations for obtaining information and understanding communication. A common phenomenon is that students encounter difficulties in capturing and comprehending orally presented material, which is exacerbated by boredom with traditional teaching methods. Therefore, it is crucial to identify and implement interactive media that can overcome these difficulties and boost students' interest in listening. (Hamsia & Roifah, 2023)

Responding to the need for innovative and interactive learning media, digital platforms such as Spotify Podcasts have emerged as a promising solution. Podcasts accessed through Spotify offer high flexibility, allowing learning content to be presented engagingly and accessed anytime, anywhere. This audio-based medium is highly relevant for training listening comprehension (*Hörverstehen*) and has proven effective even in the context of structured curriculum language acquisition. Its compact and portable nature makes the Spotify podcast an ideal resource for self-directed learning (Aruan et al., 2022).

A number of empirical studies have confirmed that using the Spotify application improves students' listening ability. For instance, a study focusing on enhancing extensive listening skills showed significant results. The use of Spotify features was shown to substantially increase students' average scores after the intervention, providing statistical evidence that the platform is an effective medium for English listening instruction. This result strengthens the hypothesis that Spotify can be a powerful tool in language learning (Azis et al., 2024).

Beyond its primary focus on listening skills, the use of music and podcast streaming platforms like Spotify also offers broader benefits for language acquisition. Students feel that this medium can enhance their interest and motivation because of its engaging, easily accessible format. Furthermore, perception studies indicate that listening to music or podcasts increases students' pronunciation in English. The advantages of flexible features and up-to-date content contribute to a positive and authentic learning experience (Lubis & Anjani, 2023).

Although various studies have highlighted the efficacy of using English songs and podcasts on Spotify, there remain gaps in the literature that warrant further exploration. Specifically, research on students' perceptions, attitudes, and acceptance of this medium, particularly when combined with songs and podcasts, remains limited. Therefore, this research aims to investigate in depth students' perspectives on the use of English songs and podcasts on Spotify, with the aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and potential obstacles from the learners' point of view (Marsela et al., 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Listening Skills

Listening skills are one of the most fundamental and essential language competencies in both daily communication and academic contexts. Despite its crucial role, this skill has historically often been neglected or viewed as a passive skill that will be acquired naturally in the process of second language acquisition (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011) However, modern perspectives in applied linguistics emphasize that listening is an active, constructive process where learners must be cognitively engaged to interpret and comprehend oral messages (Rost, 2011). In reality, many English as a Foreign Language (*EFL*) learners face significant difficulties in listening, such as trouble clearly catching the speech, exacerbated by boredom with traditional methods (Hamsia & Roifah, 2023). The main problems often reported include difficulties managing the speed of delivery of oral materials, the challenge of identifying individual words within a stream of speech, and the effort required to interpret what is heard. (Graham, n.d.)

Spotify as a Pedagogical Tool

Spotify, originally known as a music *streaming* platform, has evolved into a relevant and promising pedagogical tool in language teaching, aligning with the trend of adopting digital technology in English Language Teaching (*ELT*) (Meisa, 2024a). The application offers several technological advantages that educators can leverage to enrich students' learning experiences (Meisa, 2023). Its main function is to provide diverse audio content, including songs and *podcasts*, presented in an engaging manner (Marsela et al., 2024). Spotify's strength lies in its accessible, flexible features (Lubis & Anjani, 2023), allowing learning content to be accessed anytime, anywhere. This ease of access is critical because it supports the development of learner autonomy, encouraging students to engage in self-directed learning (Aruan et al., 2022) In addition to music content, the platform is also rich in audio *storytelling* resources and *podcasts* that provide authentic language input, such as the "Listening Time Podcast," which can be specifically used for listening comprehension practice. (Masbirorotni et al., 2023)

Benefits of Using Spotify for Listening

A number of empirical studies consistently show that using the Spotify app provides significant benefits for enhancing students' listening abilities. Quantitatively, research indicates a substantial increase in students' average listening scores after an intervention using Spotify, confirming its effectiveness as a learning medium (Azis et al., 2024) The use of Spotify is also proven effective in overcoming the issue of boredom associated with conventional methods, as it acts as an engaging interactive medium for students (Hamsia & Ro'ifah, 2023). Students' motivation and interest also increase positively due to the accessible format and authentic content (Marsela et al., 2024). Furthermore, the availability of broad content facilitates the practice of extensive listening, which is listening for overall comprehension, and also trains oral comprehension (*Hörverstehen*) in a foreign language context (Azis et al., 2024) Additional benefits, although not directly related to listening, include student reports of a perceived increase in their English pronunciation when listening to songs and *podcasts* (Lubis & Anjani, 2023).

Challenges in Implementing Spotify

Despite offering wide-ranging benefits, integrating Spotify into English language learning faces several challenges that require consideration. One of the main barriers is **technical infrastructure** issues, such as a **lack of facilities** in schools, technical-based problems, and the issue of the **digital divide** which can hinder the equitable implementation of educational technology (Hockly & Dudeney, 2018) Another significant challenge is **access and personal device issues**; not all students possess the necessary devices like **smartphones** or stable internet connections to consistently access the application outside the school environment (Faoziah et al., n.d.). From a pedagogical perspective, educators must contend with the challenge of **selecting appropriate content** that matches students' language proficiency levels from the vast resources available, as overly difficult material can impede comprehension (Nor & Hair, 2023) Furthermore, there is a need to explore students' **perceptions and attitudes** comprehensively towards the use of this medium, especially when combining song and *podcast* formats, to effectively understand and address potential obstacles from the learner's perspective (Marsela et al., 2024).

METHODS

This study uses a library research design or systematic literature review. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to access various reference sources and categorize key concepts without conducting direct field observations. Library research involves collecting information and data from sources such as journals, articles, and other relevant documents to answer research questions comprehensively.

Procedure

The author conducted an initial search using a list of keywords that had been developed. All articles found then went through a gradual selection process according to the PRISMA model: a) identification, where all articles that appeared according to the keywords collected in the initial search yielded 228 articles related to the use of the Spotify application. b) The next stage was screening, where duplicate articles and articles that did not explicitly discuss Spotify were eliminated. This process was carried out using Mendeley. c) After that, the eligibility stage was carried out, which involved reading the entire content of the articles in more depth to ensure their suitability with the research focus, namely the impact of Spotify on improving student listening skills, especially listening. d) In the final stage, namely inclusion, only articles that were truly relevant to listening learning were included as final data for analysis.
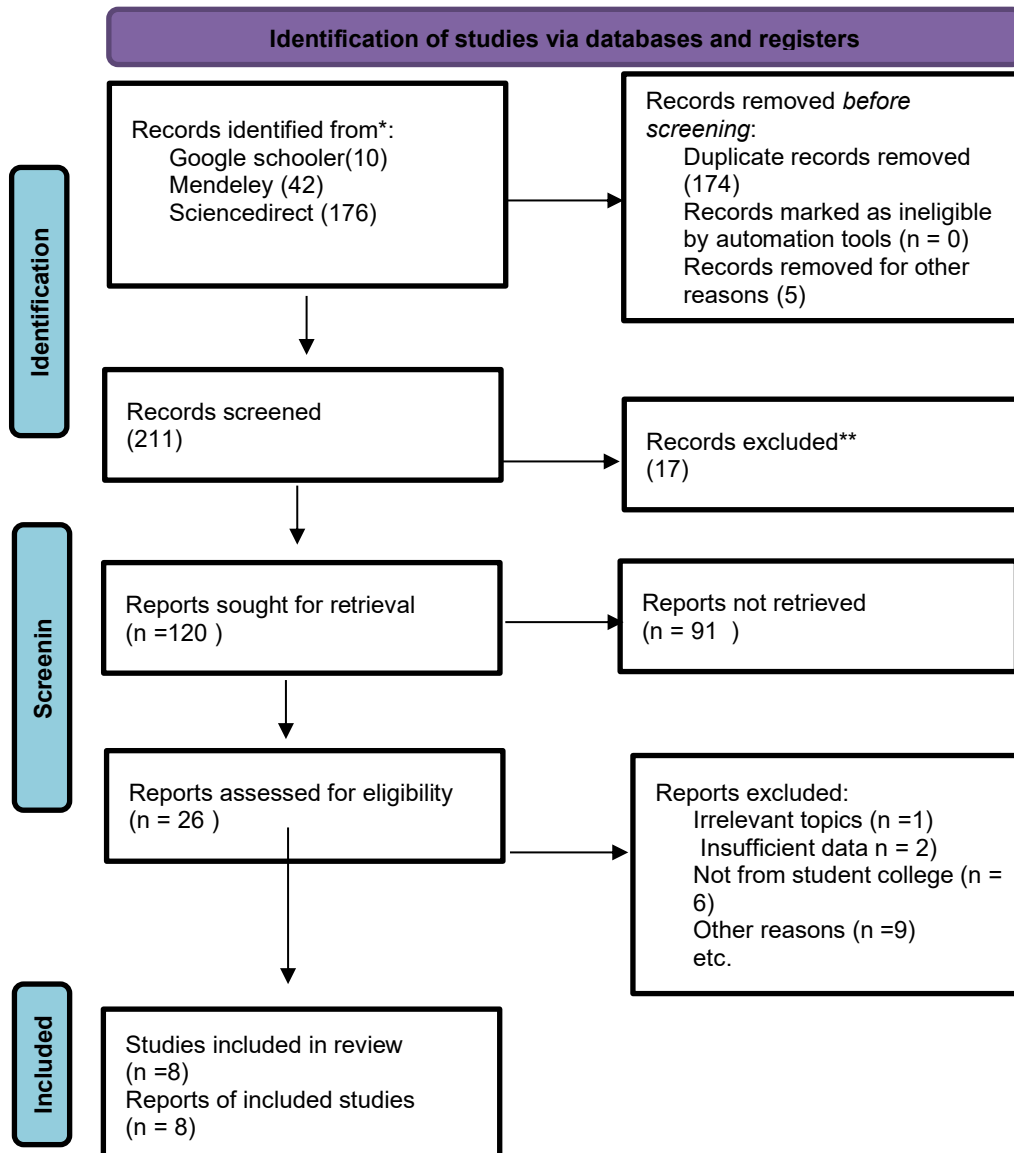
Participant Characteristics

Following the literature analysis process, studies relevant to the use of the Spotify application as a learning medium to enhance listening skills have been identified. The participants involved in these studies are tertiary students (undergraduate students) originating from various higher education institutions. Unlike broader studies, the research on Spotify reviewed here is predominantly focused on the Indonesian context. The total number of participants in each study varies widely, ranging from qualitative studies with a few subjects to pre-experimental research involving a single class of approximately 29 students.

The programs of study or majors that form the focus of this research are primarily for students from the English Language Education program. There are also participants from other departments, such as German Language Education for the *Hörverstehen* (listening comprehension) course, as well as studies that include students from non-English departments to assess their perceptions of using the Spotify application for learning. In summary, the participants are university-level students engaged in learning English or another foreign language.

RESULT/FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Identification of studies via databases and registers

Identification

Records identified from*:
  Google schooler(10)
  Mendeley (42)
  Sciencedirect (176)

Records removed *before screening*:
  Duplicate records removed (174)
  Records marked as ineligible by automation tools (n = 0)
  Records removed for other reasons (5)

Records screened (211)

Records excluded** (17)

Screenin

Reports sought for retrieval (n =120)

Reports not retrieved (n = 91)

Reports assessed for eligibility (n = 26)

Reports excluded:
  Irrelevant topics (n =1)
   Insufficient data n = 2)
  Not from student college (n = 6)
  Other reasons (n =9)
  etc.

Included

Studies included in review (n =8)
Reports of included studies (n = 8)

No	Authors	Country	Mean characteristics	Variabel	Study design	Measure	Findings
1.	Linda Aruan, Ryan Dallion, Hafniati	Indonesia (Universitas Negeri Medan)	Undergraduate students of the German Language Education Study Program, specifically those taking the Hörverstehen Level A2 course who still face difficulties in listening ability (*Hören*).	Development of Learning Media based on Spotify Podcast (covering 6 themes of the Hörverstehen Level A2 course).	Developmental Research (Research and Development) using the ADDIE Model (Analysis, Design, DevelopmentImplementation, Evaluation).	Expert Validation (Media and Material Experts) to assess the feasibility of the developed product.	The developed Spotify Podcast-based Learning Media was declared feasible and suitable for application in classroom learning. This media is expected to assist lecturers in teaching and accelerate the improvement of German Level A2 listening skills among students.
2.	Putri Anjani, Nazriani Lubis	Indonesia (3 Different Universities)	3 Tertiary Students: 1English Student and 2 Non-English Students.	Students' Perceptions on the use of the Spotify Application in improving English Pronunciation.	Qualitative with Thematic Analysis.	Semi-structured Interview.	Positive Perceptions Found (3 Themes): 1. Accessible and Flexible Feature. 2.Interesting Media for Learning. 3. Helps Practice Pronunciation. Key Finding: The use of Spotify's lyric feature improved pronunciation (especially in terms of *word and meaning*). Difference based on background: Only the English Student paid attention to and mastered comprehensive pronunciation elements (vowels, stress, rhythm, pitch, intonation), while the Non-English Students only focused on word differences and meanings. This proves that educational background has an effect

3.	Waode Hamsia, Ro'ifah	Indonesia (Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya)	25 students of the 3rd semester in the Intensive English Course at the Language Center.	Implementation and Students' Response to the use of Spotify Media as an Interactive Learning Media in the Listening Comprehension course.	Qualitative Method (Descriptive data analysis)	Observation, Questionnaire (Likert scale), and Interview.	Students showed high interest and responded very positively to the use of Spotify. The media was deemed very pleasant, and students found it easier to understand English in listening skill because it can be used anywhere and anytime. 85% of students gave positive comments, strongly supporting its use to implement listening comprehension
4.	Nurul Izzah, Masbirorotni, Failasofah	Indonesia (Jambi University)	29 Students (Class R002), English Education Department, academic year 2022/2023, taking the Listening and Speaking for General Purposes course.	The Use of "Listening Time Podcast" on Spotify to improve students' Listening Comprehension.	Pre-experimental with a one-group pre-test and post-test design.	Pre-test and Post-test (24 questions from TOEFL).	There was a significant increase in students' listening ability after using the Spotify podcast media. Pre-test Mean: 59.72; Post-test Mean: 73.24. The T-test results showed a significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$, meaning H1 is accepted and the use of *'Listening Time Podcast'* on Spotify is appropriate for improving listening ability.
5.	Yuni Marsela, Septi Nurul Aini, Putri Yuliastuti, Rizqah Fajar Khardani, Didin Nuruddin Hidayat, Yatni Fatwa	Indonesia (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta)	10 first-year students from the English Language Education Department, UIN Jakarta, academic year 2023/2024.	Students' Perspectives on using English Songs and Podcasts on Spotify to enhance Listening Skills.	Descriptive Qualitative method (Descriptive research design).	Questionnaires (15 statements using a four-level Likert scale).	The majority of students believe that: 1) Both English songs and podcasts on Spotify are effective and efficient media for improving listening skills. 2) English songs on Spotify are much more effective/beneficial than podcasts for enhancing listening comprehension.
6.	Rahma Meisa	Indonesia (Tanjungpura	Not applicable. This is a literature	Benefits and Challenges of using the Spotify	Library Research (Literature Review)	Analysis of 15 relevant articles published	Benefits: 1) Effective tool for improving listening skills, particularly

		Universit y)	review (library research) analyzing 15 previous studies on the topic.	Application for teaching English Listening Skills.		within the last 5 years (2018-2023) using keywords like "Spotify Application", "Teaching", and "Listening Skills."	through English songs and podcasts. 2) Boosts student interest and motivation, allowing for personalized learning. 3) Helps students acquire new vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and encourages the expression of ideas. Challenges: 1) Some students find Spotify's features complex or difficult to use effectively. 2) Technical issues like inefficient school sound systems, need for stable internet/devices, and noise distractions. 3) Content issues such as unfamiliar vocabulary and potential mismatch with educational objectives (e.g., "unscientific pop songs").
7.	Hidayah Nor, Abdul Hair	Indonesia (Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin)	Not applicable. The study involved content analysis of digital resources, not human participants/ students.	Available Resources of English Story Telling on Spotify for enhancing Listening Comprehension Skills.	Qualitative Content Analysis	Exploration and Evaluation of Spotify content based on factors like: content types, popularity, difficulty levels (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced), and activity rates (upload frequency).	The study identified three prominent and active Spotify channels specializing in English audio storytelling: Easy Stories in English, Lovely English Stories, and M.A. Bibrough's Practicing English. These resources: 1) Are popular and actively updated. 2) Offer content with varying difficulty levels. 3) Contain rich collections of audio stories, encompassing grammatical and vocabulary aspects tailored to different

No						levels, and opportunities for exploring diverse cultures.
8.	Andi Suwarni, Dewi Sartika, Andi Ika	Indonesia (University of Muhammadiyah Bone)	24 students (Total Sampling) from the fourth semester, English Education Department (Academic Year 2022/2023).	The use of Spotify Podcast Application to enhance Students' Listening Skill (specifically listening comprehension via dictation technique).	Pre-experimental method with One Group Pre-test and Post-test Design.	Listening Test (Pre-test and Post-test) focusing on listening comprehension using the dictation technique. Statistical analysis using **t-test**.	The use of the Spotify podcast application significantly enhanced students' listening skill. Mean Score Improvement: Pre-test (41.6) increased to Post-test (72.5). Improvement Percentage: 74.2%. The t-test value (16.8) was higher than the t-table value (2.06), indicating that the method is highly effective. The treatment made students more engaged, active, and better able to comprehend the material.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study consistently indicate that Spotify, as a digital audio-streaming platform, has a significant influence on students' foreign language development, particularly in listening comprehension and pronunciation. Various experimental studies and literature reviews affirm its effectiveness, with improvements in listening scores demonstrating that structured exposure to podcasts such as the Listening Time Podcast enhances learners' comprehension abilities. Spotify has also been successfully used in other language contexts, including the development of podcast-based listening materials for German Hörverstehen (A2 Level), demonstrating its flexibility across different languages. Its accessibility and flexibility allow students to learn anytime and anywhere, while its diverse audio resources, such as storytelling content, provide rich linguistic input that supports comprehension.

Students' perceptions of using Spotify for learning are generally positive. They view the platform as a motivating medium that reduces anxiety during listening practice and makes pronunciation exercises more engaging. Although many students consider English songs more effective for practicing listening skills, podcasts have also been proven successful when used in structured learning situations. However, several challenges accompany the use of Spotify in language education. Technical issues, particularly unstable internet connections, remain a common barrier. Learners may also experience difficulties with materials featuring fast speech rates, and the abundance of unregulated content on Spotify requires educators to carefully select appropriate,

reliable materials. In certain subjects, such as German Hörverstehen A2, significant difficulty persists, indicating a need for more targeted, well-designed Spotify-based learning resources.

Overall, the evidence strongly supports integrating Spotify as a learning tool, demonstrating its positive impact on listening skill development and favorable reception among students. Nevertheless, its successful implementation requires addressing technical constraints and ensuring the use of suitable instructional materials. When applied thoughtfully, Spotify can serve as an effective complementary medium that enriches the language learning experience and contributes to measurable improvements in students' listening skills. The analyzed material consistently shows that Spotify, as a digital audio streaming platform, has a significant impact and positive reception, with the caveat that technical constraints and the selection of appropriate material need to be addressed.

CONCLUSION

The systematic literature review consistently finds that integrating the Spotify platform into language learning (through *podcasts* and English/German songs) has a significant positive impact on students' listening comprehension and pronunciation skills. This is supported by clear increases in test scores in experimental studies and the widespread perception among students that Spotify is an engaging, accessible, flexible, and anxiety-reducing medium for language learning, although the majority prefer songs over *podcasts* for practice. However, challenges that need to be addressed include unstable internet connections and the need for content filtering to manage overly fast speech rates and the risk of exposure to unverified material. These findings are highly important because they validate the educational use of a digital tool students use daily, bridging informal digital habits with formal learning and providing an authentic, limitless source of language resources. Therefore, this research provides a strong foundation for educators to design more relevant, student-centered learning strategies while maintaining a focus on providing the necessary technical and pedagogical support to maximize the platform's potential.

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