

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE UTILIZATION OF THE SPOTIFY APPLICATION IN TEACHING LISTENING

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### Abstract

In the digital age, English listening skills have become essential for language learners, yet many students still struggle with comprehension and motivation. Spotify, a globally popular audio streaming platform, offers a variety of features that may support listening development in educational contexts. This study aims to provide an overview of how the Spotify application has been utilized in the teaching of English listening. It specifically examines how previous undergraduate studies have integrated Spotify through both songs and podcasts to support students' listening skills in classroom settings. Using a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study analyzed 20 undergraduate theses from Indonesian universities published between 2021 and 2025. The data were collected using specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, followed by content analysis to identify patterns of Spotify usage and its reported effects. The results reveal that Spotify has been used to support various aspects of listening instruction, including vocabulary enrichment, pronunciation improvement, listening comprehension, and student motivation. Features such as real-time lyrics, replay controls, and personalized playlists were highlighted as especially helpful. Overall, Spotify's diverse features offer promising potential in enhancing English listening instruction. As both a media tool and motivational aid, Spotify can be a valuable addition to modern language classrooms, particularly when combined with appropriate instructional design.

**Keywords:** English Learning; Listening; Literature Review; Podcast; Song; Spotify; Systematic.

### INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the core skills in English language learning, alongside reading, writing, and speaking. It is a receptive skill that plays a central role in both academic and real-life communication. Rukthong and Brunfaut (2020) state that, listening is not merely hearing sounds, but rather an active cognitive process that involves attention, meaning-making, and connecting new input with prior knowledge. Newton and Nation (2020) highlight that learners spend more than 50% of their classroom time with listening activities, which means the essential role of listening as a source of language input.

The integration of technology in education has created new ways to support listening activities in the classroom. Over the years, many tools have been used, such as websites, language learning applications, and multimedia platforms. These tools help provide more flexible and engaging ways for students to learn, especially when dealing with listening tasks. For example, video-based lessons or apps like Duolingo have been shown to help students practice listening through repetition, visual support, and interactive tasks Nathania (2024). Other studies also show that multimedia materials such as audio combined with images or transcripts can improve students' confidence and make the listening process easier to follow (Saraswaty, Adawiyah, Sulistiyo, & Haryanto, 2024).

However, the integration of technology in education has opened new opportunities to overcome such challenges. Despite the growing availability of these digital resources, many students still encounter various challenges when developing their listening skills, both in terms of comprehension and motivation. A recent study by Tanrıverdi, Han, and Töngel (2024) report that learners often experience anxiety, difficulty maintaining concentration, and low motivation when engaging in listening tasks.

Platforms like Spotify offer features that are suitable with learner preferences and habits, making them potentially useful in supporting listening development. As Andriani (2019) explains, Spotify is widely used by young people, and its rich selection of English songs and podcasts can enhance student exposure to authentic language input. Teachers and students have recognized Spotify as a user friendly, flexible tool that encourages frequent and self-directed listening practice.

For English language learning, both songs and podcasts have been widely used as effective listening tools in classrooms and self-study. English songs, with their repetitive structures and appealing melodies, help students improve listening comprehension, vocabulary, and motivation; a case study in Indonesia confirms that learners find listening to music relaxing and beneficial for focus and retention (Rahmawati, 2022). Similarly, podcasts provide authentic spoken language input and flexible access: research in Indonesian EFL classrooms shows that podcast-based instruction significantly boosts students' listening scores and generates positive attitudes toward learning (Hamdani, Fikni, & Handini, 2022).

While many previous studies have examined the use of songs or podcasts from Spotify independently in teaching English, fewer studies provide a broader analysis of how Spotify as a platform offering both formats have been implemented in classroom settings. This study aims to address that gap by presenting an overview of how Spotify is utilized in English listening instruction. Through a systematic literature review of 20 undergraduate theses, this study seeks to uncover patterns, strategies, and student responses associated with Spotify based listening activities.

### METHODS

The methodology used in this study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach under an overview model to investigate how the Spotify application is utilized in teaching English listening skills. Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a research method used to collect and analyze previous studies in a structured and organized way. It helps researchers find out what has been studied, what the results are, and where the gaps or problems still exist. The process follows clear steps to make sure the review is complete, objective, and reliable (Turney, 2022). Likewise, SLR needs to systematically recognize and critically evaluate relevant research with a certain topic and combine its findings (Mohd Nawi & Muhmad Nor, 2023).

To ensure methodological transparency and reporting clarity, the study also followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021), which provide a modern standard for documenting systematic review processes.

The review process involved the following four main steps:

#### 1. Formulating the Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem was formulated to investigate how the Spotify application has been utilized to support the teaching of English listening. This guided the review toward studies involving Spotify as a digital media tool in language learning, particularly in improving students' listening comprehension, motivation, and engagement.

#### 2. Identifying Relevant Studies.

A comprehensive search was conducted using Google Scholar and institutional repositories from Indonesian universities. Keywords used included: "Spotify in teaching listening," "English song," "Podcast," and related terms. The selection of studies was guided by inclusion and exclusion criteria. The table outlines the inclusions and exclusion criteria.

**Table 1.** Literature Selection Process

INCLUSION CRITERIA	EXCLUSION CRITERIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The publication dates of the articles were chosen after the year 2020.</li> <li>• Written in English language.</li> <li>• The article needs to be related to “Listening Skill” and “Spotify Application”.</li> <li>• Accessibility in the form of openly accessible complete texts</li> <li>• Publication in peer-reviewed journals or relevant conference papers.</li> <li>• The setting of the article is in the area of English language teaching and learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any publications before the year 2021.</li> <li>• Publications that were not written in the English language.</li> </ul>

**3. Summarizing the Evidence.**

Following a review of the selected articles, a table summarizing each article’s findings was created.

**4. Interpreting the Findings.**

The statement of the problem guided the analysis of the selected papers results. This analysis was then used to draw conclusions.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section of the results, the results will be presented in the form of a table along with an explanation.

**Utilizing Spotify Features:**

Based on the 20 reviewed studies, Spotify presents a wide range of features that were actively utilized in classroom and independent listening practices

**Table 2.** Spotify Features Utilization

Spotify Features Utilized	How the Features are Utilized	Articles
Diverse (songs, narrations)	Content podcast English songs and podcasts are used to improve listening skills, vocabulary, and engagement. Both English songs and podcasts were used as the main teaching materials in most studies to support various subskills and engagement.	DwicaHYa et al. (2024), Rezi et al. (2025), Izzah et al. (2023)

Spotify Features Utilized	How the Features are Utilized	Articles
Lyrics Integration	Lyrics were used in listening tasks such as gap-filling and vocabulary identification to enhance vocabulary retention and pronunciation.	Ni'mah and Putri (2024), Utari (2022)
Interactive Features	Spotify having interactive features such as pause, replay, and control playback that can be used by student for listening task	Ilmi and Nurjati (2023), Suwarni et al. (2023)
Offline Access	Spotify has an offline feature that can be used by a student. Students can download podcasts and use them offline for flexible practice, especially in areas with limited internet access.	Izzah et al. (2022)
Replay Flexibility	Learners replay parts of songs/podcasts for better comprehension	Salsabila et al. (2021)
Accessibility	Spotify is accessible via multiple devices and easy to use	Izzah et al. (2022)

The Spotify app offers a variety of interesting features, which are also very useful for listening activity. One of the most emphasized features was lyrics integration, where students used song lyrics in tasks such as cloze tests and vocabulary identification to enhance word recognition and improve pronunciation (Ni'mah & Putri, 2024; Utari, 2023). The pause and replay functions were equally vital, as they gave students control over the speed and repetition of audio, allowing for deeper comprehension of fast or complex speech segments (Alfarisi, Aulia; Sarair; Farsia, 2024; Salsabila, Irianti, & Thoyyibah, 2021). Another notable feature is offline access, which enables students especially in regions with unstable internet to continue practicing their listening skills by downloading the audio content in advance.

**Aspects Improvement by utilizing Spotify:**

Based on the 20 reviewed studies, Spotify presents an improvement in various aspects of English language learning skills

Table 3. Spotify for Listening Comprehension

Aspects Improved	How Significant the Improvement is	Articles
Listening skills: listening for gist/details	Listening tasks such as answering content questions, completing worksheets, and summarizing indicated focus on overall understanding and specific points.	Ni'mah and Putri (2024)
Listening skills: inferring meaning	In vocabulary exercises, students guessed meanings of new words in lyrics, showing inferencing strategies.	Ni'mah and Putri (2024), Utari (2023)
Listening achievement shown by the scores	Almost all of the studies reported higher post-test scores in listening comprehension after learning with Spotify media.	Dwicahya et al. (2024)

Aspects Improved	How Significant the Improvement is	Articles
Listening ability/proficiency	Students showed increased ability in identifying spoken words and comprehending English in both songs and podcast-based activities.	Dwicahya et al. (2024), Agustina et al. (2023), Rezi et al. (2025)

Listening comprehension is not a passive process, but an active process of taking a message from a series of sounds. Based on the theses above, the utilization of Spotify application increases student listening comprehension in many aspects, such as improving student achievement, ability/proficiency, inferring meaning and also students' understanding of inferring meaning. According Ni'mah and Putri (2024), both of the researchers giving a test such as completing a missing lyric, it requires students to concentrate on recognizing sentences while listening and guessing the missing words in a song, this test hones students' listening for gist/details and inferring meaning. Furthermore, Spotify also affects student achievement and ability/proficiency, Cahya et al. (2024) said, from the use of the Spotify application in the classroom, it helps improve students' grades and listening skills.

Table 4. Spotify for Vocabulary Acquisition

Aspects Improved	How Significant the Improvement is	Articles
Vocabulary Retention	Vocabulary exposure through viral songs on Spotify made it easier for students to acquire and retain new words.	Rezi et al. (2025)

From the theses above, it was found that the songs from the Spotify application not only contributed to the development of listening skills, but also supported vocabulary acquisition. Rezi, Destia, Wahyudi, Elentiranda, and Fikri (2025) reported that viral English songs on Spotify exposed students to authentic and repetitive use of vocabulary, making new words easier to remember in a natural and enjoyable way. The popularity of these songs encouraged students to listen repeatedly, which strengthened their memory of new vocabulary items. In addition, the authentic pronunciation found in the lyrics helped students become more familiar with natural speech patterns, combining both listening practice and vocabulary learning in an engaging context.

Table 5. Spotify for Pronunciation Accuracy

Aspects Improved	How Significant the Improvement is	Articles
Pronunciation Modeling	Spotify provides exposure to various English accents and clear speech.	Ilmi and Nurjati (2023)

The habit of listening to music on Spotify, especially with lyrics, can indirectly influence student pronunciation through language exposure and imitation. Students can imitate what they hear. If a student always listens to songs with a certain pronunciation, they may naturally imitate that pronunciation when speaking. According Ilmi and Nurjati (2023) said, students are motivated to understand and pronounce

words or sentences in a foreign language delivered by the speaker. Moreover, the Spotify application has an equalizer feature that allows users to adjust the sound to listen to music more clearly.

Table 6. Spotify for Overall Motivation and Engagement in Learning

Aspects Improved	How Significant the Improvement is	Articles
Increased motivation	Students reported enjoying Spotify-based learning more than traditional materials.	Izzah et al. (2023), Ilmi and Nurjati (2023), Salsabila et al. (2021)
Increased Enjoyment	Learners described the activity as enjoyable and relaxing, this was shown from use of relevant music and podcast content.	Izzah et al. (2023), Salsabila et al. (2021)
Reduced Boredom	Students reported Spotify based learning was described as less boring, comprehension after learning with Spotify media.	Ilmi and Nurjati (2023), Alfarisi et al. (2024)

Spotify provides a wide variety of audio content, including podcasts and music, that can be customized to students interests and preferences. Student motivation and enjoyment were consistently reported to be higher when listening activities involved Spotify (Alfarisi, Aulia; Sarair; Farsia, 2024; Masbirorotni, Failasofah, & Izzah, 2023). Spotify was seen as more interesting and less boring, helping reduce attention lapses and improve concentration (Salsabila, Irianti, & Thooyibah, 2021).

Based on the studies reviewed, Spotify is primarily used for two types of listening skills: extensive listening and intensive listening. Extensive listening occurs when students listen to songs or podcasts in a general way, focusing on understanding the overall meaning or main ideas, as shown in the findings of Ni'mah and Putri (2024), who found that students became more enthusiastic and concentrated when using English songs on Spotify, as the activity allowed them to follow the general idea of the lyrics while enjoying the music. Spotify is also used for intensive listening, where students listen more carefully to details, such as practicing dictation which is writing down what they hear, identifying key words, or understanding sentence structure. This is supported by research from (Ilmi & Nurjati, 2023; Suwarni, Sartika, & Ika, 2023).

Furthermore, Spotify has been shown to significantly improve students' listening skills in English language learning. This improvement is reflected in various studies, where students' scores increased after using Spotify. For example, Cahya et al. (2024) reported an average increase of 39.52 points in listening scores. Iddiyaturrohmah, Fikni, Maysuroh, and Husnu (2024) found a 21.75-point improvement, with scores rising from 63.00 to 84.75. Additionally, Masbirorotni et al. (2023) found a 13.52-point increase after using the Listening Time podcast on Spotify. Similar improvements were observed by Eka Agustina, Hastuti Retno Kuspiyah, and Ade Triani (2023) who noted significant score gains, where the experimental group using Spotify achieved an average post-test score of 80.71, significantly higher than the control group at 65.50. Improvements in student scores were also evident in research conducted by Alam, Rofi, Ilyas, and Dwika (2023), in the former test, the total score was 1250, with a mean score of 44.64, while in the latter, the total score was 2050, with a mean score of 73.21, and Ni'mah and Putri (2024) found a 19.52-point increase after students used English songs on Spotify. Overall, these studies consistently show that Spotify is an effective tool for enhancing students' listening skills.

In the listening teaching process, various components such as the teacher, students, learning goals, materials, methods, media, and evaluation are clearly utilized when using Spotify. Teachers guide students on how to use Spotify and help select appropriate audio content Suwarni et al. (2023). Students engage actively by listening to songs or podcasts, either individually or in groups Marsela et al. (2024). The learning goals aim to improve student ability to understand spoken content, expand vocabulary, and

practice pronunciation (Salsabila et al., 2021; Sayidaturrahmah, Fatmawati, & Husain, 2024). The materials come from Spotify, including English songs and educational podcasts Lisda, Universitas, and Anwar (2024). Regarding methods, some studies use dictation, individual tasks, or group discussions after listening to the audio Suwarni et al. (2023). Spotify serves as the main medium, as it is easily accessible on student smartphones or laptops. In terms of evaluation, most studies use pre-tests and post-tests to assess improvement in students' listening abilities after using Spotify (Febrianti, Talib, & Ariyani, 2023; IImi & Nurjati, 2023).

The process of teaching listening can be broken down into six distinct stages: Introduction, Ice-Breaking, Main Activity, Consultation, Lesson Recap and Closing Activity. Each stage plays a role in guiding students toward effective listening comprehension. In terms of teaching stages, Spotify is most commonly used during the main activity phase. In this stage, students are asked to listen to Spotify audio and complete tasks such as answering questions or transcribing parts of the audio Suwarni et al. (2023).

The analysis of the 20 reviewed studies also reveals several important insights regarding the use of Spotify in English language education, particularly in enhancing students' listening skills. Firstly, most studies agree that Spotify is effective in enhancing students' listening comprehension. For example, Cahya et al. (2024) reported a significant improvement in students' listening scores, with the average increasing from 42.89 in the pre-test to 82.42 in the post-test after using Spotify as a learning tool. Similarly, Iddiyaturrohmah et al. (2024) found that teaching Spotify podcasts was significantly effective in improving students' listening skills at Yadinu Masbagik High School. Based on the results, the pre-test score was 63.00 and the post-test score was 84.75.

Secondly, several studies point out that Spotify not only improves listening comprehension, but also helps students develop vocabulary, pronunciation, and engagement. Ni'mah and Putri (2024) observed that listening to English songs on Spotify helped eighth grade students expand their vocabulary and improve listening accuracy. Rezi, Destia, Wahyudi, Elentiranda, and Fikri (2025) also noted that popular English songs on Spotify exposed students to native-like pronunciation, which made them more motivated and familiar with natural speech patterns. Thirdly, student motivation and interest were mentioned many times in the studies. According to (Alfarisi, Aulia; Sarair; Farsia, 2024), students found Spotify podcasts fun and easy to access, especially because they could listen anytime and choose from a variety of topics. The researchers also found that Spotify helped lower students' anxiety during listening activities, making them more confident and engaged. Ramadhan (2024) similarly noted that students became more enthusiastic when using Spotify, compared to more traditional listening materials.

Next, the reviewed studies show that Spotify is a relevant and valuable tool in modern English language education. Its ability to provide engaging, real life listening input helps students build listening skills in ways that traditional methods often cannot. Meisa (2023) emphasized that Spotify offers authentic content that increases the learning experience. Then, both English songs and podcasts on Spotify play different roles. Songs are engaging and rhythm based, useful for motivation and vocabulary practice, while podcasts offer longer, more structured content ideal for building comprehension and critical thinking Masbirorotni et al (2023)

However, the studies also highlighted a few challenges. Meisa (2023) pointed out that the lack of visual and bad internet connections can sometimes make it harder for students to follow the audio. Similarly, Al-habsyi, Syahid, Zikri, and Ramdannah (2024) found that some students became distracted or had difficulty staying focused during independent listening sessions using podcasts, but these issues can be resolved through proper planning and teacher guidance.

Overall, these findings reflect a growing trend in language education by the utilization of Spotify application and student-centered learning. Platforms such as Spotify play an important role in engaging learners and offering exposure to authentic language use in real-world contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the review of 20 studies, both songs and podcasts on Spotify, they help improve students' listening comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and motivation. Additionally, both English songs and podcasts on Spotify provide different benefits. Songs are more suitable for boosting motivation, rhythm recognition, and vocabulary retention, while podcasts offer structured and authentic input to develop deeper comprehension and critical listening skills. Despite some minor challenges, Spotify remains a flexible and accessible option for modern language learning when used with the right strategies.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the English Education Department of Lambung Mangkurat University and both thesis advisors for their guidance and support throughout the completion of this research.

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