

Investigating Students' Perceptions in Listening through Digital Media

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital era, digital media have become increasingly relevant in supporting English listening practice, particularly for learners who need authentic, flexible, and engaging learning resources. However, many students still struggle to maintain motivation and understand spoken English when listening activities rely primarily on conventional classroom materials. This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of listening through digital media, including Instagram, podcasts, audiobooks, and English songs. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed by distributing a closed-ended questionnaire to 14 English Education students who had experience using digital platforms for listening practice. The questionnaire explored students' perceptions of motivation, enjoyment, listening comprehension, confidence, and learning autonomy. The findings showed that 78% of the participants felt more motivated to learn English through digital media, 78% agreed that digital media made listening activities more enjoyable than conventional methods, 86% found it easier to understand vocabulary and pronunciation through songs or Instagram captions, and 71% agreed that digital media supported independent and flexible learning. These results indicate that students perceive digital media positively as supportive tools for listening practice. The use of familiar platforms allows students to engage with English input in a more enjoyable, authentic, and self-directed way. Therefore, digital media can be considered a valuable resource for fostering students' motivation, autonomy, and exposure to authentic English listening materials.

Keywords: digital media, listening, English education, learning autonomy, learning motivation

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, listening has become an essential skill for English learners because it supports communication, comprehension, and meaningful interaction in both academic and real-life contexts. Listening is not only a receptive skill but also a foundation for other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing (Mulyadi et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2022). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, students need continuous exposure to spoken English in order to become familiar with pronunciation, vocabulary, intonation, and natural expressions used by native or proficient speakers. However, many students still face difficulties with listening activities because they are not consistently exposed to authentic materials and often rely on conventional classroom resources. These difficulties may reduce their motivation and confidence in understanding English listening materials.

The development of digital media has created new opportunities for students to practice listening in more flexible and enjoyable ways. Digital platforms such as Instagram, podcasts, audiobooks, English songs, YouTube, and Spotify provide learners with access to a range of listening materials that reflect real-life language use. Unlike conventional listening materials, digital media can offer authentic pronunciation, meaningful contexts, subtitles, captions, repetition, and content that matches students' interests. Therefore, digital media are increasingly seen as useful resources that can support students' motivation in listening practice. Recent studies have shown that podcasts, social media, songs, and multimedia resources may help students become more interested, engaged, and independent in learning English (Abdulrahman et al., 2018; Aziz et al., 2025; Oktaviani et al., 2025).

Motivation plays an important role in the students' learning process. Motivated students tend to pay more attention, practice more frequently, and show a more positive attitude toward learning activities. In listening practice, motivation is essential because students often encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, different accents, fast speech, and limited opportunities to hear English outside the classroom. Digital media may help reduce these challenges because students can choose materials based on their interests and listen to them repeatedly, anytime and anywhere. For example, podcasts can provide authentic and topic-based listening input, while songs and social media captions can help learners recognize vocabulary and pronunciation in a more enjoyable way. Previous studies also indicate that podcast-based listening activities can support students' motivation and listening ability because the materials are accessible and relevant to learners' daily digital habits (Abdulrahman et al., 2018; Aryadnyani et al., 2025; Aziz et al., 2025; Firdausy et al., 2025; Maharani et al., 2025; Zunaidah et al., 2020).

In addition, digital media support learner autonomy by enabling students to control their own learning process. Through platforms such as Spotify, Instagram, podcast apps, and audiobook apps, students can decide what to listen to, when to listen, and how many times to repeat the material. This flexibility encourages students to be more responsible for their own learning. Al-Jarf (2021) found that mobile audiobooks could support EFL students' listening practice by enabling them to learn beyond the classroom. Similarly, recent research on EFL learners' use of podcasts shows that students perceive podcasts as helpful tools for listening comprehension, motivation, autonomy, and engagement (Aziz et al., 2025). These findings suggest that digital media are not only entertainment tools but also potential learning resources that can shape students' listening habits and motivation.

Several types of digital media have been discussed in previous studies as useful resources for listening and learning. Instagram provides short videos, captions, reels, and audiovisual content that can expose students to everyday English expressions. Agustin & Ayu (2021) found that Instagram could support students' vocabulary development and listening skills because it presents English content in an attractive and accessible form. English songs can also support listening practice because they contain rhythm, repetition, and pronunciation patterns that make students more interested in learning. Afriyuninda & Oktaviani (2021) and Dewi et al., (2020) stated that English songs can help students improve listening skills in a fun and engaging way. Furthermore, podcasts and audiobooks provide longer, more authentic listening input that can help train students to understand natural spoken English. These various forms of digital media offer students more choices and may influence their motivation in different ways.

Although digital media are widely used by students in their daily lives, it is still important to investigate how they perceive their use for listening and learning. Not all students may experience the same level of motivation, confidence, or autonomy when using digital media (Hikmah, 2019; Ye & Li, 2022; Zayyana, 2023). Some students may feel more motivated because the materials are enjoyable and easy to access, while others may still face difficulties related to vocabulary, speed, accents, or technical limitations. Therefore, research on students' motivation in listening through digital media is needed to understand how learners respond to these tools in their actual learning experience.

Based on this background, this study aims to investigate students' perception in listening through digital media. The study focuses on English Education students' perceptions of using digital media such as Instagram, podcasts, audiobooks, and English songs for listening practice. Specifically, this study explores how digital media relate to students' perception, especially their motivation, enjoyment, listening comprehension, confidence, and learning autonomy. Using a closed-ended questionnaire,

this study seeks to describe students' responses to digital media as learning resources. The findings are expected to provide useful insights for future English teachers in integrating familiar and authentic digital resources into listening instruction in a more meaningful, flexible, and student-centered way.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate students' perceptions of listening through digital media (Cresswell & Plano, 2018). This design was considered appropriate because the study focused on describing students' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward the use of digital media in English listening practice. Rather than measuring the effectiveness of digital media through an experimental procedure, this study aimed to understand how students perceived digital media as learning resources that could support their motivation, enjoyment, listening comprehension, confidence, and learning autonomy. Therefore, the qualitative descriptive approach enabled the researcher to present students' responses in a clear and meaningful way, based on data collected from participants (Cohen et al., 2007).

The participants in this study were 14 English Education students with experience using digital media for listening practice. They were selected because they were familiar with various digital platforms commonly used in English learning, such as Instagram, Spotify, podcasts, audiobooks, YouTube, and English songs. These platforms were relevant to the study's focus because they provide authentic, accessible listening materials that students can use both inside and outside the classroom. The participants' familiarity with digital media made them suitable respondents for exploring how digital platforms relate to students' motivation in listening activities. Previous studies have shown that Instagram, songs, podcasts, and audiobooks can support EFL learners' listening practice by providing authentic, enjoyable, and flexible learning resources ((Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021; Agustin & Ayu, 2021; Al-Jarf, 2021; Dueraseh et al., 2021).

The data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of six structured statements. The questionnaire was designed to explore students' responses toward several aspects of listening through digital media, including motivation, natural listening comprehension, vocabulary and pronunciation understanding, confidence, enjoyment, and independent learning. Each item was presented using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, to 1 = strongly disagree. The use of a closed-ended questionnaire helped the researchers obtain structured data that could describe students' perceptions in a simple and measurable form. Although the instrument produced numerical percentages, the main purpose of the analysis was descriptive, as the study focused on interpreting students' perceptions rather than testing a statistical hypothesis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The questionnaire included statements related to students' motivation after using digital media, their ability to understand English conversations through audiobooks or podcasts, their understanding of vocabulary and pronunciation through songs or Instagram captions, their confidence in listening to English materials, their enjoyment of digital-based listening activities, and their ability to learn independently and flexibly through digital platforms. These items were developed based on the study's main focus: students' motivation to listen through digital media. The questionnaire also reflected the types of digital media discussed in the study, including Instagram, podcasts, songs, audiobooks, and other online listening platforms. These aspects are relevant to studies stating that digital media can create enjoyable listening experiences, provide repeated exposure to English input, and encourage students to learn more independently (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021; Agustin & Ayu, 2021; Al-Jarf, 2021; Dueraseh et al., 2021).

The collected data were analyzed descriptively by calculating the percentage of students' responses for each questionnaire item. The percentages were then interpreted to identify the general tendency of students' perceptions toward digital media in listening practice. For example, the data showed how many students felt more motivated, found listening more enjoyable, understood vocabulary and pronunciation more easily, felt more confident, and learned more independently through digital media. After the percentages were obtained, the findings were described and interpreted in relation to the research focus and relevant previous studies. This analysis helped the researchers identify the role of digital media in shaping students' motivation, engagement, comprehension, and autonomy in learning English listening (Movafagh Ardestani et al., 2025).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are presented using the six indicators from the questionnaire: motivation, natural listening comprehension, vocabulary and pronunciation understanding, confidence, enjoyment, and independent learning. These indicators were used to investigate how English Education students perceived their motivation in listening through digital media. The data were collected from 14 students who had experience using digital platforms such as Instagram, Spotify, podcasts, audiobooks, YouTube, and English songs for listening practice. Since this study is entitled "Investigating Students' Motivation in Listening through Digital Media," the findings are discussed in terms of students' perceptions rather than as experimental evidence of improved listening ability.

Figure 1. Students' Agreement toward Listening through Digital Media Based on Six Indicators

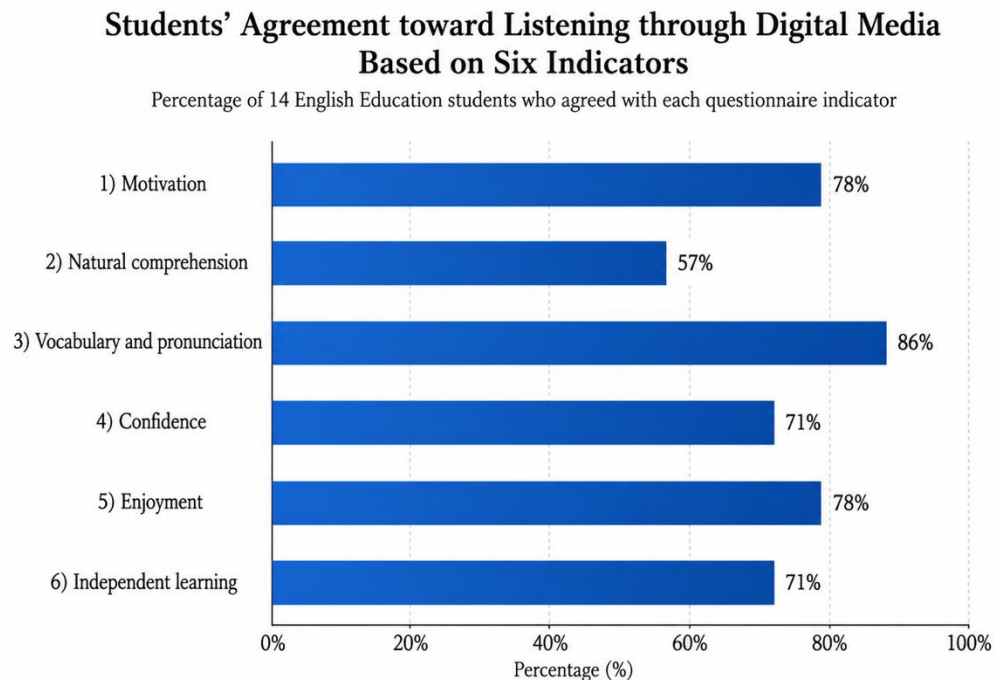


Figure 1 shows that the highest percentage was observed for understanding of vocabulary and pronunciation, with 86% of participants agreeing that songs or Instagram captions helped them understand English vocabulary and pronunciation more easily. This result indicates that students responded very positively to digital materials that combine sound, text, rhythm, and visual elements. Songs allow students to hear pronunciation repeatedly, while captions help them connect spoken words with written forms. This kind of support is important because listening is not only about hearing sounds, but also about recognizing meaning, word forms, and pronunciation patterns. Afriyuninda & Oktaviani (2021) explained that English songs can support listening activities by providing repetition, rhythm, and enjoyable learning experiences. Similarly, Agustin & Ayu (2021) found that Instagram could support vocabulary and listening development through attractive multimedia exposure.

The second-strongest indicators were motivation and enjoyment, both at 78%. In the motivation indicator, 78% of participants agreed that using digital media such as Instagram, podcasts, songs, and audiobooks increased their motivation to learn English. This finding shows that students perceived digital media as meaningful resources for listening practice. In a human learning context, motivation often grows when students feel close to the materials they use. Digital platforms are already part of students' daily lives; therefore, listening practice through these platforms may feel more natural, familiar, and less intimidating. This supports Agustin & Ayu (2021), who stated that Instagram

can increase students' interest in learning English by providing accessible and attractive exposure to the language.

The enjoyment indicator also reached 78%, showing that most students agreed that digital media made listening activities more enjoyable than conventional methods. This result is important because enjoyment is closely related to motivation. Listening can be difficult when students rely solely on formal or scripted materials, especially when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, different accents, and fast speech. However, digital media offer more varied and interesting resources, such as songs, podcasts, short videos, and social media content. These materials can make listening feel more alive and emotionally connected to students' interests. Enjoyment does not mean that learning becomes less serious; rather, it helps students stay engaged longer. Afriyuninda & Oktaviani (2021) stated that songs can make listening practice more enjoyable and help students remember pronunciation and vocabulary.

The confidence indicator reached 71%. This means most participants agreed they felt more confident listening to English materials after regularly using digital media. This finding suggests that digital media may help students build confidence by allowing them to control their own listening process. Students can pause, replay, repeat, or choose materials that match their level and interests. This flexibility may reduce anxiety because students do not have to understand everything at once. In a more personal sense, confidence grows when students are given space to learn without feeling judged. Digital media provides that space because students can practice privately, repeatedly, and comfortably. Al-Jarf (2021) emphasized that mobile listening resources enable learners to practice more flexibly outside the classroom, thereby supporting students' listening habits and confidence.

The independent learning indicator also reached 71%. This result shows that digital media supported students' ability to study independently and flexibly through platforms such as Spotify, Instagram, and audiobook applications. Students are not limited to classroom time or teacher-selected materials. They can choose topics they like, repeat materials when needed, and practice listening whenever they have time. This is especially meaningful in EFL contexts, where students often have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Dueraseh et al. (2021) dan Mulyadi (2018) found that podcasts can encourage students to learn more independently, as learners can select topics aligned with their interests. Similarly, Al-Jarf (2021) stated that mobile audiobooks can support independent listening practice because the materials are accessible anytime, anywhere.

The lowest percentage was observed in the natural listening comprehension indicator, with 57% of participants agreeing that audiobooks or podcasts helped them understand English conversations more naturally and authentically. Although this percentage is lower than the other indicators, it still shows that more than half of the students perceived podcasts and audiobooks positively. The lower result may suggest that longer listening materials are still challenging for some learners. Podcasts and audiobooks usually contain natural

speech, different accents, longer sentences, and more complex vocabulary. Therefore, students may need guidance from the teacher when using these materials. Dueraseh et al. (2021) dan Mulyadi (2018) stated that podcasts provide authentic topics that are related to learners' interests, but students still need appropriate strategies to use them effectively.

Overall, the findings show that students had positive perceptions of using digital media in English listening practice. The strongest response appeared in vocabulary and pronunciation understanding, followed by motivation and enjoyment. Confidence and independent learning also showed positive results, suggesting that digital media helped students feel more capable and more responsible for their own learning. Meanwhile, the lower percentage in natural listening comprehension indicates that authentic long-form listening materials, such as podcasts and audiobooks, may still require additional support. Therefore, digital media can be considered supportive resources for listening learning, especially when teachers help students choose suitable materials, set listening goals, and reflect on what they hear. In this way, digital media are not only entertainment tools but also meaningful learning resources that can support students' motivation, comprehension, confidence, enjoyment, and autonomy in listening practice.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' motivation in listening through digital media among 14 English Education students. Based on the findings, digital media were perceived positively as supportive resources for English listening practice. The results showed that students responded well to the use of Instagram, podcasts, audiobooks, YouTube, Spotify, and English songs because these platforms were familiar, accessible, and closely related to their daily learning habits. Therefore, digital media were not only seen as entertainment tools but also as meaningful learning resources that could support students' motivation, comprehension, confidence, enjoyment, and autonomy.

Among the six indicators, vocabulary and pronunciation understanding received the highest percentage, with 86% of the participants agreeing that songs or Instagram captions helped them understand English vocabulary and pronunciation more easily. Motivation and enjoyment both reached 78%, indicating that students felt more encouraged and more interested in listening when digital media were used. Confidence and independent learning both reached 71%, suggesting that digital media helped students feel more comfortable in listening to English and allowed them to study more flexibly. Meanwhile, natural listening comprehension through audiobooks and podcasts received the lowest percentage, at 57%, suggesting that longer, more authentic listening materials may still be challenging for some learners.

Overall, the findings suggest that digital media can create a more engaging, flexible, and student-centered learning environment. However, since this study used a closed-ended questionnaire and descriptive analysis, the results should be understood as students' perceptions rather than direct evidence of listening

improvement. Future English teachers are encouraged to integrate digital media into listening activities with appropriate guidance, such as selecting suitable materials, setting clear listening goals, and helping students reflect on their learning. In this way, digital media can be used more meaningfully to support students' motivation and independent listening practice.

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