

STUDENTS VIEW ON VOCABULARY ENHANCEMENT THROUGH LISTENING TO ENGLISH SONGS ON SPOTIFY

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Abstract

This study explores how English and non-English students perceive vocabulary enhancement through listening to English songs on Spotify. A total of 175 students, comprising 56 English majors and 119 non-English majors, participated in the research. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which employed Likert-scale indicators to measure students' attitudes, strategies, and challenges, and semi-structured interviews that allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences. The analysis employed a qualitative descriptive approach, enabling the researchers to identify recurring patterns across both groups. The findings reveal that English majors adopted more strategic and academic approaches, such as analyzing lyrics and applying new words contextually, whereas non-English majors engaged more casually yet still benefited from repeated exposure and emotional engagement with music. Spotify's distinctive features, particularly real-time lyrics, replay options, and playlist customization, were reported as highly supportive of vocabulary acquisition. Nonetheless, challenges such as fast tempo, unclear pronunciation, and idiomatic expressions remained obstacles, especially for English majors. Overall, the study highlights that Spotify, as a digital music platform, offers a flexible, accessible, and engaging medium for vocabulary learning, making it a valuable complementary tool for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

Keywords: view, vocabulary enhancement; Spotify, listening to English songs

Introduction

English language skills have four primary abilities, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills play a crucial role in language proficiency, one of the supporting factors is vocabulary. Vocabulary serves as the foundational building block upon which other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing are constructed (Nureani & Warni, 2023). The reason vocabulary is emphasized in this study is that it forms the foundation of language learning, without enough vocabulary, students cannot understand or express ideas well in English. According to Pavia (2023), having a good vocabulary helps students comprehend songs that contain real-life language, making it easier to learn and remember new words through music. Several studies confirm that vocabulary is essential for learning English effectively. Pellicer-Sánchez (2021) shows that vocabulary knowledge is a key predictor of reading comprehension

©Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UM Palembang and acts as a bridge between other language skills and understanding texts. Vocabulary learning improves overall English proficiency, including fluency, comprehension, and communication skills, and that interactive strategies like listening to songs or watching videos help learners acquire vocabulary more effectively (Butar Butar & Katemba, 2023). According to Alsharif (2022), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students keep enhancing vocabulary, because vocabulary enables students to comprehend spoken and written English more accurately, which is essential for understanding lectures, reading academic texts, and engaging in conversations. Learning vocabulary is also a continuous process because language is dynamic such as new words, idioms, and expressions constantly emerge, especially in a globalized world influenced by media, technology, and culture (Cuenca & Pila, 2025).

There are also some various methods to enhancing vocabulary, such as reading

novel, watching movies, or listening to English songs. Non-English major students typically have limited exposure to authentic English input, which hinders their ability to understand the meaning and usage of new words in context, they often struggle with reading and listening comprehension due to insufficient lexical knowledge (Idayani & Sailun, 2024). As a response to these challenges, listening to English songs offers an alternative approach that can enhance vocabulary learning. Songs provide exposure to authentic and diverse vocabulary, facilitate retention through repetition and musical association, and increase motivation by offering an enjoyable and engaging learning medium, provide authentic language input, exposing learners to colloquial expressions, cultural references, and diverse linguistic structures (Gushendra, 2019).

The rhythmic and melodic elements of songs aid in memory retention, making it easier for learners to recall new vocabulary, it often repeat phrases and structures, providing natural repetition that reinforces learning (Septiara & Hamzah, 2023). Repeated exposure to English songs on Spotify helps students naturally absorb new words and phrases, often more effectively than relying on traditional rote memorization methods. Several studies have shown that listening to English songs can improve vocabulary acquisition. For example, Nie et al. (2022) found that Chinese college students showed significant improvement in vocabulary recognition after repeated exposure to English songs, and these improvements lasted several weeks. Similarly, Phisutthangkoon & Panich (2020) observed that Thai university students not only retained vocabulary better through English song activities but also responded positively to using music as a learning tool.

In addition to these findings, Spotify has become a particularly effective medium for learning. Unlike other music applications such as YouTube, Joox, or Apple Music, Spotify provides unique features that directly support vocabulary learning. Its synchronized real-time lyrics allow learners to connect pronunciation with spelling and meaning (Nureani & Warni, 2023), while replay and playlist customization functions enable focused repetition of vocabulary-rich content (Fitri et al, 2024). Unlike YouTube, which often includes distracting video elements and advertisements, Spotify maintains an audio-centered environment that encourages active listening. Moreover, compared to other platforms with limited English content, Spotify provides broader access to diverse songs, including slang, idiomatic expressions, and culturally rich language elements that are often absent in textbooks (Meisa, 2023). These features make Spotify particularly relevant as an innovative and effective tool for vocabulary learning in informal contexts.

While previous studies have investigated students' perspectives on listening to English songs on Spotify for vocabulary learning (Alam et al, 2023 & Dwika, 2023; Lestari & Hardiyanti, 2020), there is still limited research that examines students' views across different study programs in a single university context, particularly between English majors and non-English majors. This gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive exploration of Spotify utilization for vocabulary enhancement. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its comparative approach, providing new insights into how English and non-English majors engage with Spotify as a vocabulary learning tool. The findings are expected to make a real contribution by offering an attractive, effective, and appropriate approach to language

learning that aligns with technological developments and the interests of the younger generation.

Considering the information addresses in the study's background, the research has framed the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of English and Non-English Students towards learning vocabulary through listening to English songs on Spotify?
2. How do the English and Non-English Students use Spotify for learning vocabulary?

Method

The specific research design chosen for this study was a qualitative descriptive, which is well-suited for examining participants' lived experiences, beliefs, and viewpoints in depth. There are several concepts that are essential for effectively gathering and analyzing data such as open-ended questions (interview), survey (questionnaire), and thematic analysis.

This research was conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education because this faculty has the number of undergraduate study programs (S1) and the largest number of students at Sriwijaya University, which is around 5,666 students based on official data from the Student Affairs Section of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University (2025). This condition makes Faculty of Teacher Training and Education a representative and relevant location to obtain a broad and diverse picture of students' perceptions of improving vocabulary through non-formal media such as English-language songs on Spotify. Selection was based on students' prior engagement with Spotify as a music streaming platform, with all non-English majors having completed basic English courses in their first year. This ensured that both groups had a

relevant background in English learning and practical experience using Spotify to listen to English songs. All students were included as participants through a total of 175 students, 56 were enrolled in the English Education study program, while the remaining 119 were from various non-English study programs. This group was chosen for their active using English songs in enhancing vocabulary through Spotify. Consequently, they provide a related sample for analysing the use of English songs in enhancing vocabulary.

For the data collection, a questionnaire was used as the main instrument to collect data and analyse students' perceptions regarding the use of English songs in enhancing vocabulary through Spotify. A questionnaire is recognised as an effective tool for data collection, comprising a series of questions aimed at obtaining responses directly from participants. In this case, a questionnaire was carefully put together using a Likert scale option: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. In this study, the "neutral" option was excluded from the questionnaire to enhance data clarity and validity. Besides using questionnaires as a data collection method, interview with the students was conducted to get clearer and more elaborate information about their perceptions towards enhancing vocabulary through listening to English songs on Spotify. This flexible approach allowed participants to feel comfortable and express their thoughts clearly, enhancing the quality and relevance of the data collected.

The data analysis was done using a qualitative method. The data were obtained through questionnaires and interviews. Although qualitative research may sometimes incorporate statistical methods, it typically involves an iterative process in which data collection and analysis occur nearly simultaneously (Sugiyono, 2023). This analytical method allowed the researcher to

systematically analyze data from questionnaires and interviews by focusing on the patterns that emerged repeatedly concerning students' perceptions of the vocabulary enhancement through listening to English songs on Spotify. To ensure data validity, this study applied several strategies. First, comparative analysis was conducted by examining questionnaire and interview results.

Result and Discussion

A. Result

1. Respondent profile

The academic performance metrics reveal consistently high achievement level across all programs. Nearly all program study achieved a maximum GPA of 4.00, indicating perfect academic performance, with two exceptions: Biology Education (3.90) and Mechanical Engineering Education (3.99). However, the minimum GPA scores show greater variation, ranging from 3.36 in English Education to 3.97 in Mathematics Education, suggesting different levels of academic rigor or students preparation across disciplines. Mathematics Education stands out with the narrowest GPA range (3.9-4.00), indicating exceptional consistency in student performance, while English Education shows the widest range (3.36-4.00), possibly reflecting the diverse academic backgrounds of students in this study programs.

2. Questionnaire

a) Student's Attitude

English Education students at Sriwijaya University demonstrated a generally positive attitude toward the use of English songs on Spotify as a tool for vocabulary learning. A large proportion of the respondents, more than half of non-English students at Sriwijaya University also agreed that they prefer listening to English songs over any local songs on

Spotify. Majority of respondents of non-English at Sriwijaya University stated that they can remember the new words and collect new words from listening to English songs on Spotify, respondents also stated they pay attention to the pronunciation while listening to English songs on Spotify

b) Usage of Spotify

Most of English education students in Sriwijaya University had a positive tendency by using Spotify as a medium to enhance vocabulary. More than half of respondents agreed that they prefer using Spotify as their medium to learn vocabulary over other platforms. More than half of non-English students at Sriwijaya University stated that they regularly use Spotify to listen to English songs for learning using Spotify.

c) Students Challenges

More than half of respondent also disagreed that they struggle with understanding using Spotify to learn vocabulary. Aside, more than half of English students stated that some songs do not contain useful vocabulary for their learning needs. Most of the non-English student respondents disagreed that they experienced technical difficulties when using the Spotify application. More than half of the respondents also disagreed that they struggled with understanding how to use Spotify to learn vocabulary. Nearly half of the respondents admitted they had trouble understanding what the singer say and understanding the lyrics, while listening to English songs on Spotify.

3. Interview

a) Students' Perception in vocabulary enhancement through listening to English song on Spotify

"I think it's fun and effectively to learn vocabulary through listening English songs on Spotify, for me doesn't feel like

studying. But I pick up a lot of new words and phrases without even realizing it." (TS)

The findings reveal that both English and non-English students hold positive perceptions toward using English songs on Spotify for vocabulary enhancement. English Education students described the method as effective, enjoyable, and natural, highlighting how song lyrics help them acquire and retain new vocabulary in meaningful contexts without it feeling like formal study. In contrast, non-English students also appreciated the learning benefits, although their engagement was generally more casual and entertainment driven.

b) Student's Motivation to listening to English songs

"I enjoy listening to pop songs, and most of them are in English. I feel relaxed and entertained, but at the same time, I can learn new words and expressions naturally." (ANF)

Both English and non-English students are primarily motivated to listen to English songs on Spotify due to personal enjoyment and entertainment. For English Education students, they not only enjoy the songs but are also consciously aware of its academic value, particularly in enhancing vocabulary, pronunciation, and exposure to natural language use. Similarly, non-English students are eventually recognizing their potential as an informal learning tool that supports English language improvement.

c) Spotify's features that help students enhance vocabulary

"The lyrics feature is the most helpful. It allows me to read the lyrics while listening, so I can connect the spoken and written form of a word. It's very useful when I want to understand the meaning or spelling of a word." (FDR)

English and non-English students found the lyrics feature highly beneficial

as it allows them to understand pronunciation and word usage better. This feature allows users to follow the lyrics in real-time while listening, helping them to understand pronunciation, spelling, and contextual meaning of unfamiliar words. Additionally, features like replay and playlist customization were also mentioned as supportive tools that allow repeated exposure to specific songs or vocabulary-rich content.

d) Students strategy in retaining new vocabulary

"What I do is pause the song and try to guess the meaning from the context. If I'm still unsure, I googled it and sometimes I write down the new word on my notebook. For example, phrase "out of the woods" from Taylor Swift's song, that it means to be free from danger or difficulty." (MH)

Both English and non-English students actively engage in strategies to retain new vocabulary encountered while listening to English songs on Spotify, though with some variation in approach. English Education students demonstrated a deeper linguistic awareness and intentional learning behaviour. In contrast, non-English students were more likely to rely on simpler methods but still reflect an active effort to integrate new vocabulary learning into their understanding.

e) Student's challenges in learning vocabulary through listening to English songs

"Sometimes, the pronunciation of songs than actual conversation is different and unclear. Because I think, most of the time singing pronunciation are different than talking pronunciation. Sometimes, I just miss it." (MR)

English Education students were more aware of and sensitive to linguistic challenges when learning vocabulary through English songs. Overall, English Education students may face more

nuanced linguistic barriers due to their academic expectations, while non-English students approach song-based vocabulary learning more casually and with less perceived difficulty.

f) Differences in learning experiences between academic majors

“Yes, I believe the challenges is different since we, English major study and trained to notice and analyse such a language use, grammar, vocabulary. Other majors might just listen to the songs and melody and may not approach systematically as we do.” (MH)

English Education students generally demonstrated a more critical and analytical approach, shaped by their academic background. They stated that they are being more accustomed to interpreting lyrics, identifying grammatical structures, and focusing on vocabulary development as part of their academic routine compared to other majors. Meanwhile, for non-English students acknowledged facing more difficulties in processing English vocabulary due to limited exposure and a lack of regular academic use of the language in their fields.

B. Discussion

This study explored the perceptions of English and Non-English students at Sriwijaya University regarding vocabulary enhancement through listening to English songs on Spotify. The findings reveal that both groups generally have positive perceptions of this method, although with differences in depth and strategy of use. The discussion in this chapter interprets the significance of these findings by exploring the reasons behind them, their relationship to prior studies, and their broader implications.

The positive attitudes expressed by both English and Non-English students suggest that Spotify, as a popular digital

music platform, holds potential not only as an entertainment source but also as a vocabulary acquisition tool. These findings resonate with recent research by Javadi-Safa & Tefl (2022), who found that English learners are more likely to use songs to support vocabulary retention when they actively engage in analysing the lyrics and repeated listening. For Non-English students, vocabulary enhancement through songs appears to be more incidental and intuitive, often driven by the melody and emotional connection to the music rather than structured academic strategies.

Another key insight from the study was the variation in how students retained new vocabulary. English students were more likely to use additional strategies such as comparing dialects, searching for meaning, or translating unfamiliar words. This supports findings from Butar Butar & Katemba (2023) who concluded that learners exposed to English songs with lyric support improved their vocabulary more effectively than those without lyric guidance. In contrast, non-English students pointed out that their limited exposure to English made it harder for them to understand songs. Overall, these findings are quite significant. They indicate that digital music platforms like Spotify can be a valuable tool for vocabulary development and becomes increasingly important in education, understanding how students interact with platform like Spotify is essential for creating inclusive and effective learning strategies. This align with study by Nureani & Warni (2023) stated that Spotify promotes learner autonomy by allowing students to regulate their pace and environment, increasing motivation and engagement.

Conclusion and Suggestion

A. Conclusion

The results showed that students from both groups generally had positive views about learning vocabulary through music. English majors tended to approach the method more strategically and academically. Meanwhile, non-English students found the process enjoyable and effective for picking up vocabulary naturally. English students used these tools intentionally to support their learning, replaying songs, exploring different English accents and analysing lyrics in depth. Non-English students mostly used the lyrics and translation features but were less likely to use Spotify in a targeted way for vocabulary learning.

As for challenges, English students sometimes struggled with fast lyrics, unfamiliar slang, or idioms. Meanwhile non-English students faced fewer technical or language-related issues, but limited vocabulary and distraction like advertisements were more concern for them. In summary, both English and non-English students responded positively to using Spotify as a tool for learning vocabulary through listening to English songs, though their methods and depth of engagement varied. Overall, the study highlights the educational value of incorporating music streaming services like Spotify into both formal and informal vocabulary learning experiences.

B. Suggestions

Particularly those from non-English backgrounds, use Spotify more actively as a learning tool rather than simply listening to English songs passively. They are encouraged to engage more deeply by reading lyrics, noting unfamiliar words, using online dictionaries or translation tools, and incorporating new vocabulary into daily conversations to reinforce learning and understanding educational institutions

can play a key role by offering guidance on how to effectively integrate platforms like Spotify into the classroom. By adopting these strategies, Spotify could become more than just a source of entertainment, it can evolve into a powerful, accessible tool for enriching vocabulary and enhancing language learning across different fields of study.

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