



Enhancing Listening Ability with TEDx Talks

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Abstract

Listening is a crucial skill in English language learning, yet many first-semester English Education students face challenges in comprehending main ideas, understanding details, and adapting to various accents. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of TEDx Talks as a supplementary medium to enhance students' listening skills, engagement, and autonomous learning. A descriptive quantitative approach was employed, involving 17 students who participated in an online survey using a 14-item Likert-scale questionnaire. The questionnaire measured students' perceptions of comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, recognition of idiomatic expressions, and confidence in listening. The results show that the majority of students responded positively to TEDx Talks, reporting improvements in understanding main ideas, expanding vocabulary, recognizing intonation patterns, and increasing motivation for independent learning. However, some students still experienced difficulties with specific details and unfamiliar accents. These findings suggest that TEDx Talks can serve as an effective supplementary resource to provide authentic, context-rich input, support receptive skill development, and foster learner autonomy. Integrating TEDx Talks into listening courses can therefore enhance both comprehension and motivation, contributing to more effective English language instruction for students at the early stages of proficiency.

Keyword: TEDx Talks; Listening Skills; English Education

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INTRODUCTION

Language learning requires mastery of four essential skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Reading involves understanding written texts and interpreting the author's intended meaning, while writing is the productive activity of conveying ideas or information through text. Listening, as a receptive skill, requires actively attending to and interpreting auditory input, whereas speaking is the oral expression of thoughts, ideas, or emotions. These four competencies are fundamental to achieving language proficiency, with listening and reading categorized as receptive skills, and speaking and writing as productive skills (Lidia & Septi, 2022).

Among these skills, listening holds a critical role in supporting overall language development. Effective listening enables learners to comprehend conversations, extract meaningful information, and develop broader communicative abilities. According to Mandarani (2016), learners must not only hear but also process and interpret what they hear to fully understand the speaker's message. Developing listening skills requires comprehensive practice, such as recognizing individual sounds, understanding intonation patterns, and interpreting short utterances. Listening also supports the development of other language skills, including vocabulary and grammar, which can accelerate the acquisition of broader linguistic knowledge (Hasan, 2000; Mulyadi & Mutmainnah, 2015).

Despite its importance, students often face challenges in developing effective listening skills. Limited vocabulary, minimal exposure to authentic English, and ineffective listening strategies are common obstacles that hinder comprehension of main ideas, attention to details, and adaptation to different accents and intonations. Goh & Vandergrift (2012) argue that listening competence is not only essential for understanding messages but also forms the foundation for the efficient development of other language skills. Therefore, students require structured, consistent, and context-rich opportunities to practice listening.

In the modern era, digital media has become a valuable tool to support listening skill development. Online platforms provide varied and authentic English input that can be accessed beyond the classroom setting (Tan et al., 2020). Learning media not only helps students achieve learning objectives but also addresses barriers such as passivity and limited exposure. Among these platforms, YouTube offers extensive video content, including educational and English learning materials, enabling learners to engage with audio-visual input that is accessible, motivating, and adaptable to individual learning needs. However, not all YouTube content is suitable for listening skill development. Effective materials should feature clear pronunciation, a variety of accents, appropriate duration, and engaging, relevant topics.

First-year English Education students are an appropriate group for investigating listening skill development. These students are in the early stages of language learning, often possessing limited vocabulary and minimal exposure to authentic English input. While the Listening for General Communication course provides foundational listening instruction, many students still struggle to identify main ideas, understand details, and adapt to different accents and intonations. This situation underscores the need for authentic, engaging, and accessible supplementary media to enhance listening skill acquisition.

Among the available resources, TEDx Talks stand out as a particularly suitable medium. TEDx Talks is a public presentation platform that features short, motivational speeches delivered by experts in various fields, including social issues, education, science, and technology. The platform provides a context-rich listening experience supported by transcripts, subtitles, diverse topics, and exposure to different English accents. Thus, TEDx Talks can increase students' exposure to authentic language, enhance comprehension, broaden perspectives, and encourage self-directed learning (Shabir & Umam, 2020).

This study aims to examine the impact of TEDx Talks on the listening skills of English Education students, particularly those enrolled in Listening for General Communication. By integrating TEDx Talks into the learning process, students are expected to engage with authentic English input, experience diverse accents and intonation patterns, and develop the ability to interpret meaning in real-world contexts. Furthermore, the use of TEDx Talks is anticipated to promote autonomous learning, increase student engagement, and foster active and self-directed listening practices. Ultimately, this research seeks to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of TEDx Talks as a supplementary tool for enhancing listening skills in higher education English language learning.

METHOD

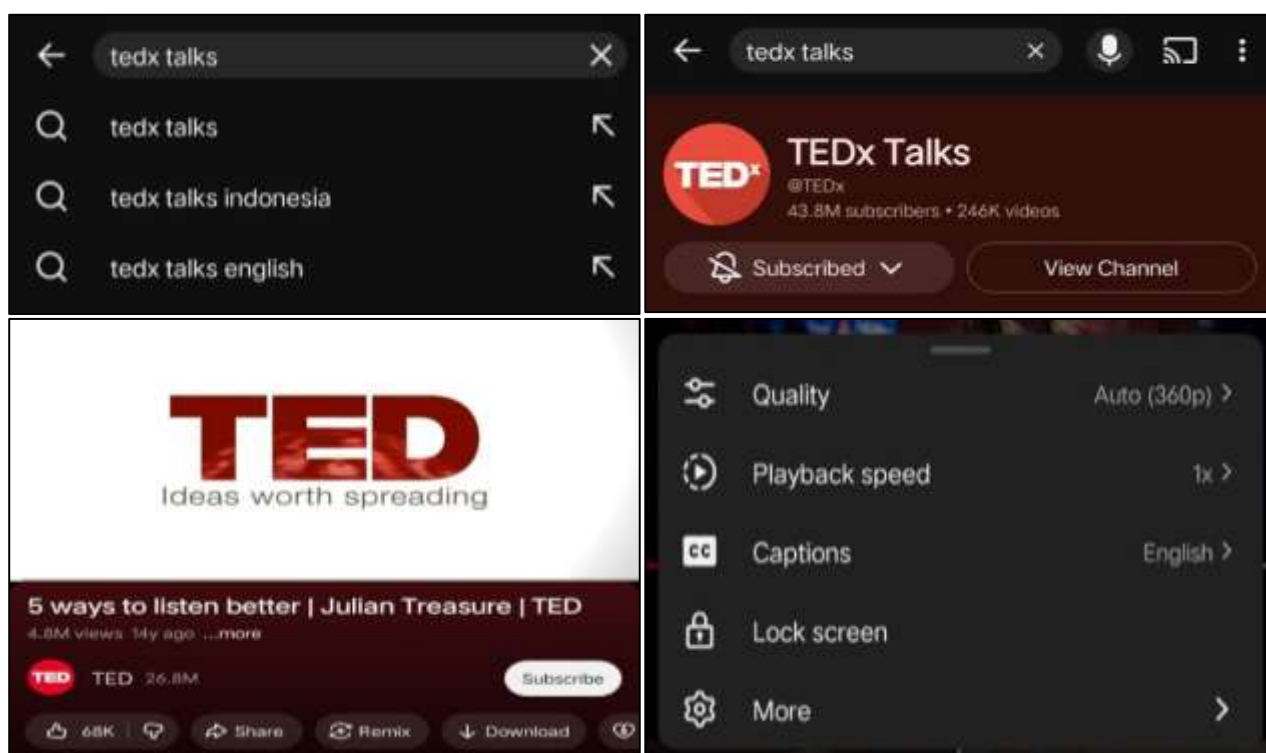
This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a survey method to investigate the impact of TEDx Talks videos on the listening skills of English Education students. According to Sugiyono (2019), a descriptive quantitative method is a research approach that aims to describe phenomena as they are, using numerical data to analyze and interpret findings statistically. Similarly, Creswell (2014) states that quantitative descriptive research focuses on summarizing and presenting information in a measurable way to identify patterns and relationships within a specific context. A descriptive quantitative approach was selected because it allows researchers to systematically describe and analyze observable phenomena in their natural context, providing a clear overview of students' experiences, perceptions, and responses regarding the learning materials used. Specifically, this method enables the study to capture the actual effects of TEDx Talks on listening skill development, as well as to highlight trends, patterns, and common challenges faced by the students in a structured and measurable manner.

A questionnaire, according to Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010), is a research instrument consisting of a series of written questions designed to gather information from respondents about their opinions, attitudes, and experiences. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) emphasize that questionnaires are an efficient method for collecting standardized data from large groups, allowing for systematic comparison and analysis. The survey was conducted using an online questionnaire, which was designed and distributed via Google Forms. The use of an online platform facilitated easy access for students and allowed researchers to collect data efficiently while maintaining the accuracy of responses. To ensure convenience and increase participation, the questionnaire link was shared with participants through WhatsApp, a widely used communication application among the students. The questionnaire was structured to collect information regarding students' perceptions of the usefulness, accessibility, and effectiveness of TEDx Talks videos as a supplementary learning medium for listening.

Participants are individuals who take part in a research study and provide the necessary data through their responses or behaviors (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). They are selected based on specific criteria that align with the research objectives, ensuring that the data collected are relevant and representative. The participants of this study consisted of 31 first-semester English Education students at Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah who were currently enrolled in the Listening for General Communication course. These students were selected because they had received formal listening instruction and had prior exposure to TEDx Talks videos during classroom activities. Their familiarity with TEDx content made them suitable for assessing how authentic, context-rich materials influence listening comprehension and engagement. Furthermore, selecting first-semester students allowed the study to focus on learners who are still at the early stages of developing their English proficiency, providing insight into the effectiveness of TEDx Talks for beginners with limited vocabulary and minimal exposure to authentic English input.

To facilitate students' exposure to authentic listening materials, the procedure began with guiding them to access the official TEDx Talks channel on YouTube. They were instructed to explore relevant videos according to the assigned topics, activate English subtitles if available, and focus on understanding the main ideas and supporting details throughout the listening activity.

This procedure aimed to expose students to authentic English input and encourage active engagement in listening activities.



Following this procedure, most students reported that the use of TEDx Talks provided engaging and meaningful listening experiences that supported their comprehension and vocabulary development.

The questionnaire consisted of 14 closed-ended items, which were formulated to measure students' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes regarding the impact of TEDx Talks videos on their listening abilities. Each item employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to quantify the degree of agreement and provide numerical data suitable for descriptive analysis. The questions were designed to cover multiple aspects of listening skill development, including comprehension of main ideas, understanding of specific details, recognition of accents and intonation, and overall engagement with the content.

During the procedure, students were guided to access the TEDx Talks channel on YouTube by typing "TEDx Talks" in the search bar. They were instructed to select videos related to the given listening topics and activate English subtitles to assist comprehension. Each student was asked to watch one video independently, focus on identifying the main ideas and supporting details, and note unfamiliar vocabulary. This procedure aimed to expose students to authentic English input and encourage active engagement in listening activities.

Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively. This analysis involved calculating the percentages of responses for each item to illustrate the distribution of students' opinions and attitudes. Additionally, the mode, or the most frequently chosen response, was determined to identify prevailing trends and dominant perceptions among the participants. The descriptive results were then interpreted to provide a detailed understanding of the impact of TEDx Talks videos on listening skill development and to answer the research questions.

In addition to primary data collection, this study incorporated a literature review as a secondary source of information. The literature review served to contextualize the findings, support the interpretation of the data, and compare results with previous studies related to listening skill enhancement, the use of authentic media, and the effectiveness of video-based learning. By combining primary survey data with insights from existing research, the study aimed to present a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of the role of TEDx Talks in supporting listening skill development among English Education students.

Through this methodological approach, the study provides a structured and systematic examination of TEDx Talks as an authentic and supplementary learning medium. The combination of descriptive quantitative analysis, survey methodology, and supporting literature ensures a reliable and insightful understanding of how digital media can enhance listening skills in higher education English language learning contexts, particularly for students at the early stages of language acquisition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from 4 first-semester English Education students were analyzed to evaluate their perceptions of using TEDx Talks as a supplementary tool for enhancing listening skills. Overall, the findings indicate that the students responded positively to the use of TEDx Talks in their listening classes. Most respondents agreed that the videos helped them understand main ideas, improve vocabulary, recognize idioms, follow intonation, and increase engagement in the learning process.

As shown in the table below, the majority of items (10 out of 14) received "Agree" as the dominant response, while the remaining items showed a mix of "Neutral" or "Strongly Agree." This indicates that the students generally perceive TEDx Talks as an effective tool for improving listening comprehension and supporting their overall language learning. Neutral responses, particularly regarding understanding specific details, interpreting intonation, and following different accents, suggest that some students still face minor challenges with complex or fast speech.

Despite these challenges, the overall trend demonstrates that TEDx Talks provides authentic, context-rich listening input, which enhances comprehension, encourages self-directed learning, and increases motivation. Students reported greater engagement and confidence, likely due to the diverse topics, clear pronunciation, and varied accents featured in the videos. These results suggest that integrating TEDx Talks into listening classes can be an effective strategy to develop students' listening skills, promote active participation, and foster readiness for real-world English communication.

Table 1. Results

No	Item	Dominant Response (Mode)
1	TED videos motivate learning English	Agree
2	Interested in the video topics	Agree
3	Learn new vocabulary	Agree
4	Understand English sentence structure	Neutral
5	Recognize idioms or daily expressions	Agree
6	Capture main ideas	Agree
7	Understand detailed information	Neutral
8	Follow conversations with different accents	Neutral
9	Interpret the meaning from intonation and expressions	Neutral
10	Facilitate independent listening and learning	Neutral
11	Repeat the difficult part to understand better	Agree
12	Increase confidence in English comprehension	Agree

No	Item	Dominant Response (Mode)
13	Improve listening ability	Neutral
14	Prepare for the Listening for General Communication Course	Agree

The positive responses from first-semester English Education students suggest that TEDx Talks can serve as an effective supplementary medium for enhancing listening skills. Students' agreement that the videos helped them understand main ideas, expand vocabulary, recognize different accents and intonation patterns, and increase engagement indicates that authentic video-based materials can provide context-rich input that supports both comprehension and motivation in language learning (Lidia & Septi, 2021; Fadya, Rahman, & Prasetyo, 2023; Saputra & Fatimah, 2023). This observation aligns with previous research, which emphasizes that exposure to diverse topics and speakers through TEDx Talks offers learners real-life listening experiences, improving not only receptive skills but also overall communicative competence (Hasan, 2000; Goh & Vandergrift, 2012; Fadya et al., 2023; Saputra & Fatimah, 2023). These findings reinforce the pedagogical potential of TEDx Talks as an authentic video medium capable of fostering autonomous and motivated learning.

Despite the generally positive perceptions, some students experienced difficulties in understanding specific details and certain accents, as reflected in neutral responses on several questionnaire items. This aligns with Saputra & Fatimah (2023), who noted that while TED and YouTube videos can enhance general comprehension and learner engagement, challenges such as fast speech or unfamiliar pronunciation remain. Similarly, Lidia & Septi (2021) highlighted that learners may require additional support to fully grasp detailed information or idiomatic expressions. These observations underscore the importance of scaffolding listening instruction, such as pre-teaching vocabulary, providing guided listening exercises, or repeated exposure to similar content, to ensure that students can maximize the benefits of authentic video input (Mandarani, 2016; Fadya et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the students' positive perceptions indicate that TEDx Talks may enhance motivation, engagement, and self-directed learning practices. Exposure to motivational and contextually relevant content encourages learner autonomy and repeated practice outside the classroom (Fadya et al., 2023). Likewise, the combination of clear pronunciation, varying accents, and meaningful topics contributes to increased confidence in listening comprehension (Lidia & Septi, 2021). Multimedia learning platforms, including TED and YouTube, provide interactive experiences that foster higher engagement and active learning, supporting the development of both linguistic proficiency and learner motivation (Saputra & Fatimah, 2023). These insights suggest that integrating TEDx Talks into listening courses can create a more holistic and effective learning environment.

Overall, these interpretations suggest that TEDx Talks represent a valuable tool for developing listening skills among higher education English language learners, particularly those at the early stages of proficiency (Lidia & Septi, 2021; Fadya et al., 2023; Saputra & Fatimah, 2023). The discussion supports prior research highlighting the pedagogical benefits of authentic video input in improving comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and engagement (Hasan, 2000; Mulyadi & Mutmainnah, 2015; Tan, Chen, & Lee, 2020; Goh & Vandergrift, 2012). At the same time, it emphasizes the continued need for teacher guidance to address challenges related to details, accents, or idiomatic expressions, ensuring that learners fully benefit from TEDx Talks as part of a structured listening curriculum (Mandarani, 2016; Fadya et al., 2023). Therefore, TEDx Talks can effectively support both listening skill development and autonomous learning, contributing to broader educational goals in English language instruction (Lidia & Septi, 2021; Saputra & Fatimah, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that TEDx Talks serve as an effective supplementary medium for enhancing the listening skills of first-semester English Education students. Through authentic and context-rich exposure to spoken English, students were able to develop greater comprehension of main ideas, expand vocabulary, and improve their ability to recognize different accents and intonation patterns. The positive responses reflected in the questionnaire indicate that TEDx Talks not only support linguistic development but also fosters engagement, motivation, and learner autonomy, aligning with previous studies emphasizing the pedagogical value of authentic video-based materials in language learning.

Despite these positive outcomes, some students reported challenges in understanding detailed information and unfamiliar accents. This finding highlights the need for instructional scaffolding and teacher

guidance to optimize the benefits of TEDx Talks. Integrating pre-listening activities, guided comprehension tasks, and vocabulary support can help learners overcome these obstacles and achieve deeper understanding. Therefore, while TEDx Talks provides a valuable source of authentic listening input, its effectiveness can be maximized when implemented as part of a structured, teacher-facilitated learning framework.

Overall, this study reinforces the pedagogical potential of digital media, particularly TEDx Talks, as a bridge between classroom learning and real-world language use. The incorporation of TEDx Talks in listening instruction not only exposes learners to diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives but also encourages independent learning beyond the classroom. Consequently, TEDx Talks can contribute significantly to improving both receptive and productive English skills, supporting the development of confident, autonomous, and communicatively competent language learners.

Future research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of integrating TEDx Talks into English listening courses, as well as to examine their impact on other language skills such as speaking and pronunciation. Broader studies involving larger and more diverse participant groups would also provide deeper insights into how authentic digital media can be adapted across different learning contexts to enhance English proficiency more comprehensively.

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