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THE ROLE OF REPLAY, PLAYBACK SPEED CONTROL, AND TRANSCRIPT FEATURES IN SPOTIFY PODCAST IN FACILITATING ENGLISH LISTENING SKILLS

PERAN FITUR REPLAY, PLAYBACK SPEED CONTROL, DAN TRANSKRIP PADA PODCAST SPOTIFY DALAM MEMFASILITASI KETERAMPILAN MENYIMAK BAHASA INGGRIS

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate students' perceptions of Spotify podcast features in facilitating listening skills. The research focused on three Spotify podcast features, namely Replay Feature, Playback Speed Control, and Transcript Feature, and their contributions to five listening aspects: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, meaning, and pragmatic context. This study employed a quantitative descriptive design using a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The participants were students who had experience using Spotify podcasts as a medium for learning English listening skills. The findings revealed that students generally had positive perceptions toward the use of Spotify podcast features. Among the three features, the Transcript Feature was perceived as the most facilitating feature, obtaining the highest percentage (83%), followed by the Replay Feature (81%) and Playback Speed Control (80%). In terms of listening aspects, meaning emerged as the aspect most facilitated by Spotify podcast features. Furthermore, the findings indicated that Spotify podcast features were effective in supporting students' listening comprehension through repeated exposure, adjustable listening speed, and written transcripts. However, students still experienced challenges, particularly in grammar and pragmatic context, which were identified as the most difficult aspects of listening comprehension. The study concludes that Spotify podcast features can serve as valuable technology-based learning tools for facilitating listening skills. Therefore, English teachers and learners are encouraged to integrate Spotify podcasts into listening activities to provide authentic language input and promote independent learning.

Keywords: Spotify Podcasts, Listening Skills, Students' Perception, Technology-Assisted Language Learning

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa terhadap fitur-fitur Spotify Podcast dalam memfasilitasi keterampilan menyimak (listening). Penelitian ini berfokus pada tiga fitur Spotify Podcast, yaitu Replay Feature, Playback Speed Control, dan Transcript Feature, serta kontribusinya terhadap lima aspek listening, yaitu pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, meaning, dan pragmatic context. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif dengan instrumen berupa kuesioner yang disebarkan melalui Google Forms. Partisipan penelitian adalah mahasiswa yang memiliki pengalaman menggunakan Spotify Podcast sebagai media pembelajaran listening bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki persepsi yang positif terhadap penggunaan fitur-fitur Spotify Podcast. Di antara ketiga fitur tersebut, Transcript Feature memperoleh persentase tertinggi (83%), diikuti oleh Replay Feature (81%) dan Playback Speed Control (80%). Pada aspek listening, meaning menjadi aspek yang paling terbantu melalui penggunaan fitur Spotify Podcast. Temuan penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa fitur-fitur Spotify Podcast efektif dalam mendukung pemahaman listening melalui kesempatan mendengarkan berulang, pengaturan kecepatan audio, dan ketersediaan transkrip. Meskipun demikian, mahasiswa masih mengalami kesulitan terutama pada aspek grammar dan pragmatic context. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa fitur-fitur Spotify Podcast merupakan media pembelajaran berbasis teknologi yang bermanfaat untuk memfasilitasi keterampilan listening. Oleh karena itu, guru dan pembelajar bahasa Inggris disarankan untuk mengintegrasikan Spotify Podcast dalam kegiatan pembelajaran listening guna menyediakan paparan bahasa yang autentik sekaligus mendorong pembelajaran mandiri.

Kata Kunci: ***Spotify Podcast, Keterampilan Listening, Persepsi Mahasiswa, Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbantuan Teknologi***

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INTRODUCTION

Listening is widely recognized as one of the most essential language skills in English language learning because it enables learners to receive, interpret, and respond appropriately to spoken language. Unlike reading, where learners have sufficient time to reread written texts, listening requires them to process spoken information immediately while simultaneously recognizing pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical structures, meaning, and pragmatic context. This complex cognitive process makes listening comprehension a fundamental component of communicative competence, particularly for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) argue that listening serves as the foundation of language acquisition because learners need to comprehend spoken input before they can successfully produce language through speaking or writing. Similarly, Rost (2024) explains that effective listening comprehension requires learners to integrate multiple linguistic components, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, meaning, and contextual interpretation, into a coherent understanding of spoken discourse. Graham (2017) further emphasizes that listening is an active cognitive process in which learners continuously construct meaning by combining linguistic knowledge with contextual information and prior experiences. Therefore, developing listening skills is essential not only for achieving successful communication but also for enhancing other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing, which depend on adequate language input.

Despite its importance, listening remains one of the most challenging language skills for EFL learners. Students frequently experience difficulties in understanding spoken English because they must process linguistic information in real time while coping with unfamiliar vocabulary, different accents, rapid speech, and complex grammatical structures. These challenges become even greater when learners have limited opportunities to interact with authentic English outside the classroom. Nushi and Orouji (2020) state that unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech, and variations in pronunciation are among the primary factors affecting listening comprehension. Likewise, Nguyen (2020) explains that listening difficulties are influenced by linguistic, cognitive,

and affective factors, including limited vocabulary mastery, insufficient grammatical knowledge, anxiety, and poor concentration during listening activities. Goh and Vandergrift (2021) further argue that learners with inadequate metacognitive awareness often struggle to apply appropriate listening strategies, resulting in ineffective comprehension of spoken texts. In addition, Field (2019) suggests that many learners fail to understand spoken discourse because they focus excessively on recognizing individual words rather than constructing the overall meaning of the message. Consequently, many EFL students perceive listening as one of the most demanding skills in English learning and require appropriate learning media that provide authentic language exposure while allowing them to practice according to their own learning pace.

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed language learning by providing learners with more flexible and accessible learning environments. Technology-Assisted Language Learning (TALL) enables students to access authentic learning resources through various digital platforms without being restricted by time or location, thereby encouraging autonomous learning and increasing learner engagement. Chapelle and Sauro (2017) explain that digital technologies facilitate language learning by integrating multimedia resources, authentic language input, and interactive learning experiences that promote meaningful communication. Similarly, Al-Azawei et al. (2017) emphasize that digital learning environments support learner-centered education because students are able to select learning materials that correspond to their needs, interests, and proficiency levels. Furthermore, Raman (2023) argues that digital media provide opportunities for learners to experience authentic language use beyond traditional classroom instruction, enabling them to improve language comprehension through continuous exposure to spoken and written English. In listening instruction, technology-assisted learning allows students to access authentic audio materials repeatedly while controlling their own learning process, making listening practice more effective and flexible. Consequently, the integration of digital technology into English language learning has become an effective strategy for improving listening competence while fostering learner autonomy and independent learning habits.

Among the various forms of technology-assisted learning media, podcasts have become increasingly popular because they provide authentic spoken language while offering flexible learning opportunities for students. Educational podcasts expose learners to natural pronunciation, stress, intonation, vocabulary, and conversational expressions used in real-life communication. Unlike conventional classroom listening materials, podcasts allow learners to choose topics that

match their interests and repeatedly access learning materials according to their individual learning needs. Indahsari (2020) explains that podcasts support listening comprehension by exposing learners to authentic spoken English through portable digital devices, thereby facilitating continuous listening practice beyond classroom settings. Likewise, Chaves-Yuste and de-la Peña (2023) argue that podcasts encourage meaningful learning because learners receive authentic language input while simultaneously developing learner autonomy. İsmail Yaman (2016) further states that podcasts provide learners with greater control over their learning because they can determine the duration, frequency, and pace of listening practice independently. These characteristics make podcasts particularly valuable for EFL learners who require additional listening exposure outside formal instruction. Therefore, podcasts have become one of the most effective technology-based learning resources for improving listening comprehension while promoting learner independence and motivation.

Among numerous podcast platforms currently available, Spotify has emerged as one of the most widely used digital streaming services because it provides access to extensive podcast collections through an accessible and user-friendly platform. Beyond offering authentic educational content, Spotify incorporates several interactive features that potentially facilitate listening comprehension more effectively than conventional audio players. Eriksson et al. (2019) explain that Spotify combines digital accessibility with personalized streaming services, allowing users to access audio content conveniently through multiple internet-connected devices. More importantly, Spotify provides features such as the Replay Feature, Playback Speed Control, and Transcript Feature, each of which offers specific pedagogical benefits for language learners. The Replay Feature enables learners to revisit difficult segments repeatedly until they fully understand the spoken content. Playback Speed Control allows learners to regulate speech speed according to their listening proficiency, thereby reducing cognitive overload during comprehension. Meanwhile, the Transcript Feature provides written support that helps learners identify unfamiliar vocabulary, recognize grammatical structures, and confirm the intended meaning of spoken discourse more accurately. These features align with learner-centered learning principles because they enable students to personalize their listening experiences while supporting self-regulated learning through repeated exposure, adjustable listening speed, and multimodal input. Consequently, Spotify podcasts have considerable potential to facilitate English listening skills in contemporary technology-assisted language learning environments.

Previous studies have consistently reported the positive contribution of Spotify podcasts to English language learning, particularly in improving listening comprehension. Suwarni et al. (2023) found that Spotify podcasts enhanced students' listening performance by providing flexible access to authentic English listening materials that could be practiced repeatedly both inside and outside the classroom. Similarly, Masbirorotni et al. (2023) reported that students who regularly used Spotify podcasts demonstrated significant improvement in listening comprehension because they were able to replay learning materials according to their individual learning needs. Other studies have also shown that Spotify podcasts increase learners' motivation, engagement, and exposure to authentic spoken English, all of which contribute positively to listening development. Nevertheless, although previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Spotify as a learning medium, most studies have primarily focused on learning outcomes or listening achievement rather than learners' perceptions of the individual features provided by the platform. Moreover, limited research has specifically investigated how students perceive the roles of the Replay Feature, Playback Speed Control, and Transcript Feature in facilitating different aspects of listening comprehension, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, meaning, and pragmatic context. This gap highlights the need for further investigation, particularly among English Department students at Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Spotify podcast features support English listening skills.

Therefore, the present study aims to investigate students' perceptions of the role of Replay, Playback Speed Control, and Transcript Features in Spotify podcasts in facilitating English listening skills. Specifically, this study explores students' perceptions regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of these three features in supporting five aspects of listening comprehension, namely pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, meaning, and pragmatic context, as well as identifying the challenges students encounter while using Spotify podcasts as a technology-assisted learning medium. By focusing on students' perceptions rather than solely on learning outcomes, this study is expected to contribute to the growing body of research on Technology-Assisted Language Learning (TALL), particularly regarding the pedagogical potential of Spotify podcast features in English listening instruction. Furthermore, the findings are expected to provide practical implications for English lecturers, teachers, and learners by offering insights into how Spotify podcasts can be effectively integrated into listening activities to create more authentic, flexible, and learner-centered learning experiences.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach with a one-shot survey design to investigate students' perceptions of Spotify podcast features in facilitating English listening skills. The design was selected because the study sought to identify trends and describe participants' responses numerically rather than manipulate variables or examine causal relationships. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain that quantitative survey research is appropriate for describing attitudes and perceptions through structured instruments, while Taherdoost (2016) notes that survey designs enable researchers to collect comparable information from a relatively large group of respondents at one point in time. The single variable examined in this study was students' perception of the use of Spotify podcasts, which was operationalized through three dimensions: perceived usefulness, perceived effectiveness, and perceived challenges. These dimensions were examined in relation to the Replay Feature, Playback Speed Control, and Transcript Feature and their perceived contribution to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, meaning, and pragmatic context.

The participants were 181 students enrolled in the first, second, third, and fourth academic years of the English Education Department at Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri. The participants were selected purposively because the study required respondents who had experience using Spotify podcasts for English listening practice. This criterion ensured that participants were sufficiently familiar with the platform and could provide informed responses concerning the three features examined. Data collection was conducted online through Google Forms, which allowed the researcher to distribute the questionnaire efficiently across different academic cohorts. Participation was voluntary, and responses were used exclusively for research purposes.

The research instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire developed from theories of listening comprehension, students' perception, podcast-based language learning, and technology-assisted language learning. The questionnaire items were organized into three main sections covering usefulness, effectiveness, and obstacles. Statements related to usefulness and effectiveness examined how each feature facilitated pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, meaning, and pragmatic context. The challenge items measured the difficulties students continued to experience while using each feature. Each statement was rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). The structured format enabled

consistent comparison of responses across participants and supported the calculation of percentages for each feature and listening aspect.

After the questionnaire had been distributed and completed, the responses were compiled and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each item and subsequently summarized to identify the overall tendency of students' perceptions. Average percentages were used to compare the three Spotify podcast features, while aspect-level percentages were used to determine which dimensions of listening were perceived as most facilitated and most challenging. The findings were then presented in tables and figures and interpreted in relation to relevant theories and previous empirical research. Because the purpose of the study was descriptive, no inferential statistical test was applied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Perceptions of Spotify Podcast Features

The findings were obtained from the questionnaire responses of 181 English Education students. Overall, the participants expressed positive perceptions of all three Spotify podcast features, with average scores ranging from 80% to 83%. This narrow range indicates that Replay, Playback Speed Control, and Transcript were all considered useful resources for listening practice, although students assigned different levels of value to each feature. Table 1 and Figure 1 summarize the overall percentages.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of Spotify Podcast Features

Spotify Podcast Feature	Percentage	Rank
Transcript Feature	83%	1
Replay Feature	81%	2
Playback Speed Control	80%	3

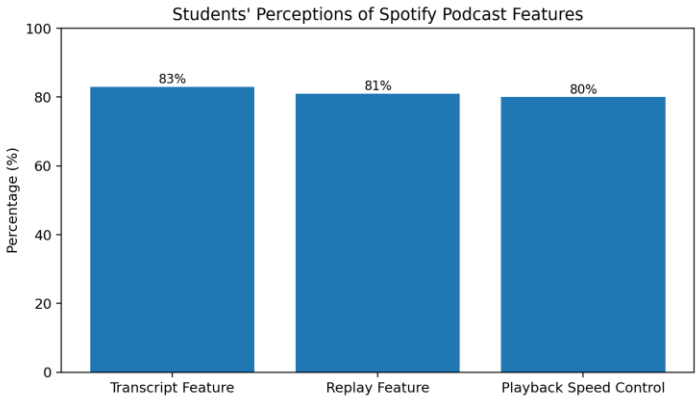


Figure 1. Students' Perceptions of Spotify Podcast Features

As shown in Table 1, the Transcript Feature obtained the highest average percentage (83%), followed by the Replay Feature (81%) and Playback Speed Control (80%). The prominence of the Transcript Feature indicates that students particularly valued the opportunity to process auditory and written input simultaneously. The written version of spoken content enabled them to confirm words they could not recognize from audio alone, connect orthographic forms with pronunciation, and follow the speaker's message with greater confidence. This result is consistent with Teng (2022), who found that captioned or transcript-supported listening can facilitate comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning by enabling learners to coordinate textual and auditory information. Graham (2017) likewise explains that textual support can reduce processing demands when learners encounter rapid or unfamiliar speech. Nevertheless, transcript use should be strategically managed because excessive reliance on written text may reduce attention to purely auditory cues.

The Replay Feature ranked second at 81%. Repetition provided learners with additional opportunities to notice details missed during the first listening and to reconstruct meaning progressively. This finding reflects the role of repeated exposure in developing listening comprehension and is consistent with Al Habsyi et al. (2024), who reported that podcasts support comprehension by allowing learners to revisit authentic spoken language. Replaying difficult sections can assist both bottom-up processing, such as recognizing sounds and words, and top-down processing, such as confirming the overall message. The result also suggests that repetition gives learners a sense of control over the listening process, which may reduce anxiety and encourage independent practice.

Playback Speed Control received 80%, only slightly below the other two features. Students perceived speed adjustment as useful because it allowed them to match the delivery rate to their listening ability. Slower playback can make word boundaries, pronunciation patterns, and sentence structures more noticeable, whereas returning to normal speed can gradually prepare learners for authentic communication. Graham (2017) notes that controlling speech rate may support comprehension by reducing immediate processing pressure; however, speed adjustment does not remove difficulties related to limited vocabulary, grammar, or background knowledge. Therefore, Playback Speed Control is best understood as a scaffolding device that supports gradual adaptation to natural speech rather than as a substitute for sustained listening practice.

The Contribution of Spotify Podcast Features to Listening Aspects

The second analysis examined the perceived contribution of each Spotify podcast feature to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, meaning, and pragmatic context. Although all percentages were high, the pattern of responses shows that the features supported different aspects in different ways. Table 2 and Figure 2 present the detailed results.

Table 2. Listening Aspects Facilitated by Spotify Podcast Features

Listening Aspect	Replay	Playback Speed	Transcript
Pronunciation	81%	82%	85%
Grammar	81%	82%	81%
Vocabulary	81%	82%	83%
Meaning	81%	81%	83%
Pragmatic Context	80%	80%	82%

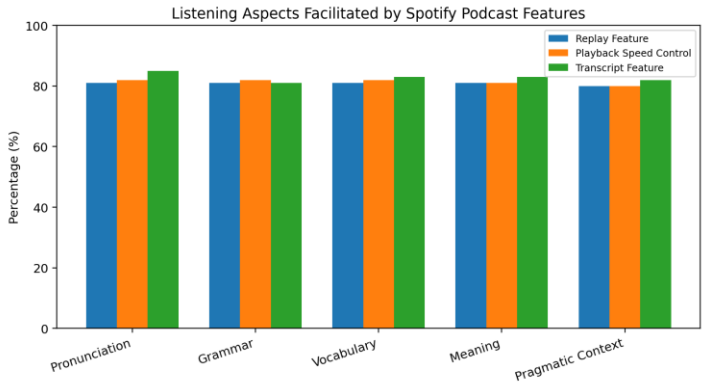


Figure 2. Listening Aspects Facilitated by Spotify Podcast Features

The Replay Feature received 81% for pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and meaning, while pragmatic context obtained 80%. The consistency of these scores indicates that students considered replay useful across both linguistic and contextual dimensions of listening. By revisiting a segment, learners could compare successive interpretations, attend to pronunciation details, notice vocabulary and grammatical patterns, and confirm the intended meaning. Repetition appears particularly beneficial when learners initially miss information because of rapid delivery or unfamiliar expressions. However, the slightly lower score for pragmatic context suggests that repeated exposure alone may not always enable learners to infer speakers' intentions or culturally embedded meanings. Such comprehension often requires contextual knowledge in addition to auditory familiarity.

Playback Speed Control obtained 82% for pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, 81% for meaning, and 80% for pragmatic context. These findings suggest that adjusting speech rate was especially helpful for identifying language forms. A slower rate gives learners more time to segment the speech stream, recognize grammatical relationships, and associate new words with their surrounding context. The result is compatible with the view that listening involves intensive real-time processing and that reducing speed can temporarily lower the burden on working memory. Nevertheless, pragmatic context again received the lowest percentage, indicating that contextual interpretation depends on more than the clarity or pace of the linguistic signal.

The Transcript Feature produced the highest individual result in the study, with 85% for pronunciation. Vocabulary and meaning each reached 83%, pragmatic context reached 82%, and grammar obtained 81%. The high pronunciation score indicates that students benefited from seeing how spoken forms were represented in writing. Transcripts also allowed learners to locate unfamiliar words and verify the content they had heard, which explains the high vocabulary and meaning scores. Teng (2022) similarly demonstrates that textual support can enhance noticing and vocabulary learning when learners actively coordinate the text with audio. Grammar, although still strongly positive, received the lowest score within this feature. This pattern supports Nassaji's (2017) observation that exposure to meaningful input does not guarantee that learners will consciously notice grammatical structures without explicit attention to form.

Across the three features, meaning emerged as one of the most consistently facilitated aspects. This result indicates that Spotify's controls helped learners focus on the overall communicative message rather than remain blocked by individual words. Rost (2024) describes listening comprehension as an active process of constructing meaning through the interaction of linguistic input and contextual knowledge. Replay, speed adjustment, and transcripts supported this process by providing learners with multiple routes for confirming interpretation. Pronunciation and vocabulary were also strongly supported, reflecting the value of repeated and multimodal exposure to authentic speech. In contrast, grammar and pragmatic context, although positively perceived, appeared to require more deliberate instructional support.

Students' Challenges in Using Spotify Podcast Features

Despite the positive perceptions, students continued to report difficulties in all five listening aspects. The challenge percentages were lower for the Transcript Feature than for Replay and Playback Speed Control, suggesting that written support reduced some comprehension problems. Nevertheless, grammar and pragmatic context remained prominent difficulties. Table 3 and Figure 3 summarize these findings.

Table 3. Students' Challenges in Using Spotify Podcast Features

Listening Aspect	Replay	Playback Speed	Transcript
Pronunciation	57%	57%	55%
Grammar	58%	57%	56%
Vocabulary	58%	55%	56%
Meaning	57%	57%	55%
Pragmatic Context	59%	57%	54%

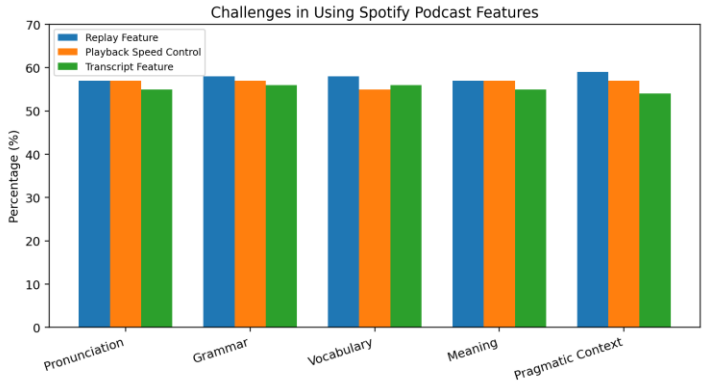


Figure 3. Students' Challenges in Using Spotify Podcast Features

For the Replay Feature, pragmatic context recorded the highest challenge percentage (59%), followed by grammar and vocabulary at 58%, while pronunciation and meaning each obtained 57%. This finding shows that listening repeatedly did not automatically enable students to interpret implied meanings, speakers' intentions, or social and cultural references. Taguchi (2018) explains that pragmatic comprehension requires learners to go beyond literal meaning and connect linguistic forms with contextual and sociocultural information. Consequently, repeated exposure may strengthen recognition but still be insufficient when learners lack the relevant background knowledge or pragmatic awareness.

Playback Speed Control produced relatively similar challenge percentages: pronunciation, grammar, meaning, and pragmatic context each reached 57%, while vocabulary reached 55%. The even distribution indicates that slowing down audio reduced difficulty to some extent but could not address every source of comprehension failure. Learners still had to decode connected speech, interpret sentence relationships, and construct meaning from authentic discourse. Speed control therefore functions as supportive scaffolding rather than a complete remedy. Its effectiveness likely depends on learners' strategic use of the feature, such as listening first at a slower rate and then repeating the material at normal speed.

The Transcript Feature showed the lowest challenge levels overall. Grammar and vocabulary each obtained 56%, pronunciation and meaning each reached 55%, and pragmatic context reached 54%. These percentages demonstrate that written support helped students overcome many auditory difficulties, particularly when checking what was said. However, the persistence of grammar and vocabulary challenges indicates that access to written text does not automatically produce deep language learning. Schmitt and Schmitt (2020) emphasize that vocabulary growth requires active processing and repeated meaningful use, while Nassaji (2017) argues that grammatical forms may remain unnoticed unless learners are directed to them. Thus, transcripts are most effective when accompanied by activities that encourage learners to analyze language forms, infer meaning, and reuse new vocabulary.

Taken together, grammar emerged as the most persistent challenge across the three features, followed closely by pragmatic context. These aspects demand higher-level processing because learners must understand structural relationships and interpret meanings that are not

always explicitly stated. Goh and Vandergrift (2021) explain that successful listening requires coordination of bottom-up and top-down processes, a demand that becomes particularly difficult when learners face authentic speech. The results therefore indicate that Spotify podcasts should be integrated as supplementary tools rather than used in isolation. Teachers can strengthen their pedagogical value through guided listening worksheets, grammar-focused noticing tasks, vocabulary notes, prediction activities, and post-listening discussions that explicitly address speakers' intentions and contextual meanings.

The overall findings demonstrate that Spotify podcast features create a flexible, learner-controlled environment for English listening practice. Transcripts provide the strongest perceived support, replay enables repeated exposure, and speed control permits adjustment to individual proficiency. At the same time, the challenges identified caution against assuming that technological access alone guarantees comprehension. Effective integration requires purposeful tasks and teacher guidance, particularly for grammar and pragmatic interpretation. Spotify podcasts can therefore contribute most effectively when they are used as part of a structured listening cycle that includes pre-listening preparation, strategic feature use during listening, and reflective or communicative activities after listening.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that students generally held positive perceptions of Spotify podcast features in facilitating English listening skills. Among the three features examined, the Transcript Feature received the highest overall percentage (83%), followed by the Replay Feature (81%) and Playback Speed Control (80%). The Transcript Feature was particularly valued because it allowed students to combine spoken and written input, while Replay supported repeated exposure and Playback Speed Control enabled learners to adapt speech rate to their listening ability. Across the five listening aspects, meaning was perceived as the aspect most consistently facilitated, and pronunciation also received strong support, particularly through transcripts.

Although the features were positively perceived, they did not eliminate all listening difficulties. Grammar emerged as the most persistent challenge, followed by pragmatic context. These findings indicate that learners may still struggle to process grammatical relationships and infer contextual or implied meanings even when audio can be replayed, slowed down, or accompanied by written text. Spotify podcasts should therefore be integrated with guided learning

activities rather than treated as stand-alone solutions. English lecturers and teachers are encouraged to combine podcast listening with vocabulary preparation, grammar-focused noticing, comprehension questions, pronunciation practice, and post-listening discussions. Future research should examine the effect of these features on actual listening achievement through experimental or mixed-method designs and should include interviews or observations to obtain a deeper account of learners' strategies and experiences.

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