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# The Relationship Between Listening to Spotify Podcasts and Improving English Listening Skills Among EFL Students

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*This study investigates the link between listening to Spotify podcasts and the enhancement of English listening skills among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. Employing a quantitative correlational design, the research examines how the frequency of podcast consumption influences students' listening comprehension abilities. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on students' podcast listening behaviors, including frequency, duration, and preferred genres, as well as their perceived improvements in listening skills. The data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression analysis to evaluate the strength of the relationship. The study aims to provide insights into how podcasts, as an accessible and engaging resource, can support the development of English listening proficiency. The findings may offer valuable guidance for educators and learners in incorporating podcast listening into effective language learning strategies.*

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of technology into language learning has gained substantial attention, offering learners innovative ways to enhance their skills. In his research on the limited popularity of language learning in England, Graham (2002) found that intermediate learners encountered the greatest difficulty with listening skills. Among the various tools available, podcasts have emerged as a popular medium for improving listening comprehension, particularly for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Spotify, as one of the leading audio streaming platforms, hosts a wide range of podcasts that cater to diverse audiences, including those designed specifically for language learners. Spotify stands as the leading audio streaming platform worldwide, with 489 million active users each month in the final quarter of 2022. The platform's user base is steadily growing, with more than 50% of these users utilizing the ad-supported option (Götting, 2023a, 2023b). It has profoundly impacted how individuals experience music, podcasts, and various other forms of recorded audio, including guided meditations, audiobooks, and soundscapes (Johansson and Werner, 2018). This accessibility and variety make Spotify podcasts a promising resource for EFL students aiming to improve their English listening skills.

Listening comprehension is a fundamental component of language proficiency, yet it remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners to develop. Traditional classroom settings often provide limited opportunities for authentic listening practice, which can hinder students' ability to understand natural speech in real-world contexts. Podcasts, on the other hand, expose learners to authentic language use, diverse accents, and real-life topics, bridging the gap between classroom learning and practical application.

Despite the growing popularity of podcasts as a learning tool, there is limited research investigating the specific impact of podcast consumption on English listening skills among EFL students. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the relationship between the frequency of listening to Spotify podcasts and the improvement of English listening comprehension. By examining the habits and preferences of EFL students, this research aims to shed light on how digital tools like Spotify can complement traditional language learning methods and provide insights for educators and learners alike.

Through a combination of survey data and listening comprehension assessments, this study will analyze whether regular engagement with Spotify podcasts contributes to measurable improvements in EFL students' listening abilities. The findings of this research have the potential to inform future strategies for incorporating podcasts into language learning programs, highlighting their role as an accessible and effective resource for learners worldwide.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Podcasts have proven to be an effective resource for improving English listening skills. Gilakjani et al. (2019) highlight that audio-based learning materials enhance listening comprehension by exposing learners to authentic language, helping them understand elements such as pronunciation, intonation, and cultural context. Similarly, Hamouda (2013) notes that audio content assists learners in overcoming difficulties related to understanding different accents and speech patterns, which are essential for mastering a foreign language.

According to Lio and Marafat (2019), regularly listening to podcasts significantly improves vocabulary acquisition and boosts learners' confidence in comprehending spoken English. Bona (2018) also emphasizes that engaging with authentic conversations, like those in podcasts, helps learners grasp contextual meanings and broaden their linguistic knowledge.

Platforms such as Spotify further enhance this learning process by offering flexible access to high-quality content. As Angelia and Simanjuntak (2022) argue, Spotify allows learners to choose topics that align with their personal interests, which fosters intrinsic motivation. Additionally, Vandergrift and Goh (2012) underline that listening activities improve linguistic pattern recognition and overall language proficiency. This framework underlines the potential of Spotify podcasts as a supplementary tool in language learning, emphasizing the value of authentic, flexible content in improving listening skills and expanding vocabulary.

The theoretical basis of this study integrates key concepts from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, cognitive listening models, and motivation frameworks. Stephen Krashen’s Input Hypothesis serves as the foundation, emphasizing the importance of comprehensible input language material slightly above a learner's current proficiency level. Spotify podcasts, with their diverse content, provide EFL students with authentic language input, which fosters natural

exposure to vocabulary, sentence structures, and pronunciation in real-world contexts.

Furthermore, cognitive theories of listening, such as the Interactive Model, highlight the dynamic interplay of bottom-up (word recognition and decoding) and top-down (contextual interpretation) processes in listening comprehension. Spotify podcasts naturally stimulate these processes by presenting learners with unscripted, real-life speech patterns, requiring them to apply linguistic knowledge and situational awareness simultaneously.

In addition, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) underscores the role of intrinsic motivation in learning. As stated by Ryan (2009), "Self-determination theory (SDT) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding human motivation, personality development, and well-being". The flexibility and variety of podcasts on Spotify allow learners to select content based on their personal interests and needs, thereby fostering a sense of autonomy and motivation. This personalization encourages consistent engagement and supports the development of listening skills outside traditional classroom settings.

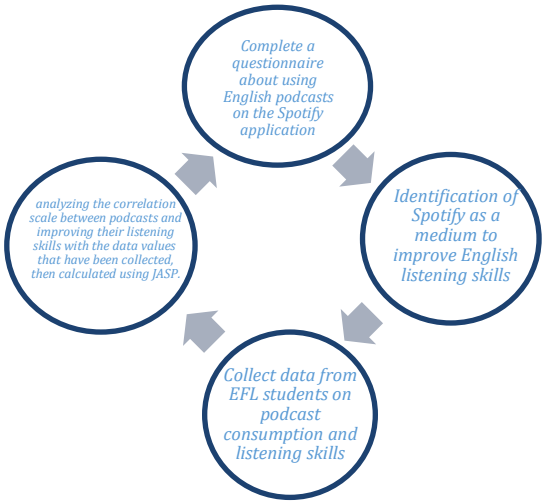
By combining these theoretical perspectives, this framework supports the premise that Spotify podcasts act as a multifaceted tool for enhancing English listening comprehension. They offer comprehensible input, activate cognitive listening strategies, and promote intrinsic motivation, making them an effective resource for EFL learners.

## METHOD

This study employs a correlational research design to examine the relationship between Spotify podcast consumption and the improvement of English listening skills among EFL students. The sample will consist of EFL students enrolled in undergraduate language courses, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure diversity in terms of age, proficiency levels, and frequency of podcast consumption. Data will be collected using a Questionnaire to measure both podcast listening habits and perceived improvements in listening comprehension.

The Questionnaire will consist of questions related to the participants' frequency of podcast listening, duration, genre preferences, and self-reported improvements in their listening skills. The responses will be measured using a Likert scale to capture participants' opinions and experiences regarding their English listening development through podcast consumption. According to Joshi (2015), the original Likert scale comprises a series of statements (items) designed for a real or hypothetical scenario under investigation, where participants express their degree of agreement on a metric scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

For data analysis, JASP software will be utilized to perform statistical tests. Descriptive statistics will summarize the participants' demographics and podcast usage patterns. Pearson’s correlation coefficient will be calculated to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the frequency of podcast listening and improvements in listening comprehension. Additionally, regression analysis will be conducted to predict the extent to which podcast consumption frequency can explain variations in listening skills. Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and adhering to ethical guidelines. The study will also acknowledge the limitations of self-reported data and the cross-sectional nature of the design.




*Descriptive Statistics*

| | Valid | Missing | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saya mendengarkan podcast berbahasa Inggris di Spotify secara teratur. | 20 | 0 | 2.650 | 1.843 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Saya mendengarkan podcast berbahasa Inggris setidaknya sekali seminggu. | 20 | 0 | 2.600 | 1.231 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Saya merasa mendengarkan podcast berbahasa Inggris membantu meningkatkan pemahaman listening saya. | 20 | 0 | 2.800 | 1.196 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Saya lebih suka mendengarkan podcast dengan penutur asli bahasa Inggris untuk meningkatkan kemampuan listening saya. | 20 | 0 | 2.350 | 0.875 | 1.000 | 4.000 |

*Descriptive Statistics*

| | Valid | Missing | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mendengarkan podcast berbahasa Inggris telah meningkatkan kosa kata saya. | 20 | 0 | 2.300 | 0.801 | 1.000 | 3.000 |
| Saya dapat memahami lebih banyak detail dalam bahasa Inggris setelah mendengarkan podcast. | 20 | 0 | 2.800 | 1.436 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Saya merasa lebih percaya diri dalam kemampuan saya untuk memahami percakapan berbahasa Inggris setelah mendengarkan podcast. | 20 | 0 | 2.550 | 1.432 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Topik podcast yang saya dengarkan menarik dan membantu meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris saya. | 20 | 0 | 2.200 | 0.834 | 1.000 | 3.000 |
| Saya mendengarkan podcast berbahasa Inggris meskipun saya tidak sepenuhnya memahami kontennya. | 20 | 0 | 3.250 | 1.293 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Mendengarkan podcast telah meningkatkan | 20 | 0 | 2.950 | 1.276 | 1.000 | 4.000 |

*Descriptive Statistics*

| | Valid | Missing | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| kemampuan saya untuk memahami berbagai aksen bahasa Inggris. | | | | | | |
| Saya menggunakan podcast sebagai alat utama untuk berlatih kemampuan mendengarkan bahasa Inggris. | 20 | 0 | 3.100 | 1.651 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Mendengarkan podcast telah meningkatkan pemahaman listening saya secara keseluruhan dalam bahasa Inggris. | 20 | 0 | 2.250 | 1.164 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Saya merasa bahwa mendengarkan podcast berbahasa Inggris lebih efektif daripada menonton film atau acara TV untuk meningkatkan kemampuan listening | 20 | 0 | 3.250 | 1.585 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Saya merasa lebih mudah memahami bahasa Inggris akademik setelah mendengarkan podcast berbahasa Inggris. | 20 | 0 | 2.250 | 1.209 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Saya melihat peningkatan dalam kemampuan | 20 | 0 | 2.200 | 1.005 | 1.000 | 4.000 |

*Descriptive Statistics*

| | Valid | Missing | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| mendengarkan bahasa Inggris saya karena konsumsi podcast. | | | | | | |
| Saya dapat memahami konten podcast dengan lebih baik sekarang dibandingkan saat pertama kali mulai mendengarkannya. | 20 | 0 | 1.800 | 0.894 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Mendengarkan podcast secara teratur membantu saya tetap terinformasi dengan tren bahasa Inggris terkini. | 20 | 0 | 2.200 | 1.105 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Saya sering mendengarkan podcast yang berfokus pada peningkatan pemahaman mendengarkan dalam bahasa Inggris. | 20 | 0 | 2.300 | 1.031 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Saya merasa termotivasi untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mendengarkan bahasa Inggris saya setelah mendengarkan podcast. | 20 | 0 | 2.700 | 0.801 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Saya mendengarkan podcast berbahasa | 20 | 0 | 2.250 | 1.020 | 1.000 | 4.000 |

*Descriptive Statistics*

| | Valid | Missing | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inggris untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mendengarkan saya. | | | | | | |

**Image 1. Method in Diagram Form**

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of descriptive statistics reveals that, on the whole, participants showed moderate engagement with English podcasts and considered them somewhat effective for improving their listening skills. A total of 20 respondents' answers were evaluated across 20 items related to their podcast listening habits and perceptions of how podcasts contribute to enhancing their English listening proficiency. The item "I regularly listen to English podcasts on Spotify" produced a mean score of 2.65 (SD = 1.843), indicating that participants generally agree with this statement, suggesting that many of them listen to English podcasts on a regular basis. The relatively high standard deviation suggests significant variation in the frequency with which respondents engage with podcasts. When asked about the frequency of listening, the statement "I listen to English podcasts at least once a week" received a mean score of 2.60 (SD = 1.231), showing a moderate level of agreement. This indicates that, on average, participants listen to podcasts on a weekly basis, although individual habits differ widely.

Participants were more positive regarding the impact of podcasts on their listening comprehension. The statement "I feel that listening to English podcasts helps improve my listening comprehension" achieved a mean of 2.80 (SD = 1.196), suggesting that most respondents believe podcasts contribute positively to their listening skills. Similarly, "Listening to podcasts has increased my vocabulary" scored a mean of 2.30 (SD = 0.801), indicating that participants perceive a moderate benefit to their vocabulary development from podcast listening. The statement "I prefer listening to podcasts by native English speakers to improve my listening skills" had a mean of 2.35 (SD = 0.875), which indicates a mild preference for native speakers. While there is some inclination toward native English content, it is not a dominant preference among the respondents.

Regarding increased confidence in understanding English conversations, the statement "I feel more confident in my ability to understand English conversations after listening to podcasts" received a mean score of 2.55 (SD = 1.432), suggesting that participants generally feel somewhat more confident, although the responses varied significantly. For the item "Listening to podcasts has improved my ability to understand various English accents," the mean score was 2.95 (SD = 1.276), showing a relatively positive view of the role podcasts play in improving comprehension of different English accents, though the responses varied widely. The statement "Listening to podcasts regularly helps me stay informed with the latest trends in English" scored a mean of 2.20 (SD = 1.105), indicating that while some respondents find podcasts helpful for staying updated with English trends, this is not universally perceived.

Finally, regarding the effectiveness of podcasts versus other media for improving

listening skills, the statement "I feel that listening to podcasts is more effective than watching TV or movies for improving my listening skills" had a mean of 3.25 (SD = 1.585), indicating stronger agreement with the idea that podcasts are more effective. However, the high standard deviation suggests that responses to this statement were quite diverse.

The results suggest that English podcasts are viewed as a moderately effective tool for improving listening comprehension, although there is considerable variation in individual responses. The moderate agreement with statements such as "I feel that listening to English podcasts helps improve my listening comprehension" and "Listening to podcasts has improved my ability to understand various English accents" aligns with existing research on the benefits of podcasts for language learning (Vogt, 2015; Godwin-Jones, 2018). Podcasts provide learners with authentic language input, which helps them improve their listening skills by exposing them to natural language use, including different accents and regional dialects. The variability in the responses reflects findings from previous studies, which suggest that learners' experiences with listening materials can differ greatly depending on personal preferences, learning goals, and proficiency levels (Lynch, 2009). For instance, while some respondents report improvement in listening comprehension and vocabulary through podcasts, others find that the benefits are less pronounced. This supports the idea that the effectiveness of podcasts for language learning is influenced by individual characteristics and learning contexts (Rosa & O'Neill, 2020).

The higher mean score for the statement "I feel that listening to podcasts is more effective than watching TV or movies for improving my listening skills" (3.25) suggests that podcasts are perceived as a more effective tool for focused listening practice. This aligns with research emphasizing the advantages of audio content for language learners (Thorne, 2008). However, the considerable variation in responses indicates that this view is not universal, and that other forms of media, such as TV and movies, may still play a significant role for some learners.

The slight preference for podcasts by native English speakers (mean of 2.35) highlights the value placed on authentic language exposure. However, the relatively moderate score suggests that learners are not overly concerned with whether the podcast features a native speaker, which may reflect a broader trend of engaging with various content regardless of the speaker's background.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study reveals that English podcasts are generally viewed as a moderately effective tool for improving listening comprehension, although their impact varies among individuals. The results show that while a majority of participants feel podcasts help enhance their listening abilities and vocabulary, the degree of improvement differs based on personal preferences, learning goals, and language proficiency levels. Although responses varied, the findings suggest that podcasts offer valuable exposure to authentic language and diverse accents, which supports their potential for language learning, as highlighted in previous studies. However, the differing views on whether podcasts are more effective than other media, like TV and movies, imply that while podcasts may be especially beneficial for some learners or contexts, they are not universally regarded as superior. Future research could explore the specific elements of podcasts, such as content type, speaker accent, and presentation style, that contribute to their effectiveness. Additionally, investigating how individual factors such as language proficiency and learning preferences influence the impact of podcasts could help tailor their use to better meet the needs of different learners.

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