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The Use Of TED Talks In Listening Classes: Students' Perceptions, Challenges, And Implication

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap persepsi mahasiswa terhadap pemanfaatan video TED Talks sebagai media pembelajaran di kelas Listening daring, serta mengidentifikasi kendala yang dihadapi selama proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus deskriptif. Subjek penelitian adalah 25 mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris angkatan 2020 di UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta yang telah menggunakan materi TED Talks pada mata kuliah Listening II saat perkuliahan daring. Instrumen pengumpulan data berupa angket terbuka dan wawancara mendalam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa (56%) menilai penggunaan TED Talks efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan listening, memperkaya kosa kata, dan memperluas wawasan melalui topik yang bervariasi dan kontekstual. Sebanyak 36% menyatakan media cukup efektif, tergantung pada topik dan kondisi teknis saat pembelajaran. Namun, sebanyak 8% responden menilai penggunaan TED Talks kurang efektif karena adanya kendala seperti logat yang kurang familiar, kecepatan bicara native speaker, serta keterbatasan akses teknis seperti jaringan dan gawai internet. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun TED Talks memiliki potensi besar sebagai media autentik untuk pembelajaran mendengarkan, efektivitasnya dipengaruhi oleh kesiapan teknis, bimbingan dosen, dan motivasi mahasiswa. Studi ini merekomendasikan integrasi strategi pedagogis adaptif dan penyediaan dukungan teknis untuk mengoptimalkan penggunaan video TED Talks dalam konteks pembelajaran daring.

Kata kunci: persepsi mahasiswa, TED Talks, keterampilan mendengarkan, pembelajaran daring, media video

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal students' perceptions of the use of TED Talks videos as a learning medium in online Listening classes, as well as to identify obstacles faced during the learning process. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. The subjects of the study were 25 English Education students of the 2020 intake at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta who had used TED Talks materials in the Listening II course during online lectures. The data collection instruments consisted of open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The results showed that the majority of students (56%) considered the use of TED Talks effective in improving listening skills, enriching vocabulary, and broadening horizons through varied and contextual topics. As many as 36% stated that the media was quite effective, depending on the topic and technical conditions during learning. However, 8% of respondents considered the use of TED Talks less effective due to obstacles such as unfamiliar accents, native speaker speaking speed, and limited technical access such as internet networks and devices. These findings indicate that although TED Talks have great potential as an authentic medium for Listening learning, its effectiveness is influenced by technical readiness, lecturer guidance, and student motivation. This study recommends the integration of adaptive pedagogical strategies and the provision of technical support to optimize the use of TED Talks videos in online learning contexts.

Keywords: student perception, TED Talks, listening skills, online learning, video media

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INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that plays an important role in global communication, including in education and the profession. In Indonesia, learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has been part of the curriculum from elementary school to college (Marlina, 2013). In developing language skills, listening skills occupy a crucial position because they are the basis for other productive skills such as speaking and writing (Masduqi, 2016; Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021). Unfortunately, listening skills often receive less attention than other skills, even though the main challenges in learning listening lie in the diverse accents, speaking speed of speakers, and limited vocabulary (Lestary & Seriadi, 2019; Izzah et al., 2020).

As information technology advances, video-based learning media has become an effective alternative in improving listening skills. One of the most popular media is TED Talks, a video presentation platform that presents a variety of current topics delivered by native and non-native speakers in a short but informative duration. TED Talks are considered capable of increasing students' exposure to authentic English, enriching vocabulary, and fostering learning motivation (Saputra & Fatimah, 2018; Ludovikus et al., 2023). However, the use of this media in online learning has raised various perceptions from students, both those who feel helped and those who face technical and linguistic obstacles such as unfamiliar accents, limited devices, and internet connections (Astika & Kurniawan, 2020; Williyan, 2023).

Based on the results of initial observations in the English Language Education Study Program of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, TED Talks have been used in Listening II learning during online lectures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students reported an increase in interest and understanding in listening materials, but some others expressed difficulty understanding the contents of the videos due to accent factors, speaking speed, and technical limitations. Therefore, this study is important to identify in depth students' perceptions of the use of TED Talks in online Listening learning and to reveal the obstacles they face.

This study focuses on two problem formulations, namely: (1) how are students' perceptions of the use of TED Talks in online Listening learning, and (2) what are the obstacles faced by students in using TED Talks in Listening classes. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to lecturers, students, and further researchers in designing more effective and contextual listening learning strategies based on digital media.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study participants

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design, which aims to explore in depth students' perceptions of the use of TED Talks videos as a learning medium in online Listening classes, as well as identifying the obstacles they experience during the process. This approach is considered relevant because it allows researchers to capture students' subjective experiences contextually and interpretively (Creswell, 2012; Duff, 2014).

The research was conducted at the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, during the period of December 2024 to January 2025. The subjects of the study were 25 students of the 2020 intake from classes A and B who had taken the Listening II course and used TED Talks materials in the online learning process. The selection of participants was carried out by purposive sampling based on the criteria of their direct involvement in the learning experience using the media.

Study organization

Data were collected through two main instruments, an open-ended questionnaire and in-depth interviews that were adapted from Izzah et al. (2020) & from Lestary (2022). The questionnaire consisted of 11 open-ended questions designed to explore students' general perceptions of the effectiveness of using TED Talks. In addition, interviews were conducted with four selected students—two with positive responses and two with negative perceptions or experiences—to obtain more detailed information regarding the benefits and obstacles in the learning process.

Statistical analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Reduction was carried out by organizing and classifying data into main themes. Furthermore, the data were presented in narrative and tabular form to support clarity of interpretation. The validity of the findings was strengthened through source triangulation, which involved comparing the results of the questionnaire and interviews to ensure data consistency. This approach allows for a deep understanding of students' perceptions and the factors that influence the success or obstacles of using TED Talks in online listening learning.

RESULT

The findings of this study are organized thematically to illustrate students' perceptions, learning outcomes, and the challenges they encountered in using TED Talks during online listening classes. The summary below presents representative themes, categories, and sample student responses.

Table 1: Findings

Main Theme	Sub-Theme / Category	Sample Quotation
1. Perception of Effectiveness	a. Very effective: improves vocabulary, comprehension, and learning motivation	"TED Talks really helped me expand my knowledge and vocabulary." (Respondent 13)
	b. Quite effective: helpful, but depends on the topic, technical conditions, or skill level.	"Depends on the topic and network, but it helps to learn listening." (Respondent 2)
	c. Ineffective: no follow-up practice, less interesting topics, or technical constraints	"Just being told to watch and conclude, not very helpful." (Respondent 1)
2. Impact on Vocabulary and Comprehension	a. Adding vocabulary	"I discovered many new terms from the fields discussed by the speaker." (Respondent 4)
	b. Increase new ideas or insights	"The topic is inspiring and adds new perspectives." (Respondent 16)
3. Technical and Language Barriers	a. Unfamiliar and fast accent	"The accent and speed of speech make it difficult for me to understand." (Interview, Respondent 6)
	b. Internet connection and data quota problems	"The signal is unstable and wastes quota when streaming video." (Interview, Respondent 6)
	c. Device or gadget limitations	"Not everyone has a laptop or cellphone that supports it." (Interview, Respondent 6)
4. The Role of Lecturers in the Learning Process	a. Need additional guidance in understanding content and listening strategies	"It would be more effective if the lecturer gave tips on understanding the video before the assignment." (Respondent 5)
5. Learning Preferences	a. Like interactive and flexible visual media	"Can be accessed anytime and repeated." (Respondent 11)
	b. Lack of focus if the session is too long (online fatigue)	"The beginning of the lesson was interesting, but in the middle of the session I became sleepy."

(Respondent 22)

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the majority of students had a positive perception of the use of TED Talks as a learning medium in online Listening classes. As many as 56% of students stated that TED Talks were very effective in improving listening skills, expanding vocabulary, and providing exposure to various accents and real-world discourses. This is in line with the findings of Saputra & Fatimah (2018) and Ludovikus et al. (2023) which stated that TED Talks can significantly improve language skills because they present authentic, contextual, and real-life content.

Students found that using TED Talks provided a more dynamic, interactive, and flexible learning experience. The diverse content delivered directly by native and non-native speakers allowed students to hear a variety of speech styles and structures that they did not find in textbook material. Respondents also stated that they were encouraged to learn independently and actively—a form of engagement that Puspita & Amelia (2020) argues is an indicator of increased learning autonomy in the context of online learning.

However, this positive perception is not absolute. Some students (36%) said that the use of TED Talks was only quite effective, and even 8% of respondents considered it ineffective. Technical constraints such as inadequate internet access, data quota, and devices are the main causes. This is exacerbated by the absence of appropriate guidance or strategies from lecturers to help understand video content. These findings confirm the study by Astika & Kurniawan (2020) that speaking speed and accent in authentic video materials can be serious challenges for EFL learners, especially at the beginning to intermediate levels.

In addition to technical aspects, affective factors such as interest in the topic and online learning fatigue are also taken into consideration. As stated by one respondent, long online learning sessions and topics of no interest cause a decrease in learning focus. This implies that the success of implementing online learning media such as TED Talks depends not only on the quality of the material, but also on the pedagogical design, selection of relevant topics, and students' emotional involvement in the content.

Furthermore, an interesting finding is that all students (100%) stated that they experienced vocabulary enhancement, and almost all (96%) stated that they gained new ideas from TED Talks. This shows that this video media is not only an instrument to support listening skills, but also a cognitive stimulus that enriches students' insights and mindsets. According to Harmer (2007), authentic video materials such as TED Talks can help students build schemata, develop pragmatic sensitivity, and deepen understanding across socio-cultural contexts.

However, the effectiveness of TED Talks utilization cannot be separated from the role of lecturers as facilitators. Several respondents highlighted the need for pedagogical strategies such as providing a glossary before watching, post-watching group discussions, and structured enrichment exercises. This supports the argument of Sari & Sujarwati (2023) that educators need to design instructional interventions so that authentic material becomes more accessible and does not burden students' cognition.

In general, TED Talks-based listening learning can be an innovative solution in improving students' listening skills, especially in the context of online learning. However, the success of this media is greatly influenced by technical readiness, lecturer involvement, and student motivation and learning autonomy. With the support of the right learning strategy, TED Talks videos can be a medium that is not only effective but also transformative in English language education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the majority of students have a positive perception of the use of TED Talks videos as a learning medium in online Listening classes. This media is considered effective in helping to master listening skills, enrich vocabulary, and foster learning motivation through exposure to authentic, varied, and relevant content in real-life contexts. The findings show that TED Talks are also able to provide cognitive stimuli that generate new ideas and increase student engagement in the learning process.

However, the effectiveness of TED Talks utilization is inseparable from various obstacles faced by students, including limited internet access, inadequate devices, unfamiliar speaker accents, and high speaking speed. In addition, the lack of guidance from lecturers in guiding listening strategies also affects the learning outcomes of some students. Therefore, a more adaptive and contextual learning design is needed so that the utilization of this media can be optimal.

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