THE USE OF SONGS ON THE SPOTIFY APP TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LISTENING ABILITY

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Abstrak *– Keterampilan mendengarkan merupakan komponen penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, yang meliputi pemahaman intonasi, pelafalan, kosakata, dan tata bahasa. Sebagai bagian mendasar dari komunikasi sehari-hari, mendengarkan merupakan salah satu keterampilan bahasa yang paling penting untuk dikuasai. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peningkatan keterampilan mendengarkan siswa melalui penggunaan lagu-lagu bahasa Inggris yang tersedia di aplikasi Spotify. Mendengarkan lagu lebih dari sekadar hiburan; ia menawarkan media yang menarik dan efektif untuk belajar bahasa Inggris. Dengan menggunakan pustaka lagu Spotify yang luas dan fitur lirik terintegrasinya, siswa dapat meningkatkan keterampilan mendengarkan mereka dengan cara yang menyenangkan dan mudah dipahami. Lebih jauh lagi, metode ini membantu siswa lebih memahami penutur asli bahasa Inggris, menumbuhkan kemahiran linguistik dan keakraban budaya. Dengan menggunakan curah pendapat dan wawancara sebagai metodologi penelitian, penelitian kualitatif ini menyoroti manfaat dan tantangan yang terkait dengan mengintegrasikan Spotify ke dalam proses pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lagu meningkatkan motivasi siswa dan meningkatkan pemahaman mendengarkan, menjadikan Spotify alat yang berharga untuk pemerolehan bahasa.*

Kata Kunci: Kemampuan mendengarkan, Lagu, Spotify.

Abstract - Listening skills are a crucial component of English language learning, encompassing the understanding of intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Listening is a fundamental part of daily communication and one of the most essential language skills. This study explores enhancing students' listening skills using English songs available on the Spotify application. Listening to songs transcends mere entertainment; it offers an engaging and effective medium for learning English. By utilizing Spotify's extensive library of songs and its integrated lyrics feature, students can improve their listening skills in an enjoyable and accessible manner. Furthermore, this method helps students better comprehend native English speakers, fostering linguistic proficiency and cultural familiarity. Employing brainstorming and interviews as research methodologies, this qualitative research highlights the benefits and challenges of integrating Spotify into the learning process. Results indicate that songs increase student motivation and improve listening comprehension, making Spotify a valuable tool for language acquisition.

Keywords: Listening ability, Songs, Spotify.

INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the most critical and fundamental language acquisition skills, as it is the foundation for effective communication and comprehension. (Diora and Rosa, 2020) emphasize that listening plays a vital role in people's lives, significantly improving communication skills and facilitating meaningful interactions. They argue that regular and consistent exposure to various forms of English is essential for developing language proficiency, as listening provides crucial language input. However, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning contexts, students often struggle with listening due to various factors, such as limited exposure to authentic spoken language, lack of motivation, and traditional teaching methods that do not adequately address individual learning needs. Strong listening skills are essential for improving pronunciation, vocabulary retention, and language proficiency.

Traditional classroom materials, such as audio tracks in textbooks or recorded dialogues, often fail to engage students and make listening practice enjoyable. Over the past decade, technological advancements have introduced new ways to make language learning more interactive and engaging. Among these innovations, music streaming platforms like Spotify have emerged as potential tools to support language learning. (Rahajeng, 2022) Spotify is an app that features digital music, podcasts, and distributed video, among other features. In digital music, users can play their favorite songs with this application. Its user-friendly interface and accessibility make

it an attractive resource for educators and learners. Unlike traditional audio materials, songs on Spotify provide an authentic listening experience, incorporating natural language use, diverse accents, and cultural expressions. These features make songs valuable for improving listening comprehension and fostering language immersion. The use of songs in education is not a new concept. Many studies have highlighted the benefits of incorporating music into the classroom to enhance language learning. Due to their rhythmic and repetitive nature, songs reduce learning anxiety, increase motivation, and improve memory retention.

In the context of English learning, songs help students become familiar with idiomatic expressions, colloquial language, and pronunciation in an enjoyable and non-threatening way. (Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, 1986), which posits that information is better retained when presented through verbal and non-verbal channels, supporting the use of music in language learning. Songs combine lyrics (verbal) with melody and rhythm (non-verbal), creating a multisensory experience that enhances comprehension and retention. However, despite these benefits, integrating platforms like Spotify into formal language instruction remains underexplored, particularly in settings where traditional teaching methods are dominant.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using songs on the Spotify app to improve students' listening abilities in English. It explores how Spotify can be a supplementary tool in language classrooms to make listening practice more engaging and effective. By leveraging the app's diverse library of songs, students are given opportunities to listen to authentic English materials, interact with different accents and speech patterns, and enhance their comprehension skills in a fun and creative manner. This research seeks to understand the benefits and challenges of using Spotify in an educational setting through a qualitative approach that interviews grade 11 students. It also examines how incorporating songs into listening activities can impact students' motivation and language learning experience. By doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on technology-enhanced learning. It provides practical insights for educators looking to integrate digital tools into their teaching practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The research aimed to explore using Spotify to improve students' English listening abilities. The methodology employed for data collection was qualitative, using semi-structured interviews with high school students in grade 11. These interviews provided insights into students' personal experiences with Spotify, their perceptions of its benefits for language learning, and their opinions on how listening to English songs can contribute to improving listening skills.

Participants

The study involved five grade 11 high school students. The participants were selected through convenience sampling, ensuring diversity in terms of music preferences and engagement with the Spotify app. All participants were active platform users and had at least a basic understanding of English. The interviews were conducted in a casual and open-ended manner to allow for detailed responses.

Interview Questions

The semi-structured interviews were designed to gather in-depth information about the students' usage of Spotify and its impact on their English learning experience. The following questions were used to guide the interviews:

1. Have you used Spotify before? If yes, how often and for what purpose?
2. Do you think Spotify can be useful for learning English? Why or why not?
3. What types of songs do you usually listen to on Spotify?
4. Do you find listening to English songs on Spotify helpful for improving your vocabulary or listening skills?
5. Have you ever used the lyrics feature on Spotify to follow along with a song? If yes, how did it help you understand the song better?

The final question focused on using Spotify's lyrics feature, a key tool for enhancing comprehension and pronunciation. It aimed to understand how the feature contributes to a better understanding song lyrics and language learning.

Data Collection

Depending on the participants ' availability, the interviews were conducted in person or via an online meeting platform. Each interview lasted between 15 and 30 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participant's consent to ensure accuracy in data collection. Notes were also taken during the interviews to capture non-verbal cues and provide additional context. The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on the students' responses to gain deeper insights into their experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research aimed to explore the effectiveness of using Spotify to improve English listening skills among grade 11 students. The findings from interviews provide insights into students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges when utilizing the platforms for language learning:

1. **Frequency of Spotify Usage**

All participants reported frequent usage of Spotify, with many indicating daily interaction. Students utilized Spotify during various activities, such as studying, relaxing, and improving their mood. One participant shared:

"I use Spotify almost every day, whether it's to help me focus on my studies or just to improve my mood."

This widespread adoption suggests that Spotify is a tool students are familiar with, making it an accessible and convenient option for educational purposes.

2. **Perceived Educational Benefits**

Participants unanimously agreed that Spotify is beneficial for learning English. Listening to English songs expanded their vocabulary, improved pronunciation, and enhanced their listening skills. A participant commented:

"Spotify is a great tool for learning English. The songs make it fun, and I can learn new words and how to pronounce them correctly."

This sentiment reflects the dual-purpose value of Spotify as an entertainment platform and an educational resource.

3. **Diverse Musical Preferences**

Students preferred various genres, including pop, indie, rock, jazz, R&B, and instrumental. One participant remarked:

"I listen to all kinds of music—pop, rock, even jazz—depending on my mood."

This diversity underscores the platform's potential to cater to different tastes, allowing educators to incorporate music that resonates with students' interests. Tailoring song selections to these preferences can maximize engagement and participation in listening exercises.

4. **Enhancements to Listening Skills**

Listening to songs on Spotify was a helpful way to improve listening skills, especially in understanding accents, expressions, and speech patterns. However, some participants mentioned challenges in grasping slang or uncommon phrases. As one participant explained:

"Sometimes I have to replay songs with slang or unfamiliar words, but it's interesting to learn them."

This feedback highlights the platform's role in exposing learners to real-world language while offering opportunities for deeper exploration of colloquial expressions.

5. **Role of Spotify's Lyrics Feature**

The lyrics feature was praised as an essential tool for aiding comprehension. Participants frequently used it to understand unfamiliar words, learn correct pronunciations, and grasp the meanings of songs. One participant

shared:

"The lyrics feature helps a lot. When I don't understand a word, I can look at the lyrics and figure out the meaning."

This functionality bridges the gap between listening and understanding, providing a comprehensive and engaging learning experience.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that Spotify is an effective tool for improving students' English listening skills, with several notable benefits and challenges. This discussion delves into key results, offering insights into how educators can maximize their potential in language classrooms.

1. Engagement and Motivation

Music inherently captivates and resonates with individuals, making it a powerful medium for learning. Students in this study reported that Spotify helped them stay engaged in their listening practice due to its entertainment value. Unlike traditional classroom materials, songs offer an emotional connection, enabling learners to relate to the content. This emotional aspect increases motivation, which is crucial for sustained learning. Furthermore, Spotify's accessibility and vast library of songs make it an attractive tool for students. Educators can bridge the gap between leisure and learning by integrating something they already use and enjoy daily. This integration transforms a passive listening habit into an active learning opportunity, fostering a positive attitude toward language acquisition.

2. Exposure to Authentic English

Spotify provides access to many authentic English materials, exposing students to different accents, speech patterns, and cultural contexts. Authenticity in language learning materials is essential for developing practical communication skills, as it prepares learners for real-world interactions. Songs also introduce idiomatic expressions and colloquial language, offering students insights into informal and conversational English. However, this authenticity comes with challenges. Students noted difficulty understanding slang, idiomatic phrases, and regional accents. While these challenges can be intimidating, they also offer more profound linguistic and cultural exploration opportunities. Educators can address these difficulties by incorporating pre-listening activities, introducing key vocabulary, providing context for challenging phrases, and facilitating discussions about cultural nuances.

3. The Role of Multimodal Learning

Spotify's synchronized lyrics feature emerged as a critical aid in enhancing listening comprehension. This feature supports multimodal learning by combining auditory and visual inputs. Students hear the pronunciation of words and see them written, creating a dual reinforcement of vocabulary and language structures. This approach aligns with theories of multimodal learning, which emphasize that engaging multiple senses improves retention and understanding. By encouraging students to listen while reading lyrics, educators can help learners connect sounds with spellings, identify grammatical structures, and understand contextual meanings. For instance, when students hear a word they cannot initially decipher, viewing it in written form enables them to recognize it and potentially integrate it into their active vocabulary.

4. Challenges in Song Selection

Despite the overall benefits, the study highlighted the importance of carefully selecting songs for educational purposes. Songs with excessive slang, abstract metaphors, or unfamiliar cultural references can be complex for students, especially those with lower proficiency levels. Educators can mitigate these challenges by curating playlists with clear lyrics, moderate tempos, and themes that align with students' interests and linguistic needs. For advanced learners, challenging songs can be used as opportunities for analysis and discussion, encouraging critical thinking and cultural exploration.

5. Fostering Critical Thinking Through Music

Beyond listening skills, songs provide a platform for fostering critical thinking and creativity. Educators can design tasks that encourage students to analyze the meaning of lyrics, explore their emotional or cultural

significance, and connect them to broader societal themes. For example, a song addressing social issues could lead to discussions about cultural differences or global challenges, enriching students' intercultural awareness. Additionally, creative tasks such as rewriting lyrics or composing new verses can help students develop productive skills in speaking and writing, making music a versatile tool for integrated language learning.

6. Broader Implications for Technology-Enhanced Learning

The use of Spotify in this study reflects a broader trend in integrating technology into education. Digital tools like Spotify cater to the learning habits of modern students, who are accustomed to accessing content through mobile devices. By incorporating such tools, educators can create more dynamic and learner-centered environments where technology supports personalized and engaging learning experiences. Spotify's application in language learning also aligns with constructivist teaching approaches, where students actively construct knowledge through meaningful interactions with real-world materials. This paradigm shifts the role of the teacher from knowledge provider to facilitator, guiding students in exploring and interpreting content.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that incorporating songs from the Spotify app into English learning activities can significantly enhance students' listening abilities. The platform's widespread use among students, diverse music library, and practical features, such as synchronized lyrics, make it an effective and engaging supplementary tool for language learning. Students reported improved vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and comprehension through consistent exposure to authentic English materials. Spotify also motivated students by providing a fun and relaxed environment for listening practice. However, challenges such as understanding slang or less common phrases highlight the importance of selecting appropriate songs that match students' proficiency levels. The findings emphasize the potential of technology-enhanced learning tools like Spotify to enrich the language learning experience. By thoughtfully integrating such tools into teaching practices, educators can create more dynamic and impactful lessons, fostering students' motivation and skill development. This research contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting digital educational resources and provides actionable insights for teachers seeking innovative methods to improve students' listening abilities.

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