LEARNING PRONUNCIATION WITH SPOTIFY: WHAT DO INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS THINK?

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Abstract: *Pronunciation is commonly regarded as one of the most difficult skills for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). In response, ELF learners have explored various strategies to improve their pronunciation, including by using digital media platforms such as Spotify. EFL learners can utilize Spotify to access authentic English through its music, lyrics, and spoken content. In this present study, the aim is to investigate Indonesian university students' perceptions, perceived benefits, and challenges associated with using Spotify to support their English pronunciation development. The study also seeks to identify specific Spotify features that aid in this learning process. By employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study collected data by means of interviews with eight students from the English Education Department at Universitas Bina Bangsa Getsempena (UBBG), Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The participants were selected by using snowball sampling. The findings of the study revealed that in general, most students had positive views regarding Spotify in boosting English pronunciation. They mentioned a number of benefits in terms of lyrics, karaoke mode, and podcasts, such as contributing to enhanced listening skills and vocabulary acquisition, while some students found the podcast feature less effective for developing speaking proficiency. To conclude, Spotify can be a valuable supplementary resource in English pronunciation learning, as it provides an engaging and flexible learning experience for EFL students.*

Keywords : University Students, English Pronunciation, Spotify Application.

INTRODUCTION

Educational media is a device that carries information and opinions in education. The purpose of educational media is to enable learners to understand the information and ideas presented in an easy-to-understand manner, so that they can authentically achieve the learning objectives. According to Mustafa et al. (2019), the efficiency of teaching and learning activities in an educational context is greatly impacted by media. Media evolution faces significant challenges in this highly technological and information-driven world. Utilizing technology and information as teaching tools is a way to make learning more dynamic and is not limited to teacher guidance alone. One of the newest methods of instruction in English classrooms is the incorporation of technology into physical space (Wati, 2021). The utilization of technology and information requires considerable effort and special attention. However, it cannot be denied that learning materials based on technology and information cannot be hindered or distorted. This type of educational media greatly assists teachers in their teaching activities

because they can no longer explain the previously covered materials. Furthermore, the media's reliance on technology has made it easy for people to mislead each other. Technology- and information-based media might include computers, laptops, the Internet, and other devices. Learning motivation theory suggests intrinsic motivation in the context of English language media, which can help understand how motivational factors affect students' perceptions of media and how the media can affect their motivation to learn speaking (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Theoretically, media that combines text, images, and sound can improve the comprehension and retention of information. In the context of English media, this theory can help explain how the use of logs as multimedia can affect the learning of speaking skills (Mayer 2005).

According to Fadhilah and Rusmiati (2018), in the world of education, the internet can be used as a medium of learning. Nowadays, the internet can be easily used. Students can not only use the internet in a special place, but they can also use the internet at school, at home, and elsewhere. Utilizing these technologies can make learning more interactive. For example, students can become more engaged, observant, and open-minded when learning new materials in English classes. Many technologies are available for learning, not just for understanding English. Numerous technological advancements have produced applications that assist us in learning English quickly and easily, such as in learning phonetics and improving reading comprehension.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pronunciation is one of the skills that should be possessed by someone learning the English language, particularly in the communication process. Pronounced incorrect or inappropriate words can cause confusion. Misunderstandings and makes the listener feel uncomfortable. This is because pronunciation is the first thing that is captured by a speaker. According to Nurullayevna (2020), having a large vocabulary is useless if people cannot pronounce it correctly and no one can comprehend what they are trying to say. Even worse, incorrect word pronunciation can result in major misunderstandings. Mulyani and Sartika (2019) also state that pronunciation plays a major role in determining how well a speaker performs. Thus, pronunciation is a crucial skill that needs to be regularly developed because mispronounced words might lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, although EFL learners may not truly reach near-native accents, it is encouraged to have intelligible pronunciation for learning while interacting with and comprehending meaning with persons of different accents (Fitria, 2020).

There are many ways to improve pronunciation skills. This can be achieved employing songs as demonstrated by the Accelerated English Center, which uses popular English songs as a medium for learning and listening. Through this learning, students can recognize and learn new English vocabulary, listen to and interpret songs, or learn pronunciation by singing songs (Rimta, 2013). In addition, students' vocabulary can grow and their listening and pronunciation capabilities can be improved with the use of songs (Farhansyah et al., 2023; Rasmadiani, 2023).

Acquiring proficiency in pronunciation and intonation through song learning can benefit learning strategies. Because the learning environment is more enjoyable and less boring, children choose this method of instruction. Children get at ease and begin to feel soothed by the song's tones, which also express a cheerful mood and

soothing words. As stated in Maisarah (2023), singing along and listening to English songs can help children acquire vocabulary more rapidly, while also making them feel happy and motivated to study more. Finally, listening to English-language music can help students become more proficient in vocabulary and pronouncing words correctly. According to Farsia and Sarair (2025) online animated text, video streaming, virtual classrooms, and more are all part of the instruction. By utilizing the advantages of both approaches, this blended approach produces a comprehensive and integrated learning experience.

There are many platforms for listening to English songs, one of which is Spotify. Spotify is a smartphone application that is intended to listen to music. With the availability of the lyrics feature on Spotify helps someone know how to pronounce the vocabulary spoken in the song, with this it is not surprising that listeners of music listeners through the Spotify application will be proficient in their pronunciation skills.

Students' listening abilities can be enhanced by listening to English music and songs in Spotify. Songs can provide a fun and engaging way for students to practice their listening comprehension, as well as help them become more familiar with language and pronunciation. Furthermore, music can help motivate students to expand their vocabulary and pronunciation skills (Suharjono & Afif, 2023). Several studies have examined students' perceptions of music to improve their pronunciation. For instance, Purba et al. (2023) conducted a study to determine whether listening to Spotify helps pronunciation. The participants of this study were 10 sixth-semester English education students at Palangka Raya University. The findings showed that students gave positive attitudes toward using Spotify application in which to listen to English music can strengthen their vocabulary and help them become more proficient pronouncers. A study by Zafirah et al. (2024) found that Spotify helped English learners improve pronunciation through hearing, and new vocabulary was easily stored in memory because it was presented through music and lyrics that were easily accessible..

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative method in order to explore the students' perceptions of using the Spotify application to boost their English pronunciation skills. A qualitative descriptive approach was chosen to capture and interpret participants' verbal expressions, experiences, and behaviors related to the phenomenon under investigation. As noted by Wijaya (2020), qualitative research is a method for examining and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups attribute to social or human experiences.

The participants in this study were university students from the English Education Department at Universitas Bina Bangsa Getsempena (UBBG), situated in Aceh Province, Indonesia. A total of eight students took part in the study, consisting of six fifth-semester students and two first-semester students during the 2023/2024 academic year. Participants were selected using snowball sampling, in which initial participants who met the criteria—such as having an interest in listening to English songs through the Spotify application, being actively engaged in English pronunciation learning, having used Spotify for at least 6 months, and having taken Pronunciation class—were asked to refer other students with similar experiences. Participation was entirely voluntary. Prior to the interviews, all participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study,

and their consent was obtained accordingly.

The study collected data by means of semi-structured interviews, which allowed for both focused inquiry and flexibility in follow-up questions. The interview guide consisted of five open-ended questions, covering the following aspects: The participants' experiences using Spotify for learning English pronunciation, The perceived benefits of using Spotify for pronunciation practice, The challenges or difficulties faced while using Spotify for this purpose, The features within the Spotify application that support pronunciation learning, and the overall perceptions and suggestions regarding the use of Spotify in language learning.

Each interview lasted about five to ten minutes, which took place in the UBBG campus. For participant comfort and clarity, the interviews were carried out in Bahasa Indonesia, which helped students to express themselves more clearly and confidently. All interviews were audio-recorded with a smartphone so as to guarantee accurate transcription and analysis.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, i.e., a qualitative method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis involves six steps: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim in Bahasa Indonesia, then translated into English for theme coding and analysis. The researchers checked the original transcripts to the English translations to make certain that what the participants said were accurate and contextually appropriate. The coding procedure was done manually, with an emphasis on frequent themes and expressions about students' experiences, benefits, difficulties, and views of using the Spotify app to learn English pronunciation. Participants were labeled to as P1 to P8 in the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results

This section presents the findings from interviews and reveals key themes related to students' experiences, benefits, challenges, and perceptions of using the Spotify application for learning English pronunciation. Selected quotes are included to support each theme.

a. Perceptions of using Spotify as a tool for learning English pronunciation

Based on the results obtained from the interviews; after listening to English songs on Spotify application, most students claimed to be able to improve their pronunciation of English words. This notion is mentioned in the following excerpt.

P2 stated: "My pronunciation is not good enough, but it's getting better through Spotify." The similar response was also given by P1, P3, P6, and P7. Most of them said that their pronunciation skills were still lacking and needed to be learned more, but improved after using Spotify. However, some respondents felt that even though they listened to English songs on Spotify, it did not help much in improving their pronunciation, as explained in the excerpt below.

P4 explained: "Although I listen to English songs through Spotify, it does not help [pronunciation] quite

well, but it's still better." P5 and P8 also stated that Spotify did not fully help their pronunciation skills.

b. Benefits of using Spotify in learning English pronunciation

Many students believed that using Spotify could improve the pronunciation of English words. Through the lyrics displayed when playing songs, they could listen directly while reading the lyrics. This notion is asserted in the following excerpt. P7 responded: "While listening to the song and reading the lyrics, I follow the way the singer pronounces the words, then I repeat it without seeing the lyrics."

In addition, P1 explained how Spotify application could improve pronunciation. He gave examples of words that were still pronounced incorrectly and got right after listening to the song while looking at the lyrics. This response relates to the first question. The response was shown below.

R1 said, "My pronunciation of the words 'through', 'enough', and 'laugh' are still incorrect; but by reading the lyrics while listening to the song, I can pronounce those words correctly." Many respondents agreed that listening to English songs while reading lyrics could help improve their pronunciation.

In addition to improving their pronunciation skills, some also mentioned that Spotify helped them enhance their vocabulary mastery and improve their listening skills. This is relevant to what P1 said in the following excerpt. P1 stated: "Using Spotify to listen to English songs helped me gain many new vocabularies." P2, P5, and P6 also added that using Spotify could help their listening skills because they enjoy listening to English songs. Moreover, they could use Spotify whenever they wanted.

c. Difficulties in using Spotify to learn English pronunciation

In addition to the benefits of Spotify in learning pronunciation, there were some challenges faced by students in using the Spotify application. P1 and P4 had a difficulty learning pronunciation using Spotify because their listening skills were still lacking. This notion is shown in the following excerpts.

P1 said: "It's difficult for me to learn pronunciation using this app".

P4 stated: "Spotify app doesn't really help me learn pronunciation skill".

Therefore, listening to English songs is not enough to help students learn pronunciation if they are not looking at the lyrics at the same time. From another point of view, P3 also revealed that the podcast feature available on the Spotify application was not very helpful.

d. Features of Spotify used in supporting students to learn English pronunciation

From the interview results, students said that Spotify provided several features that could be used to learn English, such as lyrics, karaoke, and podcast. P3, P4, and P7 utilized the lyrics to improve pronunciation by listening while looking at the lyrics and then practicing how to pronounce one word. P5 used the karaoke feature to improve her pronunciation, "I like singing English songs. So, I often do karaoke, and that makes me accustomed to saying English words."

In addition, Spotify application also provides podcast features. However, related to the podcast features, the students had two opposing opinions. P3 said that the podcast did not help her in learning English, while according to P6, he felt that the conversation in the podcast was very helpful for him in learning English, especially pronunciation skills.

Discussion

This study reveals that Spotify is a helpful tool to enhance EFL students' pronunciation skills, especially in the Indonesian university context. This is consistent with the study conducted by Purba et al (2023) which found that Spotify helped the students improve their pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary. Many students felt that using Spotify could improve the English pronunciation of English words because the lyrics displayed when playing songs helped them listen directly while reading the lyrics, as also indicated in the study by Isnaini and Aminatun (2021).

Listening to English songs while looking at the lyrics provided by the Spotify application makes them accustomed to listening to the words spoken by the singers. Many words are still mispronounced by students before listening to the correct ones from the singers. This is in line with Nagauleng's (2015) research that by memorizing and understanding English songs, students' vocabulary and knowledge of English automatically increase, such as the pronunciation of words in songs that they can apply to everyday life, especially in learning English in the classroom. In addition, listening to English songs using the Spotify app is very easy because it can be used anywhere and anytime (Zafirah et al., 2024). By installing the application on a cell phone device, Spotify can be used immediately. When students repeated the sounds of the lyrics, they were doing input/practice strategy in pronunciation, and this finding is similar to those in Hermida's (2022) study, wherein most students tended to do input/practice, such as searching, listening, watching, repeating sounds, or practicing the sounds to improve their pronunciation.

To note, there are also challenges when Indonesian EFL students utilized the Spotify application, both from the Spotify application and the limited abilities of the students themselves. Some students had a difficulty learning pronunciation using Spotify because their listening skills were still lacking. This is supported by the research Siregar et al. (2025) suggesting that weak listening foundations can limit the effectiveness of audio tools, such as Spotify, to help increase students' pronunciation skills.

Some of Spotify features that helped students in learning English pronunciation included lyrics and karaoke. Lyrics make it easier for listeners to know how to pronounce the words in the song (Zafirah et al., 2024). On the other hand, the podcast feature in Spotify was claimed less useful in learning pronunciation by some students, while others said it was beneficial to improve listening skills. Research by Syahabuddin and Rizqa (2021) also note that podcasts provide suitable materials for practicing English listening. The podcast feature also helps enrich students' vocabulary (Butar and Katemba, 2023). Therefore, while some features of Spotify, e.g., podcast, may lack effectiveness to improve English pronunciation, it still a great resource for learning for Indonesian EFL students, especially to acquire more vocabulary from English song lyrics

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study concerned with Indonesian EFL students' perceptions of learning English pronunciation using Spotify. The findings indicate that the students have positive attitudes towards Spotify as a medium for learning

English pronunciation. The students felt that their pronunciation improved after using Spotify as well as enhance their vocabulary mastery and listening skills. However, the students found it difficult to use Spotify in learning pronunciation because they had limited listening skills. Some features of Spotify that could be used to support students in learning pronunciation included lyrics and karaoke, while podcasts were less beneficial. This study, however, has some limitations such as small sample size and single use of instruments, and thus, the findings may not be generalized to other contexts. Hence, it is hoped that future studies may construct other relevant instruments in mixed-methods with a broader range of areas and sample sizes.

Suggestion

This study recommends that students utilize Spotify application not only for entertainment purposes, but also as a learning tool to improve their English pronunciation, listening comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition. It is recommended to make use of features such as lyrics and karaoke more intensively, and to combine listening with active pronunciation practice. English teachers can also integrate Spotify into classroom activities as a supplementary media to support pronunciation learning like assigning students to listen to specific songs, repeat lyrics, and practice pronunciation. This can be an engaging and effective way to enhance language skills. Additionally, teachers should provide guidance on how to effectively use music and podcasts for language learning.

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